

## **About Urbanity Dance**

Urbanity Dance exists to inspire, engage, and empower individuals and communities through the art of dance and movement.

Urbanity Dance is committed to empowering individuals and strengthening diverse communities by increasing access to high quality dance experiences. Our **community** programming aims to engage people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, both in their own communities and in our own studio space, by providing a gateway experience to the joy of movement. Our wide range of partnerships with schools and health centers, local arts institutions and enrichment camps, and juvenile detention centers help us to share high quality dance experiences with the wider community.

Urbanity Dance's **professional company** aspires to push the limits of contemporary dance technique and to inspire audiences with its edgy artistry and startling unpredictability of movement. The Company is dedicated to providing provocative, visually arresting and musically stimulating performances for diverse audiences of all ages. Multisensory works spring from collaborations with composers, visual artists, architects, fashion and lighting designers. Our dancers are lifelong learners chosen for their sharp adaptability, with dancing prowess and creative vision.

The **School** at Urbanity Dance exists to offer quality contemporary dance training to students of all ages. Our nurturing classroom environment is designed to encourage a generation of lifelong movers and dance enthusiasts. Company dancers and faculty come from diverse backgrounds and are trained to support each students' individual learning journey. Urbanity is committed to providing access to dance training and the opportunity to explore the expressive possibilities of movement.

## **About The Performance**

Urbanity Dance: Dancing in Each Other's Shoes

Grade Levels: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Contemporary dance is a case example of the unique potentialities inherent in collaboration. Urbanity Dance, Boston's premier contemporary dance company, uses cutting edge contemporary dance to compel its audience to vastly expand its worldview while embracing and celebrating the beauty of individual differences. Drawing from the techniques and traditions of various dance styles including classical ballet, modern, hip hop, and West African, Urbanity dance artists use contemporary dance to communicate a story of empathy, a story of partnership, and a story of emotion. In "Dancing in Each Other's Shoes," Urbanity dance artists and the students embark together on a unique dance exploration of compassion, kindness, and respect. This fresh and highly interactive performance celebrates diversity and encourages community. Through the art of movement, Urbanity Dance's exceptionally engaging dance artists encourage students to foster a fuller understanding of themselves and their relationships. Students will ultimately be inspired and empowered to utilize lessons of self-expression and acceptance in all aspects of their lives.

### **Performance Learning Goals**

1. To expose students to high quality contemporary dance and the cultures they stem from.
2. To challenge preconceived notions of dance through the diverse lens of contemporary based movement.
3. To explore diversity and community within the context of dance, connecting these concepts to students' own life experiences, those of their peers, and the world around them.

### **Pre-Activity Summary**

#### **Dancing in Each Other's Shoes!**

Students will **learn** about a dance style that is representative of an aspect of their cultural heritage. Students will then **create** a pair of dancing shoes inspired by what they learned using one of two templates provided. Finally, students will **present** what they learned and created for an "audience" of their peers.

### **Post-Activity Summary**

#### **A Moving Story**

Each student will be asked to recall a **moment** from childhood which can be easily expressed in a word phrase that is 10 words or fewer. Students will then be asked to "translate" their word phrase into a **movement phrase**. Working in pairs, each student will teach their partner the movement phrase they created on their own. Finally, partners will work together to create a single movement phrase that incorporates the moving moments created by each member of the pair.

Each pair will perform the phrase they created together for their classmates.

### **Curriculum Links:**

**Social Studies: Geography, World Cultures; Physical Education; Art; Public Speaking**

## **Pre-Activity: Dancing in Each Other's Shoes**

### **Learning Goals:**

1. To begin exploring themes of diversity and community safely within the context of dance and movement.
2. To connect these important themes to students' own life experiences as well as those of their peers and the world around them.

**Materials/Preparations:** shoe and foot print templates (provided), basic art supplies, old magazines, newspapers, etc.

**Time:** 1 hour + homework assignment

**Tips For Teachers:** Projects can be scaled up or down based on availability of information, time, and supplies. For example, students may find it a valuable experience to interview family members to learn more about a specific element of their unique cultural heritage, but this is not necessary. A school or community library would be an excellent resource for students in conducting their research, but the internet might be an easier and faster option.

**Step 1:** Ask students to **learn** about a style of dance that is representative of an aspect of their culture. Students can use primary sources and secondary sources to conduct their research. (at home, 30 minutes to an hour)

**Step 2:** Using whatever art supplies are available, have students **create** their own unique pair of dancing shoes inspired by the dance style/dancers they've researched by embellishing one of the templates provided. (30 minutes)

**Step 3:** Have students **present** their dancing shoes to their classmates, accompanied by a short description of the style they chose to research and why. (30 minutes)

## **Post-Activity: Telling a Moving Story**

### **Learning Goals:**

1. Step into another's dancing shoes and learn the importance of both verbal and nonverbal communication and honesty in friendship and partnership.
2. Looking through the unique lens of contemporary dance which places special value in the beauty of diversity in collaboration, notice as differences and similarities are mirrored and celebrated through movement.

**Materials/Preparations:** An open space.

**Time:** 1 hour

### **Tips for Teachers:**

- Students must understand that the movements they create are completely up to them! These authentic movements may be literal, interpretive, abstract, or anything in between, as long as they do not place the mover or their peers in danger (whether emotional or physical).
- For a portion of this activity, students will need to work in pairs.
- Student pairs may feel more comfortable performing their phrases in a casual circle of their peers, with pairs presenting one after the other. This will also significantly decrease down time between pairs.

**Step 1:** Ask students to think of a memorable moment from childhood which they can describe in a word phrase which is 10 words or fewer. (5 minutes)

**Step 2:** Have students create a short movement phrase that corresponds with their short word phrase. To start, encourage students to assign a specific gesture or movement to each word of their original phrase. For example, if the moment is described in words as "Eating ice cream with my mom on the steps." "Eating" might be represented with an exaggerated chewing motion, "ice" might be represented with a dramatized shiver, linking words like "with" might be represented with linking steps (like a skip, hop, or spin) etc. (10 minutes)

**Step 3:** Have each student share their moment with a partner using both their word and movement phrases. (5 minutes)

**Step 4:** Have each student teach their partner the movement phrase they created individually. (10 minutes)

**Step 5:** Task pairs with working together to create a single new movement phrase that integrates the movement phrases created by both partners. (15 minutes)

**Step 6:** In pairs, students will perform the final integrated movement phrase for an audience of their peers. (15 minutes, see tips)



