

Imaginary Travel

Developed by Valerie Bayne Carroll and Michele Valeri

Wake Up Your Wishes: An Introduction to Wolf Trap Drama

Objective/Goal:

Through imaginary travel, children develop motor control and socialization skills. Pretending to travel also engages their minds in abstract thinking and problem solving.

Educational Impact:

- ✓ Self-regulation
 - ✓ Problem solving
 - ✓ Representational thought
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Suggestions for use with the *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "This Old Man (Hot Samba)"
 - ✓ "Jamming in G"
 - ✓ "Ocean Soundscape"
 - ✓ "Rainforest Soundscape"
 - ✓ "Barnyard Sounds"
 - ✓ "Magic Sound 1"
 - ✓ "Magic Sound 2"
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Materials Needed:

- ✓ Recordings of nature or environmental sounds
 - ✓ Pictures of places (imaginary destinations)
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Procedure and Process:

For all children, traveling is an adventure. New sights, sounds, smells and tastes are a thrilling part of visiting new places. Imaginary travel, with thoughtful preparation and controlled cues, can create the excitement of real travel. Using pictures, sound effects, music, and even things they can taste, touch, and smell will heighten the experience.

Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Workshop Experiences

Using their imaginations, children can travel into a story and experience it on a new level. You can guide them there as yourself or as a character (thereby incorporating role-play into the experience). You can travel to the story environment on an imaginary train, bus, plane, or magic carpet. The children can march or dance behind you as you lead them around the room to their destination, while you sing a “traveling” song. Or, the children can just close their eyes and listen for a magic sound (a bell, a chime, a drum beat) that will transport them in a blink.

Preparation:

Show pictures of your destination and talk about what you will see on your trip. This will charge the children’s enthusiasm and give them a frame of reference as they travel. Stress that this is an imaginary trip, so the children will have to use their imaginations to get there and to experience the new location.



Using modes of transportation:

Use sound effects to dramatize your chosen mode. For example, to make the sounds of a train, use a cardboard container about the size of a cereal box that you have filled with lentils or un-popped popcorn, and shake it evenly back and forth to make the sound of the train’s “chugga-chugga.” A wooden train whistle completes the soundscape of a train coming into the station.

Use role-play to act out the train conductor, pilot, or bus driver. Collect tickets, line up the passengers, start the engine, and go.

Hear that train? [Make sounds effects with shaker and whistle]

We can take the train to [destination].

Do you have a ticket? Show me your pretend ticket. Here’s my ticket.

Okay, give me your ticket and then stand in a line behind me.

Put your hands on the shoulders of the person in front of you.

Ready? All aboard! Here we go! [Add more sound effects and chug around the room until you reach your destination]

Using traveling music:

Sing, beat a drum, or use recorded music to travel physically around the room to your destination. You can also just mentally travel while the children are seated in a circle.

If the children are seated, it helps to add some movement in place, such as a pantomime for driving a car, or patting their knees to the beat.

Follow me while we sing our traveling song to the farm!
[Sing to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell:"]
*We're walking to the farm,
We're walking to the farm,
We're visiting the animals,
We're walking to the farm*

Repeat as needed. Improvise additional verses.

Using a magic sound:

Ask the children to close their eyes (there will be a certain amount of peeking!) and listen, while you count to three and then make the magic sound that will take them to their destination.

When they hear the sound, they may open their eyes and look around.

*This is my magic sound. [Demonstrate sound effect]
It's going to help us get to [destination].
We're going to close our eyes, and then I'm going to count to three and
make the magic sound.
When we open our eyes, we'll be in [destination].*

When you arrive:

It helps to announce your arrival in a dramatic way to get the children's imaginations working.

*Ready? Close your eyes! One – two – three – [magic sound]
Open your eyes! We're here!*

Start pointing out imaginary sights:

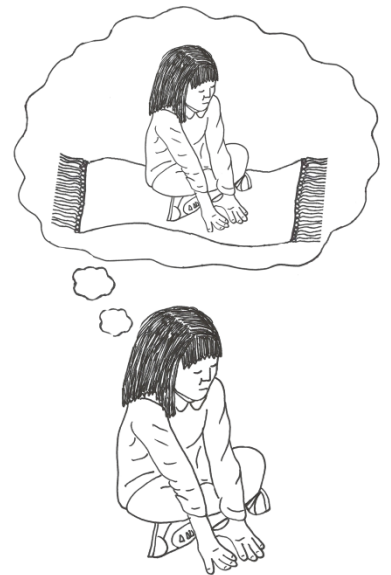
Look! I see a parrot in that banana tree!

Ask the children what they see.

Use a recording of environmental sounds:

Listen! I hear the waves. We must be near the beach.

You can fade out these sounds soon after your arrival or use them as background for the duration of the experience.



Experiencing the imaginary environment:

The imaginary environment can be created and explored in many ways. A variety of sensory cues will bring the setting to life. For example, a large blue cloth or parachute can represent a pond, a lake or the ocean. A green cloth can be scattered with artificial flowers to represent a meadow.

Listen to recordings of that environment: ocean waves, bird calls, crickets, falling rain.

Use smell to evoke the setting. If you're at the beach, rub a little sunscreen onto each child's hand to smell. If you're in a meadow, pass around some fragrant flowers or some rosewater or lavender oil on a cotton ball to sniff. (Do this only if you know that none of the children have allergies to these substances.)

Provide tactile experiences such as giving the children real sheep's wool to touch, or misting them with water to feel the ocean spray or a rainforest downpour.

Engage in activities appropriate to the setting. Take turns "swimming in the ocean" or jumping like frogs in and out of the pond; walk around the farm, feeding and petting the animals and then acting them out with sound and movement; or pick meadow flowers.

Controls:

If you plan to use a large prop, such as a parachute, introduce it to the children before your imaginary journey so that you can clearly set forth the rules for using the prop and practice following them.

Use a drum to keep a steady walking beat as you explore the environment on foot. When the drum stops, the children stop.

