

Joe Who?

At the start of the play the actors are positioned through out the audience. When they enter the play they do so from their seats in the house.

The play opens with a five minute video. The first part of the video is the “man on the street” segment. Students in our school were asked a variety of questions regarding their safety training. Their responses form the opening part of the video. It is this part of the video that should be customized to fit each community. The second part of the video is generic and should be used for all the presentations. The second part is titled “Youth of the Nation”.

As “Youth of the Nation” fades, one member of the company rises in the audience. She will be eventually followed by the entire company. The song that has just finished playing on the video is “Youth of the Nation.” She begins to sing the song acapella from the audience.

Maggie: **We are, we are** (as she rises)

Matt: **The youth of the nation** (as he rises)

Company: (rises and joins in)
We are, we are, the youth of the nation

(increasing in volume)
We are, we are, the youth of the nation

(full volume)
We are, we are

(company stops singing and whispers loudly)
Youth of the Nation, youth of the nation, youth of the nation.

(as the company keeps repeating the youth of the nation line they slowly begin to move and take their positions on stage.)

Opening - (The opening sequence is performed as 6 year old children playing)

Maggie: (playing as a firefighter)
Hold on kitty cat, I'll save you!!

Manveer: (playing as a pilot)
Oh no turbulence!!!

Maggie: **Oh no, your engine's on fire!**

Manveer: **Hurry, hold on!** (Maggie moves behind Manveer and holds on to his shoulders).

FREEZE

Focus on the UL riser. On the upstage side of the riser there is a 2' cube which Sarah is standing on.

Sarah: (standing on the cube and spinning around like a ballerina. Stephen is standing beside her blowing a trumpet to announce the King!)

La la la la la

Stephen: (blowing his strumpet) **dad a dad a**

Sarah: **oh no!!** (as she accidentally steps on Stephen's pretend castle)

Stephen: **Hey, you stepped on my castle!!**

Sarah: **It's ok, I can help build it again and we can have a tall tower, and I can be the beautiful dancing princess ballerina.**

Stephen: **Well, my tower has to be the bigger because I'm the King.**

Sarah: **You're the King! That means we have to get married!!**

Both **ooh!!!!**

FREEZE

Focus on the UR riser with Jessica and Jason. Jessica is pretending to be an artist, and Jason is pretending to be a policeman.

Jason: (shooting people!!) **bang bang, I got you!!**

Jessica: (painting an imaginary canvas) **hold still I'm trying to paint you.**

Jason: **I'm busy, bang bang. I'm capturing the bad guys!!**

Jessica: **Stay still, I HAVE to paint you and it has to be PRETTY, PRETTY, PRETTY!!**

FREEZE

Focus DL on Joann, Matt and Chandra. Joann is pretending to be a Mommy and is rocking her baby, Chandra is a Ninja and Matt is a sheriff.

Joann: **rock – a – baby, shh – be quiet!! My baby is sleeping.**

Chandra: (big Karate chops and kicks) **high yah, high yah!!**

Matt: **bam, bam, take that!!** (while shooting the Ninja).

Chandra: (continue with arms and legs kicking and flailing) **high ya!!**

Matt: Don't worry mamm, I'll protect your baby.

FREEZE

All: **When I grow up I want to be:**

Manveer: **A pilot**

Maggie: **A firefighter**

Sarah: **A dancer**

Stephen: **A king**

Jessica: **An artist**

Jason: **A policeman**

Joann: **A mommy**

Chandra: **A Ninja**

Matt: **A sheriff**

Group begins to move into a new scene. In the following scenarios they are playing children who are 13 years old.

Manveer and Chandra move DR. Manveer is admiring himself in a hand mirror – he thinks he’s a movie star. Chandra is busy examining Manveer’s face. She’s going to be a plastic surgeon.

Manveer: **Look’n good, yes siree!**

Chandra: **Why are you always looking at yourself in the mirror?**

Manveer: **Because famous people have got to be beautiful.**

Chandra: **Well you’d look better with a little nip here and a tuck there.**

Manveer: **You don’t know anything.**

Chandra: **Actually I do, you see I’m going to be a plastic surgeon, so I do know.**

FREEZE

Focus on the riser UL. Stephen and Jessica are sitting on the cube. Stephen is busy reading something and Jessica grabs it from him. She reads it and starts to laugh.

Jessica: **A hockey player!! You want to be a hockey player for the rest of your life?**

Stephen: **What's wrong with being a hockey player for the rest of my life?**

Jessica: **Well how much do they make?**

Stephen: **Uhhh, well try 10 million dollars a year! So what do you want to be?**

Jessica: **A paediatrician.**

Stephen: **A paediatrician? You want to work on feet for the rest of your life?**

Jessica: **A paediatrician is a children's doctor, you idiot!! That's what you get for being a hockey player.**

Stephen: **Whatever**

FREEZE

Focus on the riser UR. Jason is writing something and Sarah is hovering over his shoulder.

Sarah: **Um, what are you doing?**

Jason: **I'm writing.**

Sarah: **But English is over.**

Jason: **Yah so!!**

Sarah: (leaning in to point out a mistake) **Well then, I before E except**

Jason: (cutting her off) **Yah, yah, I know, except after C!! Don't read my stuff. So what do you want to do when you grow up.**

Sarah **A doctor.**

Jason: **You can't be a doctor.**

Sarah: **Why not?**

Jason: **Because doctors are smart and you're not smart.**

Sarah: **Well, (pause) I'll be a nurse then!!**

FREEZE

Focus DL on Matt and Joann. Matt is a young athlete and Joann is his overly impressed girlfriend.

Matt: **Hey Joann, did you see the game yesterday?**
(Macho like)

Joann: **I like for sure did.**

Matt: **Yah, I scored 20, 30, 40**

Joann: **Almost 50 points! So did you notice anything different?** (as she plays with her hair).

Matt: **Oh, I love your hair. It's so cool.**

Joann: **I got it from a picture of Jennifer Anniston in my new issue of Seventeen magazine.**

Matt: **Wow it's so cool. So are you coming to the game after school?**

Joann: **I wouldn't miss it for the whole world.**

Matt: **Yah, ok – see you after school.**

FREEZE

All: **When I grow up I want to be:**

Manveer: **Famous**

Chandra: **A cosmetic surgeon**

Stephen: **A hockey player**

Jessica: **A paediatrician**

Jason: **A writer**

Sarah: **A doctor**

Joann: **Popular**

Matt: **A football player**

FREEZE

The group begins to move into the third and final scenario in this section of the play. They are now 18 years old and graduating from high school.

Focus UR on Sarah as she speaks she moves off the riser and DR where she is joined by Maggie and Manveer. Sarah is reading a letter as she walks.

Sarah: **Dear Ms. Jimenex congratulations on your acceptance to.. (she picks up the phone – very excited)
Hellow Maggie – Maggie guess what? I just got accepted at UBC!!!**

Maggie: **Congratulations Sarah, that's awesome. Hold on I've got another call. Hello.**

Manveer: **Hey Maggie, it's Manveer, guess what I got into that agency in L.A. (very excited).**

Maggie: **Congratulations Manveer, hold on I've got Sarah on the other line. I'll three way! Hello**

Sarah: **Hello**

Manveer: **Hello**

Sarah: **Manveer, guess what I just got in to UBC!!**

Manveer: **Congratulations!!**

Maggie: **Wait, wait – Sarah (pause) how are you going to pay for it?**

Sarah: **Oh..... I guess I've got to go get a job.**

FREEZE

Focus on the riser UL.

Joann is using the cube as a computer and is having a discussion with Stephen.

Stephen: **Yo, loser.**

Joann: **Yes (Joann is a bit of a computer geek).**

Stephen: **What are you doing?**

Joann: **I am applying for a job on line.**

Stephen: **Why do you need a job?**

Joann: **Because I have to go to university.**

Stephen: **Why do you have to go to university?**

Joann: **Because it is my destiny!!**

Stephen: **Your destiny?**

Joann: **Well what are you going to do now that you've finished high school?**

Stephen: **I'm gonna be a rock star!!**

Joann: **Well don't you need equipment?**

Stephen: **Yah.**

Joann: **Well you had better come and apply on line with me!!**

FREEZE

Focus UR on riser with Chandra and Jason.

Jason: **Hey buddy, whatcha doing?**

Chandra: **Reading a book**

Jason: **On?**

Chandra: **Europe.**

Jason: **Why?**

Chandra: **Because I plan to visit there now that I've graduated.**

Jason: **You're going to Europe. How're you going to pay for it?**

Chandra: **Duhh!! I'll get a job. What are you planning on doing?**

Jason: **You know spend my summer hanging out, work on the truck, party – you know fun stuff.**

Chandra: **Where exactly are you going to get the money to party?**

Jason: **I don't know, I'll get a job I guess. Somewhere easy like at the mall.**

FREEZE

Focus DL on Jessica and Matt. They are sitting on the floor and gazing u at the stars.

Jessica: **Look at that one.**

Matt: **Oh look, there's a shooting star! Make a wish. (they both pause and wish).**

Jessica: **Ok what did you wish for?**

Matt: **I really want to get a new car.**

Jessica: **Well that's expensive.**

Matt: **What did you wish for?**

Jessica: **To move out! My parents are driving me crazy, but I don't know, I'm gonna have to get another job to pay for it. I'm already juggling two part time jobs now just to pay rent at home.**

Matt: **Yah well I guess I can forget the new car. I have to work full-time this summer just to pay my fees for school next year.**

FREEZE

All: **When I grow up I want to be.....**

The company moves into a unique version of a poem called “The Butto Factory”, we’ve added some simple gestures to help punctuate the poem.

All: **Hi, my name’s Joe, I work in a:**

(each one separately adds)

Factory

Restaurant

Clothing store

Library

Shoe store

Aquarium

Book store

Warehouse

Paint store

One day my boss came up to me and said, “Joe are ya busy.”

FREEZE

A video with various recognizable workplace logos plays for about 20 seconds. This gives the actors time to move into the next 3 scenarios which are all in the workplace.

Focus DR. In each of the next three scenarios the new employee is named Joe. In this first scene, Joe is a girl who works in a trendy clothing store. She is receiving instructions from the manager.

As the scene begins Chandra and Manveer are folding and stacking jeans.

Chandra:Manveer: **right, left, fold, finish, shelf**
right, left, fold, finish, shelf
right, left, fold, finish, shelf
(they continue to work quietly in the background)

Manager: **Hi Joe, how’s it going?** (Joe has been organizing a display).

Joe #1: **Good, I just organized the perfume rack like you told me.**

Manager: **Perfect, so how's your first day on the job?**

Joe #1: **I love it!**

Manager: **Great, well I need you to do one last thing before you go. There's a box of hangers at the front of the store. I need you to take them to the back and put them on the top of the shelf. You'll find a ladder in the back. Can you do that?**

Joe #1: **Sure, no problem.**

Manager: **Thanks** (she returns to her paperwork).

Joe #1: (begins to drag the box)

Chandra: **Hey don't forget to smile!**

Joe #1: **Smiling!**

Manveer: **Hey, those jeans aren't from our store.**

Joe #1: **Sorry, I'll change them tomorrow.**

Chandra: **Your name tags on upside down.**

Joe #1: **Sorry, I'll fix it.**
(Joe arrives at the ladder with the box. She looks apprehensively at the ladder.)

Umm, that ladder looks kinda high, (looking over at the manager). **Umm excuse me?**

Manager: (abruptly) **What?**

Joe #1: **Nothing, never mind.**

FREEZE

Focus on centre stage. We are now in a restaurant. The new employee Joe is receiving instructions from the manager, while Matt another employee looks on.

Manager: (greeting Joe). **Hi my name's Arlene, welcome to Burger Girl Heaven.** (as she puts apron on Joe). **Ok and your name tag11 (Arlene has a lot of energy1) Ok, I'm going to take you on a little tour. Ok here's your grill, your new home away from home. Okay now make sure you clean it with this every hour and a half, Ok Ok, so here's your bun, make sure you hold it at a 90 degree angle, like this (demos), squirt a little ketchup, then a happy face with the mustard, Ok, then put the patty on....**

(she continues explaining how to make a hamburger, but we do not hear her. Instead Matt the other employee who has been sweeping nearby begins to speak.)

Matt: **Oh my God, why does she even bother explaining how to do things. Nobody ever does it like that around here. They just figure it out for themselves.** (he continues to work)

Manager: **Ok1 so now we are going over to the condiment cupboard. Oh, look at the time, I'm sorry but I have a meeting and I've really got to be going.**

Joe #2: **but I don't know what to do!**

Manager: **I'm sorry, you'll have to figure it out for yourself. Just ask what's his name over there if you have any questions.** (exits)

Joe #2: (shrugs and attempts to make a hamburger like instructed) **Hey, umm, - am I doing this right?**

Matt: **Don't worry about it, just watch everyone else, you'll figure it out.**

Joe #2: **But, um, I...** (she goes to ask him again, but decides not to bother him)...**never mind.**

FREEZE

Focus DL, this scene takes place in a grocery store. The new employee Joe is receiving instructions from the manager on how to stock the shelves. Joe, however, is distracted.

Manager: **So basically that was the whole supermarket for ya. You've got your fresh produce on the left and your meat on the right.**

Ok super!! Now your job will be to stock the shelves with our new cereal.

(the manager gives a demo on lifting using his knees and keeping his back straight. He gets interrupted part way through the demo).

So, what you want to do here is basically bend your knees, keep your back straight.... Oh, hey there's Marie, she's our best employee.....

Joe is completely taken with Marie and is distracted and no longer listening to the manager.

Manager: **So like I said, you bend your knees, keep your back straight, pick-up the cereal and put it on the shelf – simple.**

Now I just want you to take all this cereal and put it on the shelf. Any questions, and I'll be in my office.

Joe #3: (Joe snaps out of gazing at Marie and has now missed all the instructions)

Hey! (as manager exits, Joe is embarrassed at his lack of attention) **Never mind.**

This next sequence is performed with the 3 Joe employees down stage and the rest of the company upstage performing like a greek chorus.

Joe #1: **Don't say no, can't say no, or you'll get fired.**

Chorus: **FIRED!!**

Joe #3: **I don't want to look incompetent, I don't want to look like a suck.**

Chorus: **Suck...**

Joe #2: **I don't want to make any mistakes. There's so much pressure to perform.**

Chorus: **Pressure.**

Joe #3: **I'm the new guy, the bottom feeder. I get all the risky jobs.**

Chorus: **New Guy!**

Joe #1 **They'll get mad at me.**

Chorus: **Hmmm!**

Joe #2: **I don't want to complain**

Chorus: **Whaa, Whaa, Whaa**

Joe #1: **I'm afraid to ask.**

Chorus: **Like chickens) boc, boc, boc.**

Joe #2: Just do what ever you're told.

Chorus: **Just do it!!**

Joe #3: **I can't lose this job. I can't take that risk**

Chorus: (one at a time as if burned)

**Risk
Risk
Risk
Risk
Risk
Risk**

FREEZE

Music fades in on "Donna Summer" – She works hard for the money.....

Cast moves into a new scenario. A chorus of 4 sets up DR – remainder of company set up C and DL. Joann stands on the cube on the UL riser. This second group goes through a stylized day in the life of Joe employee. The scene gets repeated 3 times. Each time faster and faster until something irrevocable occurs.

Joann: **Wake-up**

Chorus: **(alarm beeps)**

Joann: **Go to work**

Chorus: **(car sounds)**

Joann: **Put on uniform**

Chorus **(zip)**

Joann: **Punch in**

Company: **8:02, damn!!**

Joann: **Wash hands**

Chorus: **(sounds of water)**

Joann: **Take order**

Sarah: **Hi can I take your order**

Joann: **Safety check**

(they each mime pulling out a clipboard)

Sarah: **Check**

Jessica: **Check**

Joe: **Check**

Stephen: **Re-check**

Joann: **Good, cook fries**

Chorus: **(sounds of fries cooking)**

Joann: **Punch out.**

Chorus: **(sounds of punching out)**

Joann: **Clean-up**

Chorus: **(sweeping sounds)**

Joann: **Go home**

(The cast all return to their starting positions)

Repeat the entire scene exactly the same, but much faster!!

Repeat a third time, and again much faster. When the scene reaches the safety check the scene changes.

Joann: **Safety Check**

Sarah: **Check**

Jessica: **Check**

Joe: (pause)

Stephen: **Well??**

Joe: **Hey if I'm expected to get from point A to point B in a snap, then I just don't have time to bother with that.**

Stephen: (long pause) **Fine!**

The scene continues as before only Joe is no longer apart of the scene. He fights to get them to acknowledge him, but no one is listening. He tries to get back into the scene, but it seems that Joe has made a fatal error and he now ceases to exist.

Joann: **(Cook fries)**

Chorus: **(sounds of fries cooking.)**

Joann: **Punch out**

Chorus: **(punching out sounds.)**

Joe: **Hey guys, where's my card?**

Joann: **Take a break**

Chorus: **ahh**

Joe: **Ok guys very funny, but seriously, where's my stuff?**

Joann: **Clean-up**

Chorus: **(sweeping noises.)**

Joann: **Go home**

As they begin the scene for the fourth time, Joe is getting frantic and is desperately trying to get someone to listen to him. He realizes he made a mistake. The scene continues at a frantic pace, except without Joe. When the scene gets to the safety check part, Joe has had it.

Joe: **STOP!!!** (he pleads with Joann) **please just give me another chance. I promise I'll do the safety check next time. Please please just give me one more chance.**

Company: **IT'S TOO LATE!**

Each member of the chorus and the cast has one of the following lines. They deliver the lines in a cold monotone voice as they slowly circle Joe who is now standing centre stage.

Company: **We regret to inform you.**

Is he out? Did he get out?

Is she out? Did she get out?

Bridges collapsed, fallen trees, fire

These lines are repeated over and over again as they circle Joe. He is now feeling trapped and even more frantic!!

Joe: **STOP!!**

FREEZE

The company moves upstage and freezes. Joe is left alone as his employer comes DR. Joe recognizes his employer and tries to engage her, but it's as if Joe isn't there!!

Employer: **Call...call...CALL!!! Just pick up the God damn phone and dial the number. Damn kids, always trying to push hard to show off. Ask a question or even show the slightest doubt. I supervised, I provided, I (pause) trained. Don't be ridiculous what did I do?**

For God's sake. ALL he had to do was ask me for help. Damn kids, always trying to pretend like they know it all. (Pause). What if they blame me? It wasn't my fault, IT WASN'T MY FAULT! Well, there was nothing more that I could've done to prevent this. No, I should've seen it, I could'veno, no IT WASN'T MY FAULT! All he had to do was simply ask. (pause) Call...call...CALL! Just pick-up the God damn phone call his parents.

Employer Freezes

Emerging from the chorus is Joe's best friend. He crosses DL. Again Joe recognizes him and tries to greet him, but to no avail.

Friend: **This has got to be some kind of sick joke, or they have the wrong guy, because I was just with him last yesterday.**

You know it wasn't too long ago that we mastered the monkey bars. He had to be the highest when we climbed trees and the fastest when we raced our bikes. But he would always wait up for me.

(turns to look at Joe, as if he sees him)

Why him?

Joe: **I'm sorry (audible whisper)**

Friend: **He was the lucky one, he was the one who was going to go somewhere and be someone. I would have died to have his life and now (pause) I would die so he could have his back.**

Friend Freezes

We hear lullaby music as Joe's mother emerges from the company. She walks slowly DC. Joe sees her and moves to her. She stops as if she can sense that he's there, but then continues down stage.

Mother:

He was 8 lbs, 11 oz and screaming bloody murder when he left my body and came into the world. His father's eyes, my mouth and dark hair and an adorable combination of both of our noses. We knew he was going to be a boy, but that didn't matter. It was still a surprise. I heard his heart beat through a stethoscope (sound of heart beat is heard), but that was no match for snuggling my ear to his tiny chest and hearing the strong whir of his pulse. (heart beat fades).

The first year was all diapers, feedings and Fisher Price over-sized books that made noises when you turned the pages, and the toys that squeaked in the night.

The second year was all running! Keeping little Joe choral and safe from stair cases, book cabinets and the solid underneath of tables and chairs. It was a race not always won. (pause)

Where did the time go..... school, sports..(pause) and then his first job. He had gotten a job at a construction site and I was nervous about that. But his father, his father thought that it would be a good experience for him. My son, my son was always careful and responsible.

I got a call from the hospital and I was told to get down there right away. There had been an accident and my son had been hurt. When I got to the hospital he was lying on a bed beside all this machinery. There were hoses connected to him.

When my husband got there the doctor told us that he was hovering, hovering somewhere between life and death and they weren't sure which direction he was heading.

He and his friends had been sitting at the construction site eating lunch. They had all taken their hard hats off. A bolt – a small 3 inch piece of metal, had fallen off the top of a beam at the top of the building and entered my son’s head. Entered the top of his beautiful head and exited through his throat. They were calling it a freak accident.

(the sound of the heart beat returns)

That night I climbed up onto the bed (she looks at Joe who is standing there listening, it is as if she can see him), and I told him every beautiful memory I had of him, and I begged him and God not to let him go.

It was close to midnight, lying beside my son, my ear on his chest, I heard his heart beat stumble.

(heart beat suddenly stops and we hear the flat line sound) **and fail.**

FREEZE

The company with the exception of Joe moves back to the opening scene and they are once again 6 year olds playing.

Focus DR, where Maggie and Marveer are playing, They are a firefighter and a pilot.

Maggie: **Watch out Kitty cat, I’ll save you!!**

Manveer: **Oh no, turbulence.**

Maggie: **Watch out your plane’s on fire**

Manveer: **Quick, hold on!!**

FREEZE

Focus on the UL riser. Sarah and Stephen are playing. He is building a sandcastle and she is a dancer.

Sarah: (standing on the cube and spinning around)
La la la la la

Stephen: (blowing a trumpet)
Da dad a da

Sarah: **oh no!!** (as she accidentally steps on Stephen's pretend castle)

Stephen: **Hey, you stepped on my castle!!**

Sarah: **It's ok, I can help build it again and we can have a tall tower, and I can be the beautiful dancing princess ballerina.**

Stephen: **Well, my tower has to be the bigger because I'm the King.**

Sarah: **You're the King! That means we have to get married!!**

Both: **ooh!!!!**

FREEZE

Focus on the UR riser with Jessica and Jason. Jessica is pretending to be an artist, and Jason is pretending to be a policeman.

Jason: (shooting people) **bang bang, I got you!!**

Jessica: (painting an imaginary canvas) **hold still I'm trying to paint you.**

Jason: **I'm busy, bang, bang, I'm capturing the bad guys!!**

Jessica: **Stay still, I HAVE to paint you and it has to be PRETTY, PRETTY, PRETTY111**

FREEZE

Focus DL on Joann, Matt and Chandra. Joann is pretending to be a Mommy and is rocking her baby, Chandra is a Ninja and Matt is a sheriff.

Joann: rock-a-bye baby, shh – be quiet!! My baby is sleeping

Chandra: **(big Karate chops and kicks)**, high yah, high yah!!
(continue with arms and legs kicking and flailing) high yah!! Don't worry, I'll protect your baby.

FREEZE

("Joe") (Matt) watches each of them speak, he remains silent throughout)

All: **When I grow up I want to be:**

Manveer: **A pilot.**

Maggie: A firefighter

Sarah: **A dancer, I wanted to be a dancer, but it's hard to be a dancer when you've injured your back**

Stephen: **A King**

Jessica: **An artist**

Jason: **A policeman, I wanted to be a policeman, but it's hard to chase bad guys when you're in a wheel chair.**

Joann: **A mommy**

Chandra: **A ninja**

Joe: (moves down and centre) **When I grow up I want to be a somebody**

(pause)

Not a statistic.

FREEZE

As Joe freezes the video screen pulls up the final phrase which says:

It's your right!

The song "The Youth of the Nation" is playing with the video as the lights fade to black. The actors exit in the dark with the music playing and the phrase left on the screen.

END

(play is approximately 22 minutes in length)