WALNUT STREET THEATRE

#whatsurbox
0 likes

TOURING OUTREACH COMPANY STUDY GUIDE
"#whatsurbox"

Book by Ashley Kerns
Music & Lyrics by Chris Burcheri

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Ryan, Kylie, Janelle, and Oscar are four middle school students struggling to define what "box" they fit into. Their social lives revolve around the urbox app, a social media site that places its users into categories, such as #athlete, #different, #perfectbody, and #classclown. When urbox announces a contest that will ultimately raise its winner to social media stardom, everyone is after the prize. Each individual is determined to do whatever it takes to win, but at what cost?

THEMES FROM #whatsurbox

Peer Pressure	Identity	Struggle
Self–Confidence	Friendship	Society
Consequences	Coming Of Age	Technology

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE THE SHOW

1. Have you or anyone else you know felt bad because of something that was said to them or happened online? How did you/this person react to the situation?
2. What is peer pressure? Do you think peer pressure has the power to change who someone is?
3. What kind of peer pressure exists at your own school?
4. What do you do when you notice that a friend is suffering from the effects of cyber bullying, or bullying in general?

AFTER THE SHOW

1. What did you learn from *#whatsurbox*?
2. What "boxes" are present at your school?
3. What role does social media play in your school? Do people act differently within the internet world than they do in person?
4. What did Oscar teach you about the consequences of being a "troll" or cyber bully?
5. In the end of #whatsurbox, Oscar's friends decide to forgive him for his cyber bullying, but that is not always the case. What could be other consequences of being a cyber bully?

Cyber Bullying Quick Facts

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.

Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

Cyber Bullying

Why is it different?

Kids who are being cyberbullied are often bullied in person as well. Additionally, kids who are cyberbullied have a harder time getting away from the behavior.

• Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach a kid even when he or she is alone. It can happen any time of the day or night.

• Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly to a very wide audience. It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

• Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.

THEATRE 101

Ever wondered how to put on a play?

There are many different elements that go into putting what's written on the page up on its feet. Please review the following terms with your students:

PLAYWRIGHT The playwright writes the script.

DIRECTOR The director is in charge of orchestrating the entirety of the production. They lead the actors, designers, and production crew to put the show on its feet.

COSTUME What the actors wear during the show.

SCENERY Everything on stage (*except props*) used to represent setting, or the place in which the story is taking place.

PROPS All physical items on stage with the exception of the scenery. This includes lamps, chairs, pens, paper, books and more!

LIGHTS Stage lights illuminate the actors so that they look their best. The colors used, focus of the light, and amount of lighting can really set the mood and environment of a scene.

SOUND Everything that you hear during a performance that does not come from the actors.

ACTORS The actors are the people that perform the show onstage.

AUDIENCE The lucky people that get to watch the show. New to being an audience member? Follow these rules and you will be a natural!
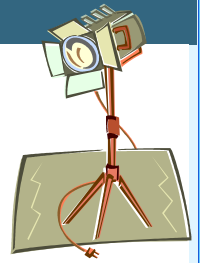
AUDIENCE RULES

♦ Unlike a movie, the actors are performing in front of you. They can see everything that you do. Talking, sleeping, poking your neighbor, or making noise during the performance distracts the actors and others around you.

♦ Don't bring electronics to the performance. The use of cell phones, cameras, computers, tablets, and video game devices are **not allowed**.

♦ Use your better judgment on when to laugh, clap, and/or cry during the performance. But don't forget to clap at the end of the show!

♦ Stay in your seat during the performance.

♦ Make sure you go to the bathroom before the show starts.

TRY IT YOURSELF!

DIRECTIONS

Give students a chance to act out our sample scene from *#whatsurbox*. Before jumping into the performance, think about all of the elements that go into a play. Are there any props that we can use to help improve the scene? Where are the characters when this scene is taking place? What might the scenery look like?

CURRICULUM CONNETCTIONS

Interpretation   Analysis

Public Speaking   Points of View

VARIATIONS

• **Write it down!** Before putting this scene up on its feet, have students read through the scene and write down how they would "direct" the scene. Can you find any clues in the script that indicate specific staging or designs?

• **Rehearse it!** Break into groups and assign a director, designers, & actors. Give groups enough time to rehearse & prepare.

#whatsurbox SAMPLE SCENE

Ryan approaches Janelle at her locker.
RYAN: The lame teenager—I know it's you…
JANELLE: "The lame teenager" posted about me too…
RYAN: You did that just to throw people off.
JANELLE: I don't spend my time feeding the trolls.
RYAN: I know it was you!
Oscar enters.
OSCAR: Hey! Leave her alone! What's your problem? Forget to work out today? Kylie forget to call you back?
RYAN: (*to Janelle*) I'll prove it was you! (*Exits*)
OSCAR: I heard someone accused him of smoking on school property… He's probably going to be suspended from school.

JANELLE: He deserves it… He thinks he can just accuse me like that… Whatever. I have algebra tutoring to be getting to… BTW how do you know so much about Ryan and the smoking drama?
OSCAR: Oscar has his ways… I've been following to competition closely… Especially the lame teenager.
JANELLE: What do you know about the lame teenager?
OSCAR: I heard some people talking about it on the bus… sounds like it's getting pretty popular… the lame teenager is awesome—he—I mean they—are like the Robin Hood of this competition.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS: "Should I post this?"

In #whatsurbox, Oscar begins posting nasty things about his peers out of impulse. Impulse is not generally a word that we think about when it comes to posting online, but once something is on the internet, it's very hard to take back. Before posting something online, it's very important to think about what information you are releasing to the public. Teach these Internet safety rules to your students and ask them to share rules of their own to the class.

1. Keep personal information private.
2. Talk with your parents about what you do on the Internet.
3. If you are about to post something negative about someone, take five minutes, consult a friend or parent.
4. Only add friends you know personally to your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
5. Never meet anyone face to face who you first met online.
6. Do not share your passwords except with your parents.
7. Do not post your plans or whereabouts ever.

Unsure about these rules?
Follow this rule when in doubt:
Would your teacher approve of this post? If the answer is no, you probably shouldn't post it.

https://nationalsave.org/pdf/cyberactivity.pdf

"What is the right age to start using social media?"

According to a 2014 study conducted by the safety advisory site, Knowthenet, 59% of children join social media before age 10. With your class, discuss how age comes into play in regards to social media.

Discussion Questions:

1. How many of you have a Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram account?
2. What age did you start using your account?
3. Do you discuss social media at home?
4. How much time do you spend on social media daily?
5. Does social media get in the way of school? Do you feel it enhances your social life?

Relevant Articles:

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10619007/Children-using-social-networks-underage-exposes-them-to-danger.html

http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2016/parents?
utm_content=buffer7b046&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/health/children/12147629/Children-ignore-age-limits-by-opening-social-media-accounts.html

GROUP EXERCISE: "Follow The Leader"

In #whatsurbox, Kylie, Ryan, Janelle, and Oscar are striving to be the leaders of their school on social media. In this exercise, your students will take turns being the leaders of the classroom. This is a great exercise to get your students up and moving.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Choose one student, or call on a volunteer, to stand in the middle of the room.
2. Have this student close their eyes while the rest of the class forms a circle around them.
3. Quietly, choose one student to be "the leader."
4. The student in the middle will open their eyes after "the leader" has been chosen and everyone should mill about the room.
5. The group will "follow the leader" by mimicking all of their actions as they mill about the room (as inconspicuous as possible). For example, "the leader" may begin walking like a certain animal or taking on different postures.
6. The student who started in the middle will try to guess who leader is. When he or she does so, the game should reset.
7. It is important to stress that "the leader" should make movements very clear, but not too quick.

LIKE THE SHOW? LET US KNOW!

Send letters or drawings to:

Walnut Street Theatre
ATTN: Education Department
825 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19107

DIRECTIONS

- Have students fill out the madlib below as if they were sending a classmate a text message.
- The exercise should be arranged so every student in the class receives a madlib filled out to them by a different classmate.
- It is important to stress that students should only fill in positive responses.
- At the end of the exercise, collect worksheets to make sure they are positive and encouraging, and return to the student whom the madlib is addressing.

Face it, _____, you are about the greatest thing since _____,
classmate's name   *your favorite food*

I have always admired you and your ability to _____ . All of us know
a talent they possess

that you are the _____-est person in the world. Sure, everyone has
positive adjective

bad days. Whenever you're having a bad day, think of that time that you

_____. So, _____, today you're going to stop beating your-
an accomplishment   *classmate's name*

self up about whatever it is that makes you feel sad or disappointed, and start

loving yourself for being _____, _____, and _____. If
positive adjective   *positive adjective*   *positive adjective*

anyone gives you a hard time, you let them know that I, _____, have
your name

your back.

Viral Video Contest

YouTube

We are looking for middle schools for our viral video contest! At the end of #whatsurbox Oscar is responsible for creating a positive video in response to all the negative videos and cyberbullying he has participated in. ***We want to spread positivity to middle school students across the Delaware Valley!***

<u>Rules:</u>

1. Video must be in response to the theme "Middle School & Fitting In." We encourage schools to use body positivity, maintaining friendships, safely using technology, pressure to be someone you're not, grades as potential explorations.

2. Video must be 3-5 minutes in length (and not exceed 7 minutes).

3. Video must be submitted by school official (teacher, administrator, counselor etc.) to our dropbox link by June 1, 2017

   https://www.dropbox.com/sh/3r9utnvfjx1zir9/AAD-DI7Ee52nQGZIWHKKZaN_a?dl=0

4. Winners will be chosen by June 30, 2017. 1 School will be chosen as the winner. Prizes included:

   - Video posted to the Walnut Street Theatre's website
   - Backstage tour of the Walnut Street Theatre
   - Official Walnut Street Theatre Swag
   - Free Touring Outreach Show for the 2017-2018 school year

Walnut Street Theatre reserves the right to use videos on all social media platforms. School is required to obtain release forms for this express purpose.

WALNUT STREET THEATRE

BIOGRAPHY

Walnut Street Theatre has the unique distinction of being the oldest, continuously operating theatre in the English-speaking world, having served Philadelphia audiences for over 200 years!

Today, under the direction of Producing Artistic Director Bernard Havard, Walnut Street Theatre is in its 34th season as a self-producing, non-profit theatre company. Walnut Street Theatre continues to entertain and enlighten diverse audiences with high quality theatrical programming. With more than 50,000 subscribers, the Walnut is also the most subscribed theatre company in the world!

Each season, Walnut Street Theatre holds a nation-wide search to recruit accomplished young professionals for Acting Apprenticeships. These actors form our Touring Outreach Company. Nearly 500 candidates are considered each year for these four positions. Last season, **172,000** children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs: including our theatre school with classes for kids and adults, Camp Walnut, Our Touring Outreach Program to local schools and our artist in residency programs.

WALNUT STREET THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION	Thomas Quinn
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION	Ashley Kerns
EDUCATION PROGRAMS ASSOCIATE	Patrick Shane
EDUCATION PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE	Angie Confredo
RESIDENT TEACHING ARTIST	Jasmine Hammond
EDUCATION APPRENTICE	Amanda Pasquini
ACTING APPRENTICES	Anne Bragg
	Alexa Cepeda
	Dana Orange
	Austin Turner

#WhatsUrBox Creative Team

PLAYWRIGHT	Ashley Kerns
DIRECTOR	Ashley Kerns
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Devon Fields
MUSIC & LYRICS	Chris Burcheri

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WEB

- **Bully Prevention**
https://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/

- **Internet Safety Tips for Teens**
http://www.nationalcac.org/prevention/internet-safety-kids.html

- **Walnut Street Theatre Touring Outreach Company**
https://walnutstreettheatre.org/education/outreach.php

THANK YOU

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

ASHLEY KERNS is the Assistant Director of Education for the WST where she teaches, administers and directs in theatre school, residency and other education programs. Some of her favorite directing projects for WST Kids series include: *Seussical, Zombie in Love* and *Beauty & the Beast.* Upcoming: *Skippy Jon Jones.* She served as the Assistant Director to Malcolm Black on *Amadeus, The Mousetrap* and *An Ideal Husband* on the Mainstage at WST. She is co-producing/directing the world premiere of *Son of a Dog* this fall. Ashley holds a B.A. in Political Science and Theatre from Elizabethtown College and is a graduate of the McCarter Theatre Internship Program.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

CHRIS BURCHERI is a Philadelphia-based accompanist, music director and composer. For the Walnut Street Theatre Education Department, he teaches and accompanies for Theatre School, music directs for the WST For Kids series, and music directs the Camp Walnut summer program. He also music directs at Friends Select School and Friends Central School, and accompanies at University of the Arts.