



Wouldn't It Be Nice?

By Drama Box (Singapore)

20 – 23 Oct 2026

Esplanade Recital Studio

Pre- & Post-show Educator's Guide

Recommended Level: Secondary – Tertiary

PRE-SHOW PREPARATION

Dear teachers,

Thank you for choosing to bring your students to experience *Wouldn't It Be Nice?* by Drama Box, presented as part of Esplanade's *Feed Your Imagination (F.Y.I)* series!

You may wonder why we have chosen to tell a story that does not take place in a familiar school setting, or feature characters who are young people. We believe this distance creates space for students to look beyond their immediate experiences and consider questions that concern all of us.

Who gets to make decisions? Who gets heard? What do we accept as “the way things are”? And what could we change if we imagined things differently?

Through the performance, we hope to spark students' curiosity about civil society and citizen activism—the many ways people come together, speak up about what they care about and work towards change.

We invite students to question who has power and how it is used, the ways we organise ourselves, and even ideas that may seem obvious, such as what it means to be a “good citizen” or to be patriotic.

We do not have all the answers. Neither does this performance. Instead, we hope it offers students a starting point to ask “Why?”, “Why not?” and “What if?”, and to explore the possibilities for themselves.

To help you and your students get the most out of the experience, we have prepared some information to introduce the show and offer some context ahead of your visit.

Drama Box

1. STEPPING INTO THE THEATRE FOR THE FIRST TIME

If this is your students' first time attending a theatre performance, you can help them prepare by letting them know that there is no "right" way to experience a show. Encourage them to come with an open mind, watch, listen and participate as the performance unfolds. As theatre is a shared experience between performers and audience, their attention, responses and presence are an important part of the experience.

For information about etiquette for enjoying theatre performances, you may visit [Esplanade's website](#).

2. WHAT IS "WOULDN'T IT BE NICE?" ABOUT?

It is Singapore, 10 years from now.

First the floods came, followed by a prolonged period of drought and contamination to our water supply. There is a shortage of clean water and an energy crunch. Water has become a controlled good, persistent power outages are disrupting the lives of Singaporeans, and there are strains in the social order.

In times of crisis, how should we organise and distribute limited resources? Who do we trust, and what do we expect from ourselves, our community and the authorities? How do we communicate, understand and collaborate across different perspectives, concerns and needs?

This forum theatre play challenges students to reflect on their own values and priorities, while considering perspectives that may differ from their own. There are no model answers and no prescribed ways to deal with the problem. Instead, through dialogue, discussion and exchange, students get to devise new strategies, test out different possibilities and explore what it means to participate and take action in the world around them.

Learning objectives:

- Explore issues related to civic responsibility.
- Develop a greater appreciation for competing priorities and challenges faced in decision-making and policy formation.
- Consider multiple perspectives and communicate effectively.
- Encourage critical thinking and analytical skills.

More information about the play and its history can be found in **Annex A**.

3. WHAT IS FORUM THEATRE?

Forum Theatre originated from "Theatre of the Oppressed", established by Brazilian theatre master Augusto Boal. The most distinct feature of Forum Theatre is that it turns passive spectators into proactive "**spect-actors**" by inviting them onstage to replace characters and change the outcome of a play.

Student participation in Forum Theatre unfolds in gradual steps:

- Watch a short play about a problem situation.
- Think, discuss with others, and share reactions to the play.
- Suggest what a character could do differently.
- Volunteer to replace a character and step on stage to try out new ideas.

Audience members are never forced to share or perform. A trained facilitator (known as the "**joker**" in Forum Theatre) guides the discussion, asks prompting questions, and supports the audiences so they feel safe and empowered to contribute ideas.

To find out more about Forum Theatre, you may check out the following titles:



4. WHO IS DRAMA BOX?

Founded in 1990, Drama Box is a socially-engaged theatre company known for creating works that inspire dialogue, reflection, and change. By shining a spotlight on marginalised narratives and making space for the communal contemplation of complex issues, we seek to tell stories that provoke a deeper understanding of Singapore's culture, history, and identity. Through our body of work, we strive to create safe, participatory spaces where people can encounter diverse perspectives, share stories, and engage in critical conversations.

Forum Theatre is one of the areas Drama Box has extensive experience in. Since 2000, Drama Box has been a pioneer in bringing Forum Theatre to communities and schools across Singapore. Over the years, we have worked with diverse groups of students, educators and community partners to create Forum Theatre performances and programmes that encourage young people to think critically, engage with different perspectives and explore issues that matter to them. Our extensive experience in youth engagement and Forum Theatre allows us to create high-quality experiences that are both artistically engaging and meaningful for students.

Beyond Forum Theatre, we have also created performances that invite students to participate in different ways. Recent productions presented in collaboration with Esplanade's *Feed Your Imagination (F.Y.I)* series include:



Re: Assembly
(2023)



The Lesson
(2019 & 2024)



The Thursday Afternoon Club: The Light of Time
(2025)

For more information and updates about Drama Box, you may visit our website at www.dramabox.org or follow us on Instagram (@drama_box_) and join our Telegram channel (@dramaboxsg).

5. HOW WILL MY STUDENTS BE ABLE TO RELATE TO THE PERFORMANCE?

Wouldn't It Be Nice? explores themes related to governance and citizen activism. While the play is not set in a familiar school environment and features characters of different ages, the questions they grapple with are relevant to young people. Students encounter questions of fairness, responsibility, trust and power in their everyday lives—at school, at home, among friends and online. They may recognise what it feels like to have a voice or feel unheard, navigate different perspectives, disagree with those in positions of authority, or decide whether and how to speak up. The performance invites students to consider where they have agency, how power operates in their own lives and communities, and how individual and collective action can contribute to positive change.

Additional Resources

Here are some supplementary resources that students can explore before attending the performance. They offer different perspectives on how people participate in society, speak up about issues that matter to them, and work together to create change. These resources invite students to consider some of the questions that they will encounter in *Wouldn't It Be Nice?*, and prepare them to actively participate during the performance.

Watch	<i>Katrina: Come Hell and High Water</i> (Source: Netflix) • A real-world example of what happens when a crisis puts pressure on government, institutions, communities and individuals. • Helps students understand the physical, psychological and social impact of a crisis, allowing them to better imagine and connect with the world and circumstances depicted in the play.
Read	<i>Gen Z Speaks: How volunteering taught me that the key to saving the world is the power of community</i> (Source: CNA) • A local perspective through a young person's journey from caring about an issue to taking action—what can one person do, and what becomes possible when people act together?
Question	Where do you have power or influence in your everyday life, and what could you do with it? • A prompt question to ignite students' curiosity and self-reflexivity

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

Dear teachers,

We hope you and your students enjoyed the performance!

We have prepared three post-show activities in the **Resource Guide for Students** to help your students reflect on and make meaning of the issues raised in *Wouldn't It Be Nice?*.

These activities are designed as a scaffolded process of unpacking the performance. Each activity builds on the previous one, gradually moving students from observing and interpreting the characters' responses, to reflecting on their own values and choices, and finally to considering how they might exercise their own agency in everyday life. This progression allows students to first establish a shared understanding of what they have seen before moving into more personal and open-ended reflection.

To support you in facilitating these activities with your students, we have included some guiding information for each activity. These are highlighted in **blue** for easy reference.

The guiding information includes the intention behind each activity, some possible student responses, and additional materials that may help you and your students explore and deepen the issues raised in the play.

ACTIVITY 1: HOW DID THE CHARACTERS RESPOND?

Students begin by examining the five characters and responding to two questions:

- (a) How did each character react and respond to the water shortage crisis?
- (b) What were the circumstances in his/her life that led to these reactions?

The activity begins with what is observable and concrete (e.g. what the characters did, said and how they responded to the crisis). Students are then guided towards making inferences and interpretations about why they responded in these ways, considering the circumstances, experiences and pressures that shaped their choices.

This first step helps students move from beyond identifying what happened in the performance to developing a deeper understanding of the different perspectives and circumstances that influence people's responses to a crisis.

Examples are provided for reference. They are non-exhaustive, and other thoughtful responses from students should also be welcomed and included for discussion.

Write your description for each character in the boxes below according to each of the question.

Characters	How did each character react and respond to the water shortage crisis?	What are the circumstances in his/her life that led to this reaction(s)?
Shaiful	He tried to help by teaming up with Nick to organise water distribution within the estate because he thinks the government efforts are too slow and that people can work together to help one another.	He has grown up under the influence of the stories and lessons he hears from his parents. <i>"I want to find a different way of living. Not a life for myself. I remember how you always tell me about your mother and the kampong life... Ayah said we can make a change."</i>
Nick	He tried to take matters into his own hands, because he does not trust that the government is able to take care of everyone affected by the crisis.	He has lost his job and is struggling to find a new one, so he may feel that the government is unable to care for the lower strata of society. <i>"There is no proper job. I had, then when anything happen, they will sack you first. The people below get the cut first."</i>
Maslinda	She tried to minimise her losses by secretly selling some of her water to Amy because she wants to protect her family's interests.	She is the sole breadwinner for her family and feels the financial pressures of providing for Shaiful's future. <i>"Everything need money! Every day need money! You think the government will take care of you if you have no money to pay tax?"</i>

Amy	She relied on her wealth, resourcefulness and connections to get out of the situation as soon as possible because she feels that she cannot continue to live in the uncertainty of the crisis.	She has experienced past failures of trying to organise people. She has had to rely on herself to build a successful business and entrepreneurship career, and believes that she needs to protect her assets in order to survive as a single woman in society. <i>“I organised! Got people to do things. Started a civil rights group. But then we fight among ourselves. So, I leave the group. And fight for myself. I work in corporate, I work so hard. I fight for my future, because the government will not take care of me, a single, unmarried old woman.”</i>
Raman	He followed official protocol closely and tried to assert his authority because he feels that maintaining order is important. However, he also let Amy leave with the water at the end.	He came from a place that did not have a good system in place, so he wants to ensure that he can make a difference now. However, he also feels powerless at the end as his authority was challenged and overridden by Amy. <i>“I came from a place where everyone wants something, and it is not easy to please everyone. I want to come to a place where there is order.”</i>

ACTIVITY 2: WHICH CHARACTER DO YOU RELATE TO?

Having considered the characters and the circumstances that shaped their responses, students are invited to turn their attention towards themselves.

This activity shifts the focus from understanding another person to reflecting on oneself. Students consider which character or perspective resonates with them, and examine the values, experiences and assumptions that may shape their own responses and decision-making.

By imagining how they might respond differently, students are also encouraged to recognise that there may be multiple ways of responding to the same situation, and to consider the choices available to them.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. What can be effective after a group or class discussion with the students is to either help them organise, or have them try to organise for themselves, their responses.

Choose one character from the play you relate to the most and answer the following questions.

Which character do you relate to the most?

Shaiful / Nick / Maslinda / Amy / Raman

In what ways do you relate to him/her?

Responses to this question can be organised in the following way:

- **By Behaviour / Action**
 - **Example 1:** “I relate to Raman because I will do what he did, which is to follow the protocol and maintain order.”
 - **Example 2:** “I relate to Maslinda because I will also do whatever I can to protect my son.”
- **By Circumstances**
 - **Example 1:** “I relate to Nick because I know how it feels to be rejected.”
 - **Example 2:** “I relate to Shaiful because I understand what it feels like to be caught in the middle, like how he is struggling between doing what his mother wants for him and doing what he thinks is right.”
- **By Values**
 - **Example 1:** “I relate to Amy because I agree that to survive, we have to keep trying and take care of ourselves.”
 - **Example 2:** “I relate to Shaiful because I think it is important to organise people so that we can help ourselves.”

How would you deal with the crisis differently from the character?

Being able to express how they would handle the crisis differently means that they are understanding where their values and boundaries differ from the characters. For this question, what can be effective is to help students identify the underlying values of their choices, and to organise their responses **by what they value**:

- Safety and security (*e.g. protecting oneself and others from harm*)
- Care and compassion (*e.g. looking after people who are vulnerable or affected*)
- Fairness and equity (*e.g. ensuring resources, opportunities or treatment are distributed fairly*)
- Freedom and autonomy (*e.g. having the freedom to make one's own choices*)
- Community and solidarity (*e.g. working together and supporting others collectively*)
- Courage and voice (*e.g. speaking up or taking action despite fear or risk*)

ACTIVITY 3: WHERE DO YOU HAVE POWER?

The final activity returns to the question introduced in the pre-show preparation.

Revisiting this question after experiencing the performance and the Forum Theatre process gives students an opportunity to connect their learning with their own lives. Having explored how different characters respond to a crisis, and reflected on their own values and possible choices, students are now invited to consider where they themselves have agency—even within situations they may not have full control over.

The activity encourages students to move from reflection to possibility and action: What influence do I have? Where can I make a difference? What choices are available to me? What might I do differently in my own everyday context?

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. What can be effective after a group or class discussion with the students is to either help them organise, or have them try to organise for themselves, their responses.

Answer the following questions.

Where do you have power or influence in your everyday life?

Responses to the questions can be organised **by domains/aspects of life:**

- Self
- Friends
- Peers
- Family
- Groups/Communities
 - Example 1: Gaming Community
 - Example 2: Religious Group

What could you do with it?

Responses to the questions can be organised **by type of action:**

- Speaking up
 - Example 1: “Stop!”
 - Example 2: “I’m uncomfortable with this.”
- Persuading others
- Organising
- Questioning decisions
 - Example 1: “How did we arrive at this conclusion?”
 - Example 2: “Does the majority always make the best decision?”
- Building alliances
- Caring for a community
- Choosing to take action rather than remain a bystander

If you find it useful to provide real-life examples to inspire your students after they have completed the activities, you may make use of the supplementary resources in **Annex B**.

PRODUCTION CREDITS & OTHER DRAMA BOX PROGRAMMES

Creative & Production Team

Producer	Fervyn Kate Tan (Drama Box)
Director	Han Xuemei (Drama Box)
Playwright	Original script by Kok Heng Leun (Drama Box) Adapted by Han Xuemei (Drama Box)
Set Designer	Han Xuemei (Drama Box)
Lighting Designer	Emanorwatty Saleh
Sound Designer	Tan Ting Yan, Rebecca
Co-Facilitators	Han Xuemei (Drama Box), Sindhura Kalidas
Actor-Facilitators	Jodi Chan Moli Mohter Md Al-Hafiz Bin Hosni Vishnucharan Naidu Zhuang Chuhang
Educational Resources	Han Xuemei (Drama Box), special thanks to Chng Yi Kai
Production Manager	Tennie Su
Stage Manager	Gillian Ong
Assistant Stage Manager	Voon Yueqi
Set Fabrication	Daniel Sim (Prop-erly)

Marketing & Publicity

Marketing	Amanda Leong (Drama Box) Dimitra Meghawaty (Drama Box)
Key Visual Design	semistudio

Upcoming programmes that might be of interest

Breaking the Silence

An introductory Theatre of the Oppressed workshop facilitated by Kok Heng Leun

24–28 Nov 2026

Register by 2 Nov at bit.ly/BTS1-2026

This five-day workshop introduces theatre games and Image Theatre from the Theatre of the Oppressed, while exploring Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Forum Theatre dramaturgy, and Forum Theatre devising.

Recommended for teachers, arts educators and facilitators interested in dialogue and participatory learning.

The Lesson

A participatory theatre experience for Secondary/Tertiary students

First commissioned by the 2015 Singapore International Festival of Arts, *The Lesson* has since been performed in various settings for diverse audiences, including theatre-goers, community groups, and students.

Built around the issue of land contestation, participants explore and reflect on the themes of development and sustainability, as well as governance and citizenry as they learn about the costs, risks, stakes and sacrifices that come with creating a healthy and sustainable society.

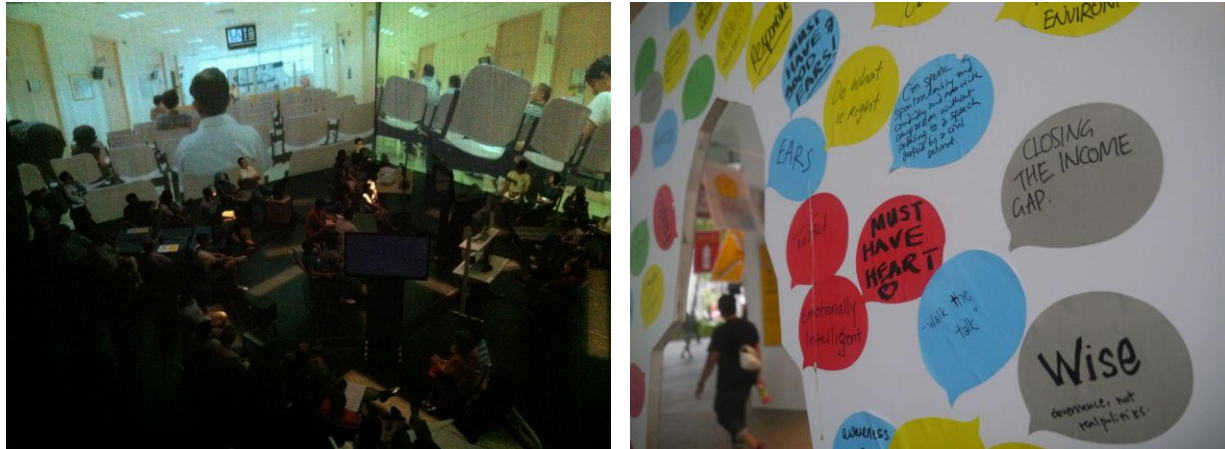
The Lesson is available in both English and Mandarin.

Interested in bringing *The Lesson* to your school? Enquire with [Fervyn Kate Tan](#).

ANNEX A

MORE ABOUT *WOULDN'T IT BE NICE?*

Wouldn't It Be Nice? was originally created as part of a larger immersive arts experience, IPS Prism, in 2012. The project looks at how Singapore will govern itself over the next 10 years. Presented by the Institute of Policy Studies, this immersive arts experience is produced by Drama Box.



Images: immersive multimedia installation (left); interactive exhibit (right)

Through forum theatre, multimedia installations and interactive exhibits, the project invites the audience to immerse themselves in alternative experiences of Singapore 10 years after 2012. It imagines how our choices today can shape our lives, community and country tomorrow.

1) THE IPS PRISM PROJECT

In 2012, The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) launched IPS Prism to engage Singaporeans in reflecting on the different dimensions of governance and to work towards a future that they desire. The central question driving the process is: “How will Singapore govern itself in 2022?”

The entire research project was split into three phases of data collection and analysis. For more information about the project and its concluding report, you may visit:

https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/prism-project_ips-prism-report.pdf

Wouldn't It Be Nice? was part of phase 2, where the public is invited to attend the said immersive arts experience, and to share their thoughts and views through various artistic and engagement methods.

ANNEX B

This section provides supplementary resources that extend students' learning beyond the performance and connect the play's themes to real-life contexts. These resources help students deepen their understanding, encounter real-world examples of people and communities responding to crises, and explore how individuals can take action to create change. They also invite students to consider different perspectives and reflect on how others' choices, actions and collective efforts might inspire their own responses.

[Video] TP Live on Campus: Activism in Singapore (Source: CNA)

TP Live on Campus: Activism in Singapore is a short CNA video series produced in collaboration with Temasek Polytechnic (TP). It explores what activism looks like in Singapore, the issues activists work on, the constraints they face, and the different ways people, particularly young people, can participate in creating social change.

Part 1 (7 mins)

Civil societies in Singapore have been active for as long as our modern history, starting out with combatting against opium consumption, and advocating for education for women. Many years on, our panelists discuss what issues our society is concerned with now and why they are pertinent.

Part 2 (7 mins)

Singapore has never been known for a robust activism scene though activists say there is more recognition now, and things are moving in the right direction. What are the current challenges and constraints activists face in Singapore?

Part 3 (6 mins)

Collaborative activism is the order in Singapore where confrontational approach to advocacy may actually backfire. Hear how our activists get around the many constraints to get their voices heard and make a difference.

Part 4 (8 mins)

Gen Y is sometimes seen as apathetic and uncaring about social causes, but are they really? What can young people do to make a difference in Singapore?

Interested to learn more about the arts? Check out www.esplanade.com/schools for more resources and content!

Principal Sponsors

A&O SHEARMAN



Bloomberg

Supporting Sponsor

Deloitte.



#EsplanadeSG #WonderHere