

Children's Tales From Around The Globe **Enrichment Packet**

This group of dance works was created for the viewer to enjoy all together or one at a time. We have created this show order, but feel free to adapt as needed. Each one has a message for our audience that we hope will support your other curriculum. The last dance, ***Red Shoes*** includes our Creative Team credits and some funny outtakes. We have included pre and post show activities for each dance film. Please do not hesitate to contact Professor Davalos if you have any questions, cdavalosa@stmarys-ca.edu.

Program Order:

1. Land acknowledgement- at Saint Mary's College of California, we start each dance concert with a land acknowledgement to honor those who were and are indigenous to the land in which we currently reside. Each student researched the people that occupied their space using <https://native-land.ca/>.
2. ***Who We Are*** and ***I Am***- the first section of the work, ***Who We Are***, is an introduction of the cast and crew. They are dancing to their own voices and spoken word. Our audience will hear the name of each person, their ethnic background and ancestry, and how they identify. Dancers created their "I am..." spoken word statement and then made movements to go with it. They played with literal and metaphorical movement design to create an interpretation of their words and themselves. The last three performers are from our backstage crew. Professor Davalos included them in this dance because their cultural backgrounds informed us. In addition to this, the backstage crew is often seen as less important than the performers. In our class, it was important that all voices were part of the creative process. Everyone was included.

The second section of this dance is called ***I Am***. Using the movement created by the performers, and coupled with the movement created by the lead choreographer, we developed an interpretive dance to celebrate all of us and performed it to music.

Before watching ***Who We Are*** and ***I Am***, students can read the children's book *Call Me Tree*, by Maya Gonzalez to understand that we are all humans living together on this planet. The metaphor that we are all trees living in the same forest is one that helps us understand and honor our differences. A more literal approach to the same message is the book *All Are Welcome Here* by Alexandra Penfold.

After watching the video, our audience can create their own “I am...” spoken word statement and make their own movement stories. Then someone can compile the work of the students into one dance that makes a unified statement of who their class is as a whole. Students can create their own three dimensional tree with symbols of their own culture as the leaves on the tree.

3. ***Sharing Our Food Traditions***- The theme of this dance is from kitchen to table and then table to discussion in the classroom about diversity. This dance was created to share how we celebrate our culture and/or ethnicity through traditional recipes.

Before watching this video, our audience might read *World Pizza* by Cece Meng or *Too Many Tamales* by Gary Soto. We used the idea of sharing as found in the story *Stone Soup*. What are some other stories about food and culture you can read aloud?

Here are several ideas for fun projects after watching the video:

- What is your favorite food and how does that make you feel? Make a dance that shows this. Think about the actions used in making and cooking the food. Use those as a starting point. Then make a movement for how that food makes you feel. Does it make you happy? Some other emotions to explore in movement are comfort, warmth, togetherness, sharing and new beginnings. This was how we created our food dance.
- Make an imaginary pizza. Draw a circle on the ground with chalk. Working in groups or 5-6, have each student add some food to the pizza. When they add a food, for example cheese, have them create a movement that goes with the food. Everyone will follow their lead and learn this movement, and this continues until everyone has added something to the pizza. They can all learn each other's movement and dance them in order or in random order. Any food can be substituted using this general outline.
- Create a unit of study on fruits and vegetables. Research what grows in various regions. You can use the ideas found in #1 exploring how the food makes you feel and/or #2 to create a vegetable or fruit salad. Both will create movement possibilities for a dance.
- Cooking. If you are interested in any of the recipes found in our videos, please write to us, or find them by doing your own research. Include a brief history and geography lesson related to the countries and foods represented.

Latina/o/x and Indigenous Dances:

4. ***Pin Pon*** is a traditional song about a character that learns how to take care of himself. Some examples include washing his hands before eating and brushing his teeth before getting ready for bed. We have changed the lyrics to relate to our current situation with the pandemic. We share the idea of how important it is to wash our hands, wear a mask, and be mindful of our distance to each other.
5. ***Caballo Dorado/Payaso de Rodeo*** is a line dance lesson. We hope you will stand up and move with us! Carolina starts the video by explaining the origins of the dance experience coming from Mexicans and other Latina/o/x families. She then teaches the simple version of the movement. With her back to us, as if you are watching her in a dance class, she explains the steps and you can follow her. Feel free to repeat this part until students are ready to try the movement with us. Part 2 is a “Dance along” and we demonstrate the movement so our audience can follow us. Remember that you are moving in a square, and that each person can have their own interpretation of the movement. Part 3 is a “Fancy” version of the same basic steps. Dancers each add their own flair to this section. Feel free to dance along with this part too or watch and enjoy!
6. ***The Family of the Four Directions*** is a Mexica/Aztec creation story. The concept of this dance is balance. Dance brings us balance and we need balance in our lives. The story is about four brothers who bring balance to the four directions: east, north, west and south. They remind us that we all need to get along, and that we all play a special role in our family. Together these brothers also bring us dance and song that keep us working in harmony and balance. Through dance, we continue to keep balance in nature and within ourselves through movement, nourishment, and rest.
 - After watching this video students can explore what it means to be balanced.

What do you need to keep your body healthy?

1. Nourishment- what feeds you?
 - a. Make a list or draw pictures of the things you like to do.
 - b. Make a list or draw pictures of the things that you like to eat and drink.
2. Movement- how do you get moving?
 - a. What do you do to exercise or keep moving?
 - b. How do these activities help you?
3. Rest- how do you let your body recharge?
 - a. Sleep?
 - b. Take a nap?

- This dance also teaches us about the roles we play in our families. What roles do you play in your family? What would it look like if someone in your family wasn't doing their part? How can we learn to appreciate each other for the roles we play? Do you thank people for the roles they play?
- This indigenous dance practice asks us to pay attention to our environment. How should we treat the Earth? How should we treat animals and plants? Working in small groups, students can create an Earth Day dance that says “thank you” to the Earth, the animals, the plants, and the elements.

African American Diaspora:

7. ***Back to Our Roots*** is a dance in three sections utilizing Modern, Hip Hop, and West African dance styles. We made this dance to connect to our roots through movement. In a literal sense we are connecting back to our African heritage working our way through each dance form. Sometimes we do not see ourselves represented in certain dance styles, like Modern dance. We also explored code switching and how this is expected of us as African American women. We would like our audience, and especially the children, to know that it is okay to explore and figure out who you are whether it's through dance, your hair, or even your clothing. We are not defined by one set image based on our culture, race, religion, etc. and we do not have to conform to fit into an “ideal” image. All of these things add up to make us who we are. We are proud of who we are.

Before watching this video students can read books like: *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry, *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers and *My Feet Are Laughing* by Lissette Norman. After watching the video, students can discuss more ideas about what it means to be African American and of African heritage.

8. ***Red Shoes*** celebrates that everyone can dance. Everyone is connected through dance and movement and we use the different red shoes as a metaphor for our connections. We are still individuals through our different backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities which are represented by each dancer, and our red shoes unite us. In this video, the dancers perform the same choreography to show the idea that we are all connected. Then the dancers perform their different styles and solos to show individuality. We embrace the idea of self love and ask each audience member to love who you are. At the end of the film, we ask our audience to put on their “red” shoes, real or imaginary, and get up and dance with us. The Creative Team's credits follow this video with some fun dancing music and crazy outtakes from our recording sessions. We also honor our friend Eesha Shah who had to take a different role in our production due to illness. You can see her dancing at the beginning of the credits.

After watching *Red Shoes*:

- write down some of the things you love about yourself.
- make a drawing of yourself in red shoes doing something you love.
- read *Red Shoes* by Karen English.
- make a dance!

Director's note: January 2020 was not what any of us expected. A few weeks before the term started, we were informed that our classes would all be remote. This meant rehearsing on Zoom before we came together to film the work. No one expected it to be so hard. But this group of students were determined to be positive and to make this work. Each day, we made it a point to find our joy. This process brought us an unexpected closeness that allowed us to make it through what was to be many hardships. We experienced personal traumas on all levels so when the weather was crazy on the days we were filming outdoors, we just laughed and made it work. On some days, we recorded with 30 mile an hour gusts of wind and 45 degree temperatures- in bare feet! On other days, the weather was sunny and 65 degrees with mild wind. We followed all COVID-19 safety guidelines for Contra Costa County and made sure each student felt safe in the process. If students did not wear masks in the filming process, it is because they are family members or roommates living in the same household. Other times, we used the magic of film and editing to make it look as if we were all in the same room. I am so fortunate to have had this experience with these incredible young artists. All of the students in this group, from cast to crew, deserve a standing ovation.

Thank you for watching,
Professor Davalos