

Factory Children Sketch

COMMUNITY

me and my world



No maximum number
depending on adequate
supervision



5-10 minutes

Aim: To give the boys a medium by which they can express the things they have learnt about Child labour exploitation to older generations in a format which they will find funny and thus memorable

Equipment:

- Script
- Possible costume

Sketch:

There is a boy here.....

A sketch in the style of a “Two Ronnies” script...

Three Characters:

The International Business Man says:
The local Business Man
The Child Labourer

International Business Man

I import and sell hand made carpets from India. I've driven a hard bargain to make sure they are competitively priced and I make a good profit from them. Oh yeah – and by buying these carpets I must be helping India's economy and keeping lots of those poor people in work.

All: There is a boy here.

Local Business Man

I am a carpet factory owner in Northern India. My business is an important part of India's economy. Using children in the business means I can sell my carpets at more competitive prices and I don't have to worry much about factory conditions that adult workers would demand. I look up to the international businessman.

All: There is a boy here.

Child Labourer

I am a child labourer. I am told that I must live and work in the carpet factory to repay my parent's debts. It's very hard work and we are imprisoned here. We are not allowed to talk to each other, to play or to even see our parents who are many miles away. Often I get injured but must continue to work or I get beaten. I wish that I could go to school.

All: There is a boy here.

International Business Man

I look down on factory owners because they use young children to make their carpets. OK, I know that the children are often abused and mistreated. But hey, I need to make money and it's a problem for them and their government, not for me.

All: There is a boy here.

Local Business Man

I look down on my child labourers because I always have to watch that they are working hard and I have to feed them and provide a corner for them to sleep. It also takes time to convince their parents that they must pay off their debts to me. Time is money. Anyway, who cares if they get paid – the work has to be done and the children can do it cheaply? All this talk about conditions, education and play will ruin our economy. I have carpets to produce and deadlines to meet.

All: There is a boy here.

Child Labourer

I look up to the carpet factory owner because he said my parents are getting my wages and this helps them to survive. I really don't believe him. I know they love me too much to let me live like this but how can they know where I am? Some men took me from my village when I was playing – no one even saw me go. I have not seen my parents for three years now.

All: There is a boy here.

International Business Man

I look down on child labourers because they shouldn't do this work if they don't want to. Anyway, I'm sure that working in a factory is better than being on the streets, so I must be helping them out, and people in the UK demand lower prices for quality goods, so I'm giving a service to everyone.

All: There is a boy here.

Local Business Man

I look up to the international businessman because he keeps my company going. Both of us are helping India's economy and, let's face it, few people care about the children. What they don't know can't hurt them.

All: There is a boy here.

Child Labourer

I wish I could look up to the international businessmen because if they wanted to they could do something about child labourers and how we are treated. We are always told that international business helps my country. I wish it could start to help me. Perhaps people in other parts of the world will think about it and then DO something about it.

All: All of us are part of child labour. We can tell our children that we played our part.

There is a boy here.

After the sketch has finished ask another boy to stand up and explain that this is sometimes a misconception and there are groups who aim to abolish slavery and child exploitation in the carpet trade. One such organisation that the BB has looked to cooperate with is 'Rugmark' a body who place marks on carpets sold in the UK that have been made by a process that they have deemed as not exploiting children for labour purposes.