



## Lesson 8: **Thespian at the Oasis**

Scene 13: "Hakuna Matata"

Scene 14: "Scar in Command"

**Project 1: "Time Capsule" (begin)**

**Project 2: "Circle of Life Recycling" (begin)**

### **Objectives:**

1. To help the youth **become acquainted with the psychological aspects of adolescence** that await them, and to think about their life as a mythic journey.
2. To introduce and create some excitement about undertaking the first two projects of this course: **"Time Capsules"** and **"Circle of Life Recycling."**

### **Materials:**

- **chime** or **bell**
- *The Lion King* DVD and DVD player. Before class, **put Disk 1** into the player and cue it up to **Scene 13**, "Hakuna Matata," then pause it.
- ***The Lion King songs on audio CD***. (For playing Hakuna Matata at the end of class.
- Extra copies of **Human Circle of Life Diagram**
- **Grab-bag** with cut-up **readings** inside it (printed at end of this lesson)
- **Photocopies of CHECKLIST for Time Capsule contents** (one for each child, for them to take home)
- **Photocopies of the Grab-Bag Readings** printed (with pictures) at the end of this lesson, for cutting apart and putting in the Grab Bag.
- **The lock box with the journals**, plus extras for any newcomers, and lots of pens, colored markers and colored pencils.

**ACTIVITIES:** DVD watching; open discussion; Grab-Bag Readings; introduction to and preliminary discussion of Time Capsule Project and Circle of Life Recycling Project; journal-writing; stretching; singing



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### **Classroom preparation:**

- Before class, cue up **Disk 1** of the DVD to **Scene 13**: "Hakuna Matata."
- Set out extra copies of the "**Human Circle of Life Diagram**" that has been used in class twice before. (In Lesson 7, the youth were asked to put their copies of this diagram into their journals.)
- Cut up the **pictorial readings** printed at the end of this lesson and put them in the **Grab-bag**.
- Have accessible the photocopies of "**Time Capsule Project**" **Checklist**, for passing out later in class.
- Put the **Lock Box** of **journals** onto a table; have **extra journals** available for newcomers, plus pens and colorful markers.
- Have the **chime** or **bell** accessible.

### **Lesson flow:**

1. Recollections from previous week **(5 mins)**
2. **DVD**: Watch **Scenes 13 and 14** **(10 mins)**
3. **Class discusses** "Task", "Gift", and "Center of Gravity on the Human Circle of Life Diagram" **(5 – 10 mins)**
4. **Grab-Bag Readings** **(10 mins)**
5. **Introduce & Discuss "Time Capsule Project"** **(10 mins)**
6. **Introduce & Discuss "Circle of Life Recycling Project"** **(5 mins)**
7. **Sing-along to Audio CD of "Hakuna Matata" SONG** **(5 mins)**



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GUIDE:

*[Recruit someone who has not been very active in class to pass out **the journals to everyone.**]*

### **Recollections from prior week (5 mins)**

GUIDE:

"Last week, we watched the part of *The Lion King* movie where **Simba's father, Mufasa, dies and Simba runs away from home, going through a life passage out of his Explorer in the Garden stage to his Thespian at the Oasis stage of life.** I led several guided meditations for helping you think about and journal on your **own experience** of making this same life passage. We also began to look at the symbolism within *The Lion King* movie, and how one can look upon one's own life as mythic, as a kind of Hero's Journey.

**Q:** "In light of all that, did any of you have any **further insights** during the week that you would enjoy **sharing** with the rest of us?"

*[This discussion will probably take no more than a few minutes.]*

### **Date and Title a New Journal Page**

*[Invite the Youth to select a fresh page in their journal to date, and title it "Thespian at the Oasis." . . . Also write down the titles of the new scenes we will watch today: "Hakuna Matata" and "Scar in Command"]*

## DVD Viewing: Scenes 13 and 14 (10 mins)

**Scene 13, "Hakuna Matata," starts at 44:48 into the movie. Continue on through the end of Scene 14, "Scar in Command," which ends at 50:35.**

[You know it **ends when Scar commands the 3 Hyenas** to "get out" and they leave the cave, laughing. When you see the scene change to a vista view of the big rock and river at dusk, press the PAUSE to end the DVD viewing.]

## Short Discussion

### Task, Gift, and Center of Gravity (5 – 10 mins)

GUIDE:

Ask the youth to pull out the **"Human Circle of Life" Diagrams** from their journals. (Have extras available).

**SPONTANEOUSLY CONDUCT OPEN DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DIAGRAM**, by asking the youth to compare the differences between the Explorer stage and the Thespian stage in each of these 3 areas: **"Task"**, **"Gift"**, and **"Center of Gravity."**

Note: Where it says, **"Peer group, sex, and society"** the word **"sex"** doesn't mean that the youth are supposed to start having sex. It means they start having a fascination with learning and thinking about the sexual and romantic aspects of life.

This discussion will **probably last only a few minutes**; you just need to have them really see these parts of the diagram and begin thinking about them.

## Grab-Bag Readings (10 mins)

Printed at the end of this lesson are **9 quotations** drawn from the book in which the diagram appeared. Psychologist Bill Plotkin writes about the "Thespian at the Oasis stage" in his book Nature and the Human Soul.

Invite the youth to **take turns drawing cards** from **the Grab-Bag** and **reading the quotation**. Each card may or may not generate some short discussion.

**NOTE:** If you want to make the readings **more ritualistic**, then **delay any discussion** until all the readings are done, and recruit a volunteer to ring the

**chime** to signify the transition from one reading to the next.

Be sure to leave at least **15 minutes** for the rest of the lesson, which includes introducing the Time Capsule and Circle of Life Recycling projects, and the closing song.

## Introduce & Discuss “Time Capsule Project” (10 mins)

**Note to Guide:** During the remaining weeks, the youth will gradually **gather at home** and prepare **their own personal time capsules** into which they will put (real or symbolic) treasures of their childhood, memorabilia, and notes they now write to themselves that will help them remember (in the years after adolescence, when they reopen the time capsule) key events of their earliest years, and what they most valued about themselves as “Explorers in the Garden.”

### **Begin by passing out the TIME CAPSULE CHECKLIST**

“**Just like Simba**, each of you is likely to try on a variety of new ways of being during adolescence, all in quest of”

- (a) **discovering your authentic self**, and
- (b) **finding fulfilling and honorable ways to fit in socially with your peers.**

“THESPIAN AT THE OASIS can be a disruptive time, and much of what you valued in childhood you may end up ignoring as a teenager. So, to ensure that your adult self has a chance enjoy and savor your most important childhood memories and interests, a TIME CAPSULE is a great thing to construct at your age.

“Basically, a time capsule is some kind of **container that you put objects and writings into and seal up**, for opening at a much later time.

“**Sealing up the time capsule** will be a rite of passage in our final session together. At that time, each of you will also decide for yourself whether you want to be in charge of keeping your Time Capsule yourself or whether you want to entrust it to an adult to keep it safe and secure for you.

“This is a project you will **mostly do at home** over the next several weeks. It might take you as little as 10 minutes to assemble what you

want to put in the capsule, or you might get elaborate about it: writing lists, writing notes to yourself, collecting things.

“It’s important, of course, to have a sense of HOW BIG you want your time capsule to be: the smaller the better. For example, you’re not going to put your first bicycle into your time capsule.

**Q:** So in this first class let’s just **discuss the range of containers** that you might want to consider for your Time Capsule — and whether the container would be something you would want help in acquiring. Any ideas?

### Introduce & Discuss “Circle of Life Recycling Project” (5 mins)

“Before we move into our closing song, I want to encourage you all to also participate in a **second project**, to be undertaken at home concurrently with your TIME CAPSULE project. This second project we might call **CIRCLE OF LIFE RECYCLING**.

“As you sort through your stuff at home looking for what you might want to place in your time capsule, it would be a great idea to also be **on the lookout for things you acquired and used in childhood that you haven’t used in quite awhile**.

“If those playthings are still in reasonably good shape, they probably deserve to be kept in use — that is, to **keep them circulating in the Circle of Life**. After all, important artifacts deserve to be kept in use! That might mean passing what you can on to younger siblings or friends, or simply bringing them into this church so that we, as a group, can donate those playthings to families less fortunate than ours.

“So start creating a pile of things at home that will ultimately become Circle of Life Recycling.

“For the **broken and the frayed** objects that are too big to go into the time capsule or that don’t seem emotionally important enough to put there, you will probably need to bid them goodbye. Ultimately, those playthings will have to go into the trash or your regular home recycling — whichever is appropriate. But if the object was once a big part of your life, you might first want to write a little note to yourself about a best-memory with the object, and then include that note in your personal Time Capsule.

"In the weeks to come, we can talk more about these two projects. And I'll encourage you to share your best ideas with the group, so that others can benefit from your insights."

**Closing Song** (listen or sing-along) **(5 mins)**

**Play Audio CD of *The Lion King*: song "Hakuna Matata"**

## Project 1

# Explorer in the Garden Time Capsule

### GOALS:

1. To help you pass through adolescence without totally forgetting what was most important to you in childhood (so that you can retrieve those memories later, when you are an adult).
2. To help you keep from losing your most precious symbols and small physical objects from childhood.

### POSSIBLE ITEMS TO INCLUDE:

*Note: Include only those items that you will not want to use during adolescence. Make a separate pile of cherished childhood objects that you want to keep with you as a teenager, because there will be a different and more accessible way for you to store them.*

- favorite photographs • an old hat • your artwork • favorite stuffed animal
- any poems or writings • your most favorite childhood book
- a thank-you letter to your "Explorer in the Garden" self
- a greeting letter to your future self ("Wanderer in the Cocoon" or later)
- the journal you are creating in this class • other memorabilia
- ANNOTATED LISTS of your favorite childhood songs, books, movies, video games, foods, holidays, friends, teachers, activities, etc.
- ANNOTATED LISTS of your most important experiences, vacations, adventures, trips into nature, most sacred experience, pets, hobbies, sports, skills that you learned, people you consider role models, etc.

**Grab Bag Readings:** Photocopy, cut apart, put in grab-bag.

## GRAB-BAG Readings

The **teenager** ventures from the family home, garden, and neighborhood and soon enough finds himself at a **community gathering place: an oasis**. . . .



Here he or she encounters people of all ages, personalities, agendas, styles, and races.

There is **allurement and danger** at the oasis. Although it is a relatively safe and contained space, the Oasis of early adolescence always has a **storm on the horizon** and, not infrequently, one sweeping through. It is **not a particularly peaceful time**, even in the healthiest situations. Unbidden disturbances are common — emotional **tempests**, hormonal **hurricanes**, relationship **squalls**, and courtship **typhoons** that sometimes feel like volcanic eruptions from hell. (p. 172-73)



The **teenage Thespian** comes to experience **nature** not only as a home but also as a reflection of the self. The **forest** becomes the inscrutable maze of one's own unfolding life. The **mountaintop** feels as distant as one's own aspirations, the **ocean** as deep as one's emotions, the **desert** as vast as the heart.

The **masculine** element within all Thespians comes to see nature as a context of **danger** and **adventure**, in which the self can be thoroughly tested.

The **feminine** element in all Thespians experiences wildness as the standard of a fully fleshed-out self. Nature is an **inspiration** for personal growth. (p. 196)



After puberty, maintaining and nurturing **emotional health** is especially important — and challenging. Both teenage and older Thespians begin with the **emotional foundations** formed in the Garden, upon which they must build a more sophisticated set of **emotional skills**.

The **outer emotional resources** for the Thespian include healthy friends, mentors, and a dependable social network. The **inner emotional resources** are one's authenticity and also skills in conflict resolution, self-sustenance, and maintaining emotional safety.  
(p. 188, 200)



Learning about the **natural world** continues in the Oasis, but here the emphasis is on human-nature reciprocity, especially the responsibility of all mature members of society for the wellbeing of the greater **Earth community**. In the Oasis, our attention turns to **nature's larger story**, the web of relationships that connects all life: the ecology of Earth.

(p. 194)



"Generating a **social presence** that is both **secure** and **authentic** is **difficult** for most people, even under the best circumstances. One factor that makes the task of the Oasis so difficult in contemporary society is the **complexity of the social world**. There are not only social roles and romantic relationships but also the intertwined dimensions of **style** and **fashion**, **sports** and **music**, **clubs** and **cliques**, **drugs** and **alcohol**, and political perspectives and social movements."

(p.

181-82)



*"The archetype of the **Thespian** does not imply **inauthenticity**. In fact, the cultivation of authenticity is one of the Thespian's top priorities. He's in the process of **discovering which social roles** are most fitting for his particular **personality** and worldly circumstances."*

(p.178)



THE OASIS TASK is to **compose one particular way of being human** — her own way — that works well enough in her society. It is her first extended spin around the sociocultural block. This created social self is not meant to be a final product to last the rest of her days. Rather, starting in the **COCOON** stage, she'll begin the project of building a more **deeply authentic self**."

(p.175)



In order to **compose a social self** beyond the boundaries of his extended family, the healthy Thespian at the Oasis **experiments with new values** and the ways of life those values suggest. He **searches for a life** he can call his own. He also **asks new, bigger questions**: What is worth striving for? Who are my people? What principles will I fight to uphold? To whom and what will I be faithful? What is necessary for a decent life? What is the meaning of human existence? What, to me, is God, death, infinity?

(p. 182)



The **goal or task** of the Oasis stage of life is to **fashion a self that is both authentic and socially acceptable**, to find a genuine way of belonging and a group to be faithful to. The psychologically successful adolescent knows where she stands socially, knows which sorts of people she gets along with in what sorts of ways. She knows and appreciates her own developing personal **style, interests, attitudes, and sensitivities**. She knows and appreciates her most salient **weaknesses and liabilities**, as well as her most prominent **talents and gifts**. She is able to experience her own emotions and knows how to express them to others in a way that serves both self and other. She enjoys a good foundation of self-esteem, while understanding that the **self is always a work-in-progress**. (p. 174)