

# HOPE

A LEARNING RESOURCE FOR ALL CHILDREN

## Tree of Hope

There is no  
change without dreams,  
as there is no dream  
without hope.

Paulo Freire

The Tree of Hope invites you  
to reflect on what hope means to you  
and to express this through art.  
This tree holds the hopes and dreams  
of children far and wide,  
and you can add yours too.



Scan the QR code  
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Out of the Box.

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OUT OF THE BOX

QPAC's  
**OUT OF THE BOX**  
FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN  
EIGHT YEARS & UNDER



Since *Out of the Box* was launched in 1992, we have welcomed more than a million children and their families, caregivers and teachers to this beloved festival, making precious memories and celebrating the value and importance of the arts in education and life-long learning.

We're incredibly proud of the national leadership role the festival has played in programming for young children, nurturing creativity and imagination. Our focus for *Out of the Box* has always been to celebrate and support arts-rich, aesthetic learning and participation, health and wellbeing, inclusivity and belonging, and to inspire hope for children and their families as they learn and grow together.

The success of *Out of the Box* is because we place children at the centre. We see children as artistic collaborators and experts in imaginative play, discovering the world through song, dance and sharing stories from our First Nations people and other cultures. Our approach is driven by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the right of children to participate fully in cultural and artistic life.

This year we've embraced the theme of hope, not as an aspiration but a necessity, especially so in the lives of our children. To explore this theme, we have created an inclusive and wide-reaching art project called the *Tree of Hope* that has welcomed the participation of more than a thousand children from across metropolitan, regional and remote Queensland. Manifesting as large-scale installations across the cultural precinct filled with the artworks of children, we invite you to visit our *Trees of Hope* which share our children's hopes and dreams for the future.

We gratefully acknowledge the many children, artists, companies and teachers who have collaborated together to create a rich and immersive program of world-premiere performances, hands-on workshops and free activities, including circus, dance, theatre, music and art-making. They have collectively created inspirational and memorable experiences responding to our festival theme and philosophies, and this year's remarkable program could not have been achieved without their generous arts practice and imaginations.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to QPAC to celebrate the return of the *Out of the Box* in 2025, as part of our 40th Anniversary celebrations. In preparation for your attendance, we have put together a series of resources, prompts, activities and learning sequences for every experience that you can attend, including this one, which explores the abstract concept of hope. We hope you find the activities inspiring and they assist you to prepare your students for a wonderful festival experience.

**Katrina Torenbeek**

Director – Engagement, QPAC



# WHAT IS HOPE?



Hope is something that you cannot see, touch, taste or smell...but evidence of it is everywhere - if you look hard enough! Fortunately, artists and authors have gifted us with some beautiful works to help us as we look, drawing upon symbols, images and metaphors to capture the essence of hope. These include: rainbows, butterflies, stars, the horizon, seeds, flowers and even light.

In the case of light, hope might be, a tiny spot of light in the darkness, like a single light suddenly coming on and glowing golden in the darkest window of a very dark house. It might also be a bright light, like a lighthouse for sailors lost at sea.

If we were to dance hopefully, our dance would most likely have a lightness about it, a floating quality like a balloon drifting over a garden. Music that sounds like hope might help us to feel calm, reminding us of wonderful memories, friends or promises. This music might make us want to dance or smile or laugh or even cry from relief.

Hope may be personal – we might hold our hopes close to our hearts, not letting anyone else know what we are hoping for. Or hope may be something we share with our friends, with our family, with our community, with others from across the world. Hope may also be a gift we give to someone else – a kind word, an invitation, a story, an outstretched hand.

What do you think hope is? Can you dance it, sing it, paint it, tell stories about it? We HOPE so and also that the children you bring to the festival are able to use one or more of the languages of the Arts to help them understand it. Maybe, the Festival itself is a kind of hope – a coming together of artists, children, educators and friends to explore ideas and stories that make us all feel lighter and happier and more connected to each other.



# RESOURCES



In preparing this guide, we took inspiration from a couple of children's picture books that are focused specifically on hope, and two others where the characters have begun to lose hope but then find it. We also located a couple of short, animated films designed to prompt children's thinking about this elusive emotion.

Let's look at some of these!

***"Little Mole Finds Hope"* by Glenys Nellist, illustrated by Sally Garland (Fortress Press, 2020)**

Little Mole is sad and "just doesn't feel good inside". His mother decides that what he needs is hope. She takes him on a journey through his local area and shares with him examples of where hope can be found. This beautiful book, suitable for young children, uses the conversation between little mole and his mother to explore what hope is. Across its pages, Little Mole is carefully guided by his mother to see that change is everywhere and that change is a kind of hope. She explains that a tree may look dead in the Winter, but in the Spring it will grow new leaves and flowers; that a tulip bulb may look brown and dead, but with water and light it will soon sprout to become a burst of yellow flowers; and that a chrysalis might not look like a living thing, but will soon become a beautiful butterfly. Mother Mole explains to her son that sometimes hope hides in the darkness and is hard to see, but if you look carefully, you can always find it.

***"Wisp: A Story of Hope"* by Zana Fraillon, illustrated by Grahame Baker Smith (Hachette Children's Group/ Orchard Books, 2019)**

Set in a world where people live without hope, we meet a young boy called Idris. His life is narrow and grim – until one evening, a wisp arrives. Depicted by the illustrator as a small spot of light, the wisp of hope slowly begins to transform people's lives by returning their memories and the brightness to their eyes. This hauntingly beautiful book would be best for children 6-8 years.

A high-quality reading of the book, complete with inspirational music is available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRgqB1VVrhg>

***"The Red Tree"* written and illustrated by Shaun Tan (Lothian Children's Books, 2010)**

Within this beautifully illustrated picture book the main character awakes to feelings of despair, with her room

slowly filling up with a sea of brown, decaying leaves. To escape this gloom, she leaves her home and wanders through a world where she increasingly feels trapped and alone. However, hope is always present, with each page including an image of one red leaf. This red leaf symbolises the fact that no matter how difficult life can be, hope is always possible. At the end of the story, the girl returns to her bedroom to discover a blooming red tree of hope.

***"Mrs McGinty and the Bizarre Plant"* written and illustrated by Gavin Bishop (Oxford University Press, 1981).**

In this picture book, suitable for young children 4-8), we meet a grumpy old lady called Mrs Delilah McGinty. For Mrs McGinty "life is a burden". She seems to have no friends and is teased by the local children who put stones in her letterbox. But a small plant she purchases soon grows to become a giant bizarre plant that becomes a source of joy for the whole community. Mrs McGinty becomes a celebrity in the town. The bizarre plant has renewed her and brought her friendship and hope.

***"Raindance"* by Cathy Applegate and illustrated by Dee Huxley (Margaret Hamilton Books, 2000)**

Hope in the picture book entitled "Raindance" is the life and joy that comes from the arrival of rain after a long period of drought. Set in an outback community where livelihoods and homes are at risk, the book explores the excitement and joy of one young girl, her baby sister and mother when rain finally falls. With stunning illustrations that highlight the physical response of joy, this book provides a human example of hope.

***"Hope"*** – a short animated film about a baby turtle that is confronted by some difficult challenges as it makes its journey from its egg to the sea.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1P3ZgLOy-w8>

***"Never lose hope"*** – This short, animated film is about a dog that wants to be a guide dog for blind people. Like the turtle in the "Hope" animation above, the dog has challenging hurdles to overcome to attain his goal, but he never gives up hope and eventually succeeds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAdu-84Q5Nk>

# LEARNING SEQUENCE FOR EXPLORING HOPE

While we have indicated age groups for the various activities and steps in this sequence, as an educator, parent or carer, you will know best what will engage the children you work with or care for, so please feel free to use the activities in whatever way you choose. These are simply some suggestions to get you started.

## Step 1 - Resource Sharing

*This step is designed for children 3-8, but please select the resource/resources most appropriate for your children, their capabilities and interests.*

Share with the children one of the short, animated films or one of the stories above (or any other resource you might have that relate to the theme of hope). Explain that the book/film you have chosen is about hope – something we can't see or touch or taste or smell, but is something that makes us happy or joyful. Explain that we can see and feel that!

## Step 2 - Discussion

*For older children (6-8), this discussion might take place as a whole group activity, but for younger children (3-5) we recommend conversations in small groups or even with individuals.*

Following the reading/viewing, ask the children some of the following questions, or others that you can think of that will prompt the children's interest and engagement:

- Have you ever heard the word hope before? Have you ever heard someone say: "I hope so!"
- You might have heard someone say, "I hope the rain stops soon" or "I hope you feel better soon", or "I hope you had a lovely birthday"? What else have you heard?
- Have you ever said, "I hope so!"
- If so, what have you hoped for? (Some examples might be: Mummy or Daddy would come home soon or come to collect you soon; that you feel better soon when you have been sick; that your cousins or friends might come to play with you at your house; that your birthday comes soon; etc.)
- Did anyone in the story we just read/viewed seem like they felt hopeful or in need of some hope?
- How were they different before they found hope compared to afterwards?
- What changed for the characters in the story when they felt the joy of hope? (eg the little mole smiled, the girl in Raindance danced; Mrs McGinty's back straightened up and she laughed; the little boy in Wisp saw colours and light and smiles on people's faces; the little dog felt proud; the turtle started a new life).

## Step 3

*(See above)*

Explain to the children that today we have the special chance to meet and talk to one of the characters from the film/story reviewed. Explain that this person/animal may not be the main character, or even one that appears in the story or film. They may instead be someone who saw what was happening. Who would they like to meet to find out more about hope?

Examples:

*Never Lose Hope:* one of the other dogs; one of the trainers.

*Hope:* a human on the beach who watched the young turtle's troubles and eventually saw it reach the sea; an adult turtle whose young ones had already made it to the sea and was watching.

*Mrs McGinty and the Bizarre Plant:* Mrs McGinty herself; one of the children in the community (that did or didn't put stones in her letterbox); one of her nextdoor neighbours; a local shopkeeper.

*The Red Tree:* The young girl herself; one of the people who lives in her building; her teacher (she didn't come to school yesterday, but today she came and told me what happened yesterday).

*Raindance:* the girl; her mother; the girl's father who had gone to sell the farm.

*Little Mole finds Hope:* Little mole; her mother.

*Wisp:* the young boy; one of the people he helps; the local community leader who witnesses the changes.

## Step 4:

Teacher then explains that they are going to become that character by putting on a costume item or by holding a prop of some kind. They will also explain that they will be sitting in a special seat that will transform them into that character...but only if everyone tries very hard to pretend.

## Step 5:

To prepare to meet the character, invite children to think very hard on their own or with a partner and come up with some questions for the character. What would you like to ask them? They might want to know how they felt before and after finding hope; or why hope can be difficult; what they had to do to feel joy and hope again; are they still feeling hopeful?



# LEARNING SEQUENCE FOR EXPLORING HOPE

## Step 6:

Using the hot seat strategy, provide opportunities for the children to ask the character questions. Try to answer as sincerely as you can and remember to stay in role. If you have to redirect a child's behaviour, stand up and remove your costume or prop. Do not do this in role. Try to be a bit different, but don't put on an accent or funny voice. Also, add lots more detail, after all, you were there. It either happened to you or you saw it, so you know a lot more than we heard about in the story.

## Step 7:

After the teacher has stepped out of role, invite the children to talk about what they just heard. Do they need to talk to anyone else to find out more? Repeat as required.

## Step 8:

Now that the children know a lot more about hope, ask them to use their bodies and facial expressions to show two images: what the character looked like/felt like before they found hope and what they looked like after they found it. Talk about these images.

## Step 9:

Talk to the children about some of the Arts activities they might choose to engage in as a response to the steps above. Explain that you want them to explore the idea of hope and have provide a range of resources for them to use. Remember though that quality arts education in the early years requires that children have agency, so try to avoid directing them too much. Instead, make some suggestions and then be ready to guide their responses:

### Dance

Invite the children to listen to a piece of music that is likely to make them feel calm, happy and hopeful. For example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tR5Vy4ijuSQ> (first track).

Provide lengths of material and invite the children to create a dance of hope. Remind them that they could work with a friend or on their own and that they need to be careful not to run into other people. Explain that they might move high and low, fast and slow, together and apart, in circles and in lines, using their material in many different ways. Film some of the children's dances using your smart phone and share them with the children. Invite them to respond to the dances and say if they can see hope!

### Music

Explore sounds using percussion instruments, including glockenspiels and xylophones. Can you make music that sounds hopeful?

Listen to a variety of songs and pieces of music. Ask the children which ones make them feel happy and hopeful?

Invite them to ask their parents for the names of the songs they like that make them feel hopeful and joyous. Make a list where possible.

### Visual Arts

Invite children 3-5 to help create a Hope Box. How would we decorate the box? What hopes could we put inside? Would we draw them or paint them? What would we draw/paint? Could we just use colours that make us feel hopeful?

Using one large piece of calico fabric, invite the children to use felt pens or glitter pens to draw their hopes and create a Cloth of Hope. Explain that when it is finished, we might use it when we dance Hope!

### Dramatic Play (3-6 years)

Suggest that the children might want to use play to explore hope by either creating a shoe shop where you can try on different kinds of emotions – including hope, or a garden centre where they sell plants and seeds that might grow help (but not guaranteed).

For the Shoe Shop of Hope, wonder with the children about:

- what this shop might be like
- how we might create it
- the kinds of shoes on sale
- how the shoes might be arranged (by style or by kind of hope – self, family, school, community, world!)
- who might work there and what they would wear or do
- what kinds of customers might come into the shop and what they might ask for
- what might go wrong in the shop (for example might people end up trying on the wrong kind of feeling, or mismatched feelings from two different shoes??)

For the Garden Centre of Blooming Hope, wonder with the children about:

- how might make this garden centre different to a normal nursery;
- what might be sold (seeds, soil, plants, tools, watering cans etc);
- how the seeds or plants might be arranged (by style or by kind of hope – self, family, school, community, world!)
- who might work there and what they would wear or do
- what kinds of customers might come into the garden centre and what they might ask for
- what might go wrong in the shop (for example what if the seeds don't grow or the plants die? )

# LEARNING SEQUENCE FOR EXPLORING HOPE

Play space focus	Possible Props	Possible Teacher's Roles	Children's roles	Possible "What's up?" (the sources of dramatic tension that drive the play)
<b>The Shoe Shop of Hope</b>  The premise for this space is that customers can come in and try on shoes that will help them to feel hopeful! But they have to be sure to try on a matching pair and to walk in the shoes for a little while so that they can really feel the hope! If they can't feel the hope, they will need to try another pair!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoes of all shapes and sizes (some odd shoes, some very tiny shoes, some very large shoes, some old shoes, some unusual shoes, some decorated shoes, some labelled shoes, some unlabelled shoes)</li> <li>• shoe racks</li> <li>• small chairs for customers to try shoes on</li> <li>• shoes that have been decorated</li> <li>• aprons for the shoe sellers to wear</li> <li>• cash register and money</li> <li>• signage</li> <li>• shoe boxes</li> <li>• shoe posters explaining about categories of shoes/hope: for the world; for good weather;</li> <li>• for your family; for your class; for the school; etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoe shop manager</li> <li>• Customers of different kinds: already hopeful, gloomy, worried, cynical, unsure, low status, high status, in a hurry, slow to decide, problem feet, no money, fussy, demanding, confused, greedy, etc</li> <li>• Shoe designer</li> <li>• Shoe maker</li> <li>• Shop assistant</li> <li>• Director of Hope</li> </ul>	As per the teacher's roles +  Hope helper, Shoe matcher, size co-ordinator, shoe sorter, shelf tidier, sign maker, banker, ad writer, ad developer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some customers can't feel the hope even with the shoes one.</li> <li>• Some customers are not putting on matching shoes and are getting confused about what to feel.</li> <li>• The shoes are mixed up and out of order!</li> <li>• Too many customers – so much hope is needed. What to do?</li> <li>• Not enough customers – how do we let people know about the shoes that bring hope?</li> <li>• People need the shoes but don't have any/enough money to buy them?</li> <li>• The shoes need to be sorted by type of hope...but how will we know? How can we test them?</li> <li>• Can one pair of shoes bring different kinds of hope to different people?</li> <li>• An evil person has stolen all of the shoes that can bring hope to the world!</li> <li>• The store manager needs to go on holidays – who can take on this job?</li> </ul>

# LEARNING SEQUENCE FOR EXPLORING HOPE

Play space focus	Possible Props	Possible Teacher's Roles	Children's roles	Possible "What's up?" (the sources of dramatic tension that drive the play)
<b>The Garden Centre of Blooming Hope</b>  The premise for this space is that customers can come in and buy plants or seeds that will help them feel hopeful! But, they need to be careful because unless the seeds and plants are cared for, and challenges are overcome, the hope might not bloom!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottles of seeds labelled with different kinds of emotions that might/might not bloom into hope (sadness, happiness, fear, gratefulness, joy, curiosity, etc)</li> <li>• Small plants of hope that are already blooming or are almost there</li> <li>• Images of plants and of people being hopeful</li> <li>• Gardening tools</li> <li>• Hoses for pretending to water the plants</li> <li>• Watering cans</li> <li>• Tables and shelves</li> <li>• Empty pots that have been decorated by the children in order for the plants to thrive</li> <li>• aprons for the gardener centre staff to wear</li> <li>• cash register and money</li> <li>• signage</li> <li>• posters explaining about categories of hope: for the world; for good weather; for your family; for your class; for the school; etc school; etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garden Centre manager</li> <li>• Customers of different kinds: already hopeful, gloomy, worried, cynical, unsure, low status, high status, in a hurry, slow to decide, no idea of how to garden, no money, fussy, demanding, confused, greedy, etc</li> <li>• Gardening experts</li> </ul>	As per the teacher's roles + Hope helper, seed or plan specialist, plant sorter, store tidier, sign maker, banker, ad writer, ad developer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some customers can't don't care for their plants and they return them.</li> <li>• Some customers are not sure what kind of hope they want</li> <li>• Some customers don't believe that the plants will bring hope</li> <li>• Too many customers – so much hope is needed. What to do?</li> <li>• Not enough customers – how do we let people know about the seeds and plant that bring hope?</li> <li>• People need the shoes but don't have any/ enough money to buy them?</li> <li>• The shoes need to be sorted by type of hope...but how will we know? How can we test them?</li> <li>• Can one pair of shoes bring different kinds of hope to different people?</li> <li>• An evil person has stolen all of the shoes that can bring hope to the world!</li> <li>• The store manager needs to go on holidays – who can take on this job?</li> </ul>



# LEARNING SEQUENCE FOR EXPLORING HOPE

## Writing: Ages 6-8

1. As a class, create a Hope Chest...decorating it as you like. Once decorated, leave a slot at the top for the children to post messages about their hopes. Explain to the children that their hopes should be anonymous...we want to know what people are hoping for, not who is hoping for what! After a week or so, read the hopes that have been placed in the chest and try to arrange them by: personal hopes, family hopes, school hopes, community hopes etc.
2. Write a letter to one of the characters, describing how you feel about them and about hope.
3. Create a poster that explains to others what hope is and where they can find it.
4. Retell the story of one of the characters as a newspaper article with the title: X (dog, child, old woman, turtle etc.) finds Hope! In the article, use the five W's (who, what, where, when and why) to explain what happened and what hope means to the character now. As part of the story, try to explain what hope is/means to them.