

Objects with meaning

Stories and poetry

20 minutes

(but can be adapted to be longer or shorter)

You will need:

A selection of objects (either personal items that people bring along, or objects chosen by the facilitator)

A tray to place the items on

Optional:

A pen and paper

One-to-one



Fun
Collaborative
Reminiscent

This activity takes a simple concept to create an accessible activity that can be set up in any environment and which everybody can take part in. It works well as a warm-up or as a starting point for something bigger.

To prepare:

Either ask participants to bring objects to the session or bring some yourself. These could be unusual things, or things that remind them of an earlier time. For example, you could ask everybody to bring along something that reminds them of a holiday, or something that they received as a present. Or, as facilitator, you could gather a selection of items that are all related to different places.

To begin:

Lay out the objects so that everybody can see them and invite your group to have a good look at them. Encourage people to pick up the items to look at them more closely and to get a sense of what they feel like.

What is their favourite object? Which one stands out for them and why? If the group brought along the objects, they should not choose their own item. Go around the group and ask each person to share their favourite object and explain why they have chosen it. What do they like about it? What made it stand out for them?

Next:

As a group, choose one object that you would like to think about. Can you work together to create a story around that item? *Who might it have belonged to? Where might it have come from? How might it have been used?* As you are talking, you might want to jot down the story that is being created.

Then ask the group if that object is linked to any of the other items that you have got. *How are they connected? Are they linked to the same person or different people?*

To finish:

When you have exhausted stories and ideas around one object or chain of objects, you could read back the story that you have created.

You could also:

If the group has brought in the objects, people could tell their personal story of their item. How is it similar or different to the story that the group created inspired by that object?

This activity can be a great way to start generating ideas and stories to create scenes for performance. If you are doing this, you could choose a selection of items linked by a theme that you want to explore.

Credit:

Royal Exchange Theatre Elders Company / Gordon and Jackie.