**Introduction:**

"Welcome To Gomora" is a thrilling play that delves into the complexities of justice, morality, and personal responsibility within the heart of the Gomora community. The narrative follows characters grappling with their roles in the pursuit of justice and the blurred lines between right and wrong. This theatre activities guide is tailored to assist directors, actors, and theatre practitioners in unlocking the depth of the play, fostering a collaborative exploration of its characters, settings, and overarching themes.

**Table Work:**

***Activity: Character Roundtable***

***Description:*** Gather the cast and creative team for a discussion resembling a roundtable. Each participant shares insights, questions, or interpretations of characters and scenes.

***Example:*** "In the roundtable, focus on Thabo's motivations as he says, 'If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything.'"

**Steps**

* ***Choose or Create a Setting****:* A rehearsal room with a table and chairs arranged in **a circle.**
* ***Choose a Line of Dialogue****:*  For example - initiate discussions using Thabo's line, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything."
* ***Character Connection:*** Encourage actors to share personal insights related to Thabo's character.

**Role Playing and Character Work:**

***Activity: Character Switch***

***Description:*** Have actors switch roles temporarily. This allows them to approach characters with fresh perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of the ensemble dynamics.

***Example:*** "Thembile and Thabo switch roles to explore how each character perceives justice and personal motivations."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Rehearsal space with minimal props.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Utilize Thembile's line, "What if one day bayakubulala nawe?" to emphasize the tension in the character switch.
* ***Character Connection:*** Discuss how stepping into another character's shoes influences their perception of the story.

**Physical Theatre and Movement:**

***Activity: Statues in Motion***

***Description:*** Ask actors to embody a specific emotion or moment from the play in a frozen pose. Then, transition to moving in slow motion, exploring the physicality of the emotion.

***Example:*** "Capture the intensity of Thembile's emotions in the frozen pose as she confronts the truth about justice."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Open space for movement exploration.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Choose Thembile's line, "I do not believe Justice was made, the book was just raped," to inspire the frozen pose.
* ***Character Connection:*** Encourage actors to express emotions physically, connecting with their characters.

**Ensemble Building:**

***Activity: Group Storytelling***

***Description:*** Have the ensemble collaboratively create a short story using one-word contributions. This fosters communication, creativity, and a shared storytelling mindset.

***Example:*** "Build a story collaboratively, drawing inspiration from the diverse backgrounds of Gomora's characters."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Circle formation for easy communication.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Integrate phrases or expressions commonly used by Gomora characters like "Gomora iyasha."
* ***Character Connection:*** Emphasize the importance of unity in portraying the community.

**Creative Writing and Script Development:**

***Activity: Character Letters***

***Description:*** Ask actors to write letters from their characters' perspectives, expressing thoughts, emotions, or events not explicitly covered in the original script.

***Example:*** "Thabo writes a letter reflecting on his personal connection to Ubuntu and the responsibilities he feels towards justice."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Quiet space for reflective writing.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Incorporate Thabo's internal thoughts, such as "I stand for Ubuntu! Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu."
* ***Character Connection****:* Encourage actors to delve into their character's minds, expanding on their personal experiences.
* Students/performers read their letters infront of the class (production team)

**Visual and Spatial Exploration:**

***Activity: Set Walkthrough***

***Description:*** Allow actors to physically explore a scaled model of the set or a rehearsal space designed to represent key locations. This helps them understand the spatial relationships.

***Example:*** "Walk through the streets of Gomora in a scaled set, paying attention to how the environment influences character interactions."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Model set or rehearsal space resembling key locations.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Refer to scenes that specifically highlight Gomora's streets, incorporating lines like "May I ask what happened to your dad..."

**Improvisation:**

***Activity: Character Swap Improv***

***Description:*** Have actors improvise scenes with characters they don't typically interact with. This encourages flexibility, spontaneity, and a deeper understanding of character dynamics.

***Example:*** "Thembile and Zola improvise a scene to explore the tension between justice and personal relationships."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Open space for free movement.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Integrate lines that showcase the dynamics between Thembile and Zola, such as Thembile's line "Do you wanna play a game with me?"
* Can you create a set of 3-4 questions that students/performers can write as reflection of the activity.

**Sound and Music Integration:**

***Activity: Soundscapes & Soundtracks***

***Description:*** Individual and Group task

Individual

1. Choose any song that you feel represents your character in the play. Once the song is chosen, step on to the stage and reenact a moment you feel your character’s song should be played.

- Why did you choose this song?

- How does the song make your character feel?

- Would a different soundtrack make your character different? How?

Group

1. Each person must have an everyday object. Experiment with creating soundscapes using everyday objects or instruments.

- Discuss how different sounds can enhance or evoke specific emotions in scenes.

***Example:*** "Enhance the atmosphere by creating a soundscape that mirrors the intensity of a crucial moment in the play."

**Steps**

* ***Setting:*** Rehearsal space with various sound-producing objects.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Integrate lines that correspond with the selected scene's emotion, like "You are destroying the only humanity left in us as a people."

**Reinterpretation of Time and Space:**

*Activity: Time Travel Scenes and Alternate Realities*

***Description:*** Explore scenes as if they're set in different time periods or realities. This activity helps the cast consider how changes in time can affect character relationships and choices.

***Example:*** "Revisit a key scene with characters transported to a different era, examining how societal changes influence their decisions."

1. In Pairs or Groups think of your characters as being different from what they are currently in the play. Enact an interaction between these two-three characters

- What changed about the characters? Physically/Emotionally/Psychologically

- How was the interaction different from the original character?

Steps

* ***Setting:*** Open space with minimal props to represent different eras.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Use lines that resonate with the era being explored, incorporating phrases like "When you still praised the name of Shadrack and Michael."

**Feedback and Reflection:**

*Activity: Mirror + Yes, And Exercise*

***Description:*** Pair actors and have them mirror each other's movements without speaking. Afterward, discuss how these exercise relates to communication and collaboration in the production.

***Example:*** "Reflect the exercises, relating it to the theme of silent struggles and unspoken challenges faced by Gomora's characters."

1. Pairs: Students/Performers have an interaction related to anything around Gomora. The idea behind the exercise is that each students after a statement has been said must agree with “Yes, and...” Students go back and forth agreeing and adding to the conversation.
2. Pairs: Copy each other’s movements and expressions using the mirror exercises

Questions

1. What was your experience of the exercise?
2. What was similar and what was different between the two exercises?
3. How do the exercises relate to being on stage and performing?

Step

* ***Setting:*** Pairs facing each other in a quiet space.
* ***Dialogue Inclusion:*** Consider lines related to unspoken challenges within the play, like "Keeping silence does not serve this community."

**Integration of Real-world Context:**

As an additional layer of engagement, consider incorporating real-world elements into your exploration. This can deepen the understanding of the play's themes within the context of your community. Here's a suggested activity:

**Community Connections:**

***Activity: Community Trust and Dynamics***

***Description:*** Explore the dynamics between the community, key figures, and institutions in Gomora. This activity aims to bridge the fictional world of the play with the real-world experiences of the performers.

***Example:*** "Analyze the relationship between community members and authoritative figures like the police and pastors, mirroring the complexities portrayed in the play."

***Steps:***

* **Community Research:** Conduct research around your school or area to understand the relationship between the community and the police.
  + Do people trust the police or not?
  + Between Church (pastors) and Police, who does the community trust more? Share personal insights or research findings.
  + Police vs. Pastors Debate: Explore the perceptions and debates within your community regarding the roles of police and pastors.

***Branching into the Real World:***

Encourage students to interact with community members, perhaps through interviews or surveys, to gather diverse perspectives. This real-world engagement can inform their understanding of the play's themes and characters.

This activity not only adds a layer of authenticity to your exploration but also encourages students to apply their theatrical insights to real-world scenarios. It allows teachers to seamlessly integrate societal observations into the creative process, creating a richer and more impactful learning experience for both creators and the community they are a part of.

**Conclusion:**

In closing, these activities aim to transform your creative process, offering a pathway to a more profound engagement with "Welcome To Gomora." The characters, settings, and themes embedded in the play come to life through these dynamic exercises, fostering a collective exploration that transcends the boundaries of the script. Also, to connect the students with their own environment by taking the play outside to their given communities through the last activity “Intergration of Real-World Context”. May your journey be filled with discovery and a renewed appreciation for the intricate layers woven into this theatrical narrative. Break a leg!