

- Against logic, younger students may often *memorize* better than they read. Working at home on memorization on their own or with their parents often affords a much more impacting skit. To aid in memorization, I recommend bringing a tape recorder to a rehearsal and have the students sit and read the script. Make copies for each cast member to take home. Remember listening to Barney songs one hundred times in one car trip? Mom will be very thankful that you have provided this entertainment for the car, and everyone in the family will be able to perform the entire skit for you!
- I strongly encourage *performing* these skits for parents or other classes, particularly for students who are not advanced readers. Good preparation and work done at home may allow them to perform well and help encourage reading and speaking in public. Rehearsing a script over and over reinforces reading skills and self-confidence. Often a poor reader may be an excellent actor and acting necessitates more reading!
- Often, middle school students who have worked on these skits make excellent *student directors* and crowd-controllers for younger students so that several rehearsals can take place simultaneously. This is a great opportunity for developing leadership and directing talents in the older students, and the younger students enjoy it as well.

Summing it Up

This should be fun! Although drama is, by no means, a simple process, it should also not be a grueling chore. Students have enough of that in the rest of their classes! Although discipline and control do tend to be difficult in drama class, the mere reward of performing should be enough of an incentive for most children. Threaten them with more math homework, and they should shape up quickly!

Break a leg!

1. New Kid

Topic: A friendly, kind girl tries to approach a new girl who is resistant, angry, and unfriendly.

Cast:

SUE: nice, pleasant, and friendly
LISA: hard-edged with a chip on her shoulder
MARIA
BONNIE
DALIA
BRAD
TODD
JULIE
BARBARA
WINNIE
DIXIE
MARTY
MIKE
DAISY
CORY
BITSY

- 1 (LISA is sitting on a chair or at a desk Center, looking through
- 2 a school textbook. SUE enters from Stage Right and
- 3 approaches Lisa.)
- 4 SUE: Hi. Aren't you the new girl?
- 5 LISA: Who's askin'?
- 6 SUE: Oh, uh, my name is Sue.
- 7 LISA: Good for you. (Continues to flip through book rudely.)
- 8 SUE: You're Lisa, right?
- 9 LISA: You must be a genius.
- 10 SUE: No, um ... do you have Mr. Craven for math?
- 11 LISA: Yeah.
- 12 SUE: Well, just a word of warning: Don't walk into his room
- 13 late. He goes nuts when people walk in late.
- 14 LISA: Thanks for the heads-up.

1 SUE: (*Becoming warm and friendly*) And Mrs. Davey loves it
 2 when you say, "Yes, ma'am." That will earn you a lot of
 3 brownie points in chemistry.
 4 LISA: (*Pauses. Looks up accusingly.*) What do you want?
 5 SUE: Huh?
 6 LISA: Why are you bein' nice to me?
 7 SUE: What?
 8 LISA: (*Sarcastic*) Huh? What? Don't you understand English?
 9 SUE: (*Unsure*) Well, yeah, sure, but I don't know what you
 10 mean.
 11 LISA: (*Closes book and gains an unfriendly demeanor.*) Well
 12 listen, girl, let me tell you how it is. I'm new. This is the
 13 seventh school I've been to in five years. Every city is the
 14 same and the kids are the same everywhere.
 15 SUE: What do you mean?
 16 LISA: I lived in Baldwin for about six months. The longest
 17 six months of my life. (*Action moves to a group of three girls*
 18 *standing, giggling, and pointing.*)
 19 MARIA: And she calls soda *Coke*!
 20 BONNIE: Her shoes look like something out of a department
 21 store catalogue!
 22 DALIA: I heard she had to repeat eighth grade because she
 23 moves around so much. What a loser! (*MARIA, BONNIE,*
 24 *and DALIA exit.*)
 25 SUE: That's awful.
 26 LISA: No big deal. And it's the same everywhere. People
 27 don't want nothing to do with you unless you have
 28 something they want. Like in Clawson. (*Action moves to a*
 29 *group of three students and LISA joins them.*)
 30 BRAD: C'mon, Lisa, you said your parents wouldn't be
 31 home.
 32 LISA: Yeah, but they'd freak out if I had kids drinking in the
 33 house.
 34 TODD: Who's gonna tell them?
 35 JULIE: Don't be lame, Lisa. Gosh, I thought you'd want the

1 chance to make a few friends.
 2 LISA: I do, but —
 3 TODD: But what? Your house is the only place we could use
 4 this Friday. Let's do it. It will be fun.
 5 LISA: I don't know.
 6 BRAD: I told you guys she won't go for it.
 7 TODD: Yeah, I must have been wrong. I thought you seemed
 8 like a nice girl.
 9 JULIE: Let's go, guys. I've got a new CD I want you to hear.
 10 (*The three leave, LISA rejoins SUE.*)
 11 LISA: They only want to be friends when they want
 12 something from you.
 13 SUE: (*Quietly, unsure*) I don't want anything.
 14 LISA: Then why are you trying to be so buddy-buddy with
 15 me?
 16 SUE: Ummmm ... I don't know exactly.
 17 LISA: Oh, you must be like the bunch from Davison High.
 18 (*Action switches to a group of four students. LISA joins the*
 19 *group.*)
 20 BARBARA: You have to join our gang.
 21 WINNIE: It's the best gang in the school.
 22 DIXIE: Don't join the Clods. They're the worst.
 23 MARTY: You'll be sorry if you join the Clods. You'll get in all
 24 sorts of trouble.
 25 LISA: I'm not sure I want to join a gang or anything.
 26 DIXIE: Why not? You got something against gangs?
 27 BARBARA: Yeah, you saying we ain't cool or something?
 28 MARTY: You already talked to the Clods or something?
 29 WINNIE: I'm telling you, Linda, you join those Clods and
 30 you'll be sorry.
 31 LISA: My name is Lisa, not Linda.
 32 MARTY: Whatever. You joining us or not?
 33 WINNIE: You got a car?
 34 LISA: No.
 35 BARBARA: Shoot, she ain't even got a car. What we doin'

1 wasting our time with her?

2 DIXIE: You're a loser, girl, you know that? (*LISA returns to*
3 *SUE and others leave.*)

4 LISA: I don't have any money or a car, so what do you want?

5 SUE: (*Hands up in self-defense mode*) Honest, I don't want
6 anything. I was just trying to be friendly. I know what it's
7 like to be new and I thought maybe you could use a
8 friend.

9 LISA: I don't have *friends*. I move around a lot and don't get
10 close to people. That's the way I like it.

11 SUE: (*Slightly sarcastic, but not unkind*) Yeah, you seem like a
12 real chipper person.

13 LISA: Hey, don't get too close and you can't get hurt. That's
14 my philosophy.

15 SUE: How's that working out for you so far? (*Long pause.*
16 *LISA looks away.*) That's what I thought. (*Sits next to or*
17 *across from LISA. Leans in.*) Look, I don't want to get all
18 up in your business, but it doesn't hurt to have a couple
19 of friends, even if you're only around for a short time.
20 Everybody I meet adds something to my life, that's the
21 way I look at it. Avoiding people because you don't want
22 to get hurt doesn't sound like much fun to me.

23 LISA: Yeah? What do you know about it?

24 SUE: I just moved here last year from Minnesota. It was a
25 little hard making friends at first, but I'm glad I did.
26 Some of the kids here are pretty cool. And it's always
27 better than going it alone. We need friends to keep us
28 from going crazy. (*Action switches to four students whom*
29 *SUE joins.*)

30 MIKE: You new?

31 SUE: Yeah. Hi.

32 DAISY: Good to know you. I'm Daisy. This is Mike, Cory,
33 Bitsy. What kind of music you like?

34 SUE: All sorts. I love classic rock.

35 CORY: Dude. Classic rock is awesome.

1 BITSY: There's a concert Friday at the Bonsai Club. You
2 wanna go?

3 SUE: I don't know. I'll have to ask my parents.

4 MIKE: No problem. Let us know and maybe we can meet for
5 a burger or something before. We all hang out at
6 Diamond's before the concert. It's kind of an every-
7 Friday thing. The parents don't seem to care too much.
8 Keeps us "off the streets," they say.

9 SUE: Sounds great. (*The four exit and action returns to LISA,*
10 *and SUE joins her.*)

11 LISA: Sounds like the kids here are pretty cool. Not so sure
12 they'll like me, though.

13 SUE: Sure they will. You just have to let people in.

14 LISA: Easier said than done.

15 SUE: Well, I can be your experiment. I'll even put up with
16 your rotten moods. Here's my most important piece of
17 advice: Avoid the mashed potatoes in the cafeteria as if
18 your life depended on it.

19 LISA: Really?

20 SUE: Really. They are deadly. Come on, I'll introduce you to
21 a couple of other kids.

22 LISA: Well, OK. Thanks. (*They exit.*)