



Educational Toolkit

WAITRESS



Waitress Educational Toolkit

Welcome to **Waitress** on Broadway! Based upon the motion picture written by Adrienne Shelly, **Waitress** tells the story of Jenna, a waitress and expert pie maker stuck in a small town and a loveless marriage. **Waitress** celebrates friendship, motherhood, and the courage it takes to pluck a long abandoned dream off the shelf.

This Toolkit provides background info on the people, stories, and songs behind Waitress and exercises for exploring the important themes and relationship dynamics in the play.

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Compiled by Brenna Nicely and designed by Robert Duffley, American Repertory Theater



Stories in Song

An Interview with *Waitress* Composer Sara Bareilles

By Amanda Faye Martin

AMANDA FAYE MARTIN: How did your involvement with *Waitress* begin? What attracted you to the project?

SARA BAREILLES: Diane Paulus first told me about the project over lunch a little over two years ago. I was certainly interested, but nervous because it felt like a huge undertaking. I had no experience writing in this format, but my first love was musical theater. Growing up, I devoured shows like *The Secret Garden*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, *Chess*, *Oklahoma!*, and *Miss Saigon*. They informed how I listened to music, and I think my being a storyteller was also influenced by that kind of writing. I watched the *Adrienne Shelly* film after I met with Diane, and the material spoke to me. I thought it was charming and heartfelt, and that there was a beautiful foundation to develop into a musical. I made a pact that I would do it with the condition that if it wasn't going well, Diane would tap me on the

shoulder and let me know. And nobody has tapped me on the shoulder yet!

AFM: Many of the songs on your last album, *The Blessed Unrest*, deal with the themes of *Waitress*: asking for strength (“Hercules”), moving forward (“Chasing the Sun”), and you’ve said “Islands” is about having “to be your own island to exist. You have to be ok being alone.” What has it been like to explore these themes differently, writing for a musical rather than another solo album?

SB: I write autobiographically, so it has been challenging but so exciting to embrace this. I really connected to the lead character, Jenna. She is deeply flawed, pained, and broken, but also has so much strength and soul. When I first watched the movie, I was compelled by the lowest point in her character arc, and that was what made me want to go to the piano. The first song I wrote was “She Used to Be Mine,” which is about that phenomenon of waking up and looking at yourself and

EXPERIENCE

Stories in Song, cont.

realizing there's a part of you that doesn't recognize who you are anymore. I also fell in love with all the other characters and their quirks. The character Ogie, who is the oddball love interest of one of Jenna's waitressing

The first song I wrote was "She Used to Be Mine," which is about that phenomenon of waking up and looking at yourself and realizing there's a part of you that doesn't recognize who you are anymore.

buddies, is so funny, so warm, so delightful. I had a great time playing with humor in the writing and capturing this really quirky character with sound. I found likenesses between myself and each character, and that's how I've been able to tell their stories. Writing the score has also liberated my process, because I had gotten used to writing in a specific format with a particular goal in mind. It's not about "will this song make sense on the radio?" It's more, "am I helping the audience understand the heart and soul of this character?"

AFM: You've said you consider yourself a feminist. Why do you think Jenna's story is important to tell now in this country?

SB: We're dealing with a woman in an abusive relationship who has to find strength within herself and within her community. One of the things I love about this story is that it highlights sisterhood amongst friends. I also think there is so much happening right now that celebrates what it means to embody a female spirit, and how that is evolving and changing for each new generation. The story deals with traditional value systems, but we're challenging them within the world of the musical.

AFM: Did your upbringing in a small town in California help you capture that world?

SB: I encountered a lot of these characters growing up in Eureka—people who have big dreams that never came to life because they never got out of town, and people who are perfectly content, who made a wonderful life in a tight-knit community. You were never more than a couple degrees of separation from anybody else, so I really relate to that. I also worked as a waitress for a long time—all through my college years, and post-college when I first formed a band. I actually loved being a waitress. It's hard work, but it's also really gratifying and social. And that experience has definitely informed some of the **Waitress** lyrics. I worked at a little beer bar in Santa Monica after I graduated from UCLA. We had regular patrons who came in every single day. It was a unique experience because I knew them, and at the same time didn't know everything about them. But the bar provided a sense of familiarity and a sense of home.

AFM: You've worked with other artists before, but how has this project for the theater been different?

SB: This is by far the most collaborative thing I've ever done, and that is both super challenging and exhilarating. I think the reason people collaborate is because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Diane is visionary, brave, and bold, and I love that she has very high expectations. She is deeply collaborative, and so good at finding the gems and knowing when things need to be deepened and pushed further. I feel like I've hit the jackpot getting to learn from someone like her during my first professional experience in the theater. •

DISCUSSION

- What does it take for a collaborative project to be successful?
- How do you draw creative inspiration from your own life?

Hidden Strengths

Waitress Star Jessie Mueller Gives Voice to Vulnerability

By Amanda Faye Martin

“Life is like a pie,” reflects actress Jessie Mueller. “You have to have a sturdy, flaky, buttery crust in order to hold your filling.” As she explains where to find the best banana cream pie in New York City (Joe Allen), why fruit pies are only good homemade, and the secret to her mother’s strawberry rhubarb, it’s easy to see how Mueller’s down-to-earth charm has made her one of the most celebrated musical theater performers in the country. In 2014, she won the Tony Award for Best Actress in a Musical for her heartfelt portrayal of Carole King in *Beautiful*, an original biographical musical about the iconic singer. In rehearsals for the world premiere production of the musical *Waitress*, Mueller brings that same extraordinary voice to the character Jenna, an expert pie-maker stuck in a small town and a loveless marriage. Whether she’s singing one of Sara Bareilles’ moving ballads or chatting about her favorite Midwestern pie chain, Mueller exudes sincerity and warmth.

The daughter of two actors and sister of three siblings who are also all performers, Mueller grew up in suburban Chicago surrounded by theater. She never felt pressured by her family to perform, but was attracted to the process and culture of theater. “It was my parents’ job and I understood there was a lot of work involved from an early age,” she remembers. “But I also saw the camaraderie. I saw my parents’ friends with them after a show. I saw that world – it’s unlike anything else.” Mueller began acting in high school, and later studied theater as an undergraduate at Syracuse University. Returning to Chicago after graduation, she was quickly recognized for her remarkable voice and captivating stage presence. Within a year, Mueller landed a role at the Chicago Shakespeare Theater, and then continued to perform at many of Chicago’s leading theaters, winning her first Joseph Jefferson Award in 2008 in *Carousel* and another in 2011 in *She Loves Me*. In



Hidden Strengths, cont.

2011, Mueller made her Broadway debut playing the romantic lead in *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*. Since then, she has performed in *Into the Woods* at the Public Theater and Broadway productions of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *Nice Work If You Can Get It* in 2012. Her poignant performance in *Beautiful* inspired Carole King to join Mueller onstage for an impromptu duet of “You’ve Got a Friend” at the 2014 Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS fundraising event.

An inquisitive actress who is deeply inspired by the developmental process, Mueller’s exploration of her character’s psychology and voice in rehearsal is invaluable. She explains that the relationship among *Waitress* director Diane Paulus, book writer Jessie Nelson, and composer Sara Bareilles has influenced her own collaborative approach to new work. “I like the way those ladies all work together,”



Jessie Mueller in *Waitress*.

she says. “They’re very open to feedback from actors, and they’re great collaborators and communicators.” The music written by Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles has played a critical role in helping Mueller develop her character, and she’s found an artistic kinship with the pop star. “It’s beautiful what artists like Sara do, because they’re working through their stuff and letting us into it,” she observes. “Sara’s music makes you feel like, ‘Oh, you wrote that about me, didn’t you?’ And of course she didn’t, but that’s what a good song can do.”

Mueller’s characters in both *Beautiful* and *Waitress* have been admired for their strength and resilience. In *Beautiful*, Carole King rises to stardom and reclaims independence after a failed marriage; in *Waitress*, Jenna aspires to get more out of life after years stuck in an abusive relationship. Both characters confront romantic and professional challenges, and persevere by pursuing their dreams and working through something in themselves. “People say they relate to the strength in the characters I play,” says Mueller. “But I think what they’re really relating to is my characters’ vulnerability. I think that’s where most of the connection comes from—that’s where the empathy comes from. The strength of a character doesn’t really exist without the vulnerability.”•

DISCUSSION

- Jessie Mueller says, “life is like a pie.” Do you agree with this metaphor? How would you expand on it?
- In the previous interview, Sara Bareilles describes her songwriting process as autobiographical. Based on this portrait of Mueller and her character Jenna in *Waitress*, do you think an actor’s process can also be autobiographical? In what way?

A Scene from *Waitress*

BECKY

(Jenna's sassy co-worker and closest friend)
Honey, you all right?

JENNA

(a soulful, pie-baking waitress)
Shh. I'm inventing a new pie in my head.

BECKY

Of course you are.

JENNA

I'm calling it, "I Don't Want Earl's Baby Pie."

DAWN

(a waitress learning to break out of her shell)
I don't think we can write that on the menu board.

JENNA

Then I'll just call it "Betrayed By My Eggs Pie."

DAWN

What's gonna be in it?

JENNA

Crack an egg, combine with sausage, soak it in beer, mix in cheesy red dressing, use extra shortening in your crust to trap the moisture in. Forever -

BECKY

Jenna this ain't somethin' you can tuck into a pie.

CAL

(Jenna's gruff boss at Joe's Pie Diner)
HEY! Pledge the sorority later! You don't do your work I'll dock your pay. *(to Becky)* And lady, you are really pushing my buttons today.

BECKY

Which one is mute?

EARL

(Jenna's husband, an almost-talented musician who peaked in high school. His voice cuts through the clatter of the diner.)
Waitress! Who do you have to know around here to get a piece of pie?

JENNA

Earl -

EARL

Hey sweet thang -

JENNA

What are you doin' here?

EARL

Takin' the rest of the day off.

JENNA

What about work?

EARL

Friggin foreman was on my ass for bein' late yesterday. I said don't blame the line at Taco Bell on me! I don't belong in that shit job... Hey, where's my kiss?

JENNA

Earl, I gotta get back to -

EARL

They can wait. *(Jenna kisses him on the cheek.)* How we doin' today? *(He holds out his hand, their ritual. She reaches into her pocket and hands him her tips then gets him a piece of pie.)* Not bad... not great... You know I've been thinking. I'm not really sure it's worth your working at this diner. I don't like those girls. *(Off Becky's stinky eye.)* That one looks at me like I just killed her dog. I think I might rather have you be home. Makin' me pies all day long. *(Taking a bite of pie)* Damn this is tasty.

JENNA

Last piece left. Sold so fast today couldn't quite believe it -

EARL

(jealous, a tad threatened) Yeah, well, don't go getting a big head or nothin'. I mean this is good but let's face it... you're no Sara Lee.

JENNA

You used to say my pies were so good I could open my own shop.

EARL

Yeah, well I was just tryin' to get laid. •

DISCUSSION

- How does humor and drama function in this scene?
- How would you describe Jenna and Earl's relationship based on this scene?
- Do you think Jenna wants to change her life, and are her friends helping her?
- When you are stuck in a bad situation, what does it take to change it? Who do you trust to call you out?

A Song from *Waitress*: “She Used to Be Mine”

JENNA

It's not simple to say that most days I don't recognize me
That these shoes and this apron, that place and its patrons have
Taken more than I gave them.
It's not easy to know I'm not anything like I used to be although
It's true I was never attention's sweet center
But I still remember that girl:

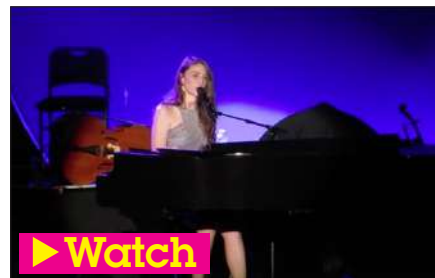
She's imperfect but she tries
She is good but she lies
She is hard on herself
She is broken and won't ask for help
She is messy but she's kind
She is lonely most of the time
She is all of this mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie
She is gone but she used to be mine.

It's not what I asked for. Sometimes life just slips in
Through a back door
And carves out a person and makes you believe it's all true
And now I've got you
And you're not what I asked for, if I'm honest I know
I would give it all back
For a chance to start over and rewrite an ending or two
For that girl that I knew:

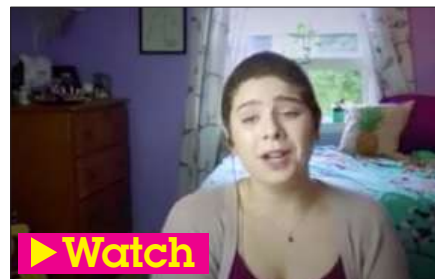
Who'll be reckless just enough
Who gets hurt but who learns how to toughen up
When she's bruised and gets used by a man who can't love

And then she'll get stuck
And be scared of the life that's inside her
Getting stronger each day till it finally reminds her
To fight just a little to bring back the fire in her eyes
That's been gone, but it used to be mine.

She is messy but she's kind
She is lonely most of the time
She is all of this mixed up and baked in a beautiful pie
She is gone but she used to be mine.



▶ Watch
Sara Bareilles sings
“She Used to Be Mine”
in concert



▶ Watch
Fans share their own
recordings of
“She Used to Be Mine”



▶ Watch
Sara Bareilles sings
“She Used to Be Mine” in the
official lyric video

DISCUSSION

- How have you changed from when you were younger?
- What kind of person do you aspire to be?
- Is there anything getting in the way of your aspirations?
- What might you have to give up or change to achieve your dreams?

From Diners to Fine Dining

*Waitresses work across the entire American landscape. We asked members of the **Waitress** team to share some of their own experiences as, or with, waitresses and waiters.*



JESSIE MUELLER

Cast (Jenna)

I've never been a waitress. I almost can't believe it. I've catered, but catering is faceless, which is sometimes a nice thing. You're not really serving. You talk to lifelong waitresses, and that's their profession: to serve. I remember some of the waitresses from when my family would travel from Chicago to New Mexico—in Oklahoma and Texas. I think there's a pride in it. For the waitresses in the musical, there is certainly a pride in it. For my character, Jenna, it's the one place she feels proud; she feels useful. I think it's the only place she feels like herself, or whatever version of herself she remembers as being good.

JESSIE NELSON

Book

I was a waitress for nine years. That period when I carried the tray was one of the most unexpectedly meaningful times of my life because of the camaraderie I felt with the women I worked with—women I normally would never have known. I saw them five nights a week, eight hours a night, and in many ways they became closer to me than my closest friends. When I got my first break, and left the restaurant in California, two of the older waitresses flew to New York on opening night to surprise me. We had never seen each other without a name tag or uniform.

SARA BAREILLES

Music & Lyrics

I worked as a waitress for a long time—all through my college years, and post-college when I first formed a band. I actually loved being a waitress. It's hard work, but it's also really gratifying and social. And that experience has definitely informed some of the *Waitress* lyrics. I worked at a little beer bar in Santa Monica after I graduated from UCLA. We had regular patrons who came in every single day. It was a unique experience because I knew them, and at the same time didn't know everything about them. But the bar provided a sense of familiarity and a sense of home.

DIANE PAULUS

Director

When I was in high school, I worked as the “dessert girl” in a restaurant during the summer. I stood behind a counter and was in charge of preparing all the desserts—mostly putting out slices of cake, pie, and fancy cookies. I remember one day my boyfriend at the time (now my husband!) came in and passed me a little piece of paper with “I love you” written on it. I was holding a large platter of cookies. When I saw what he had written, I dropped the entire platter. I was in such a daze, I didn't know what to do. I just remember a co-worker at the restaurant leaning over and telling me to pick up the cookies and put them back on the plate. •

Bad Love on Stage and Screen

By Maxwell Kagan

Jenna, the main character of ***Waitress***, admits that she has been hurt physically and emotionally by her husband Earl, though it is not easy for her to escape Earl's physical, emotional, and financial control of her. Sadly, feeling stuck in a relationship like Jenna's happens frequently to many men and women. Theater and film have found innovative, entertaining, and poignant ways of portraying real-life issues, feelings and relationships over the decades.

Today, performance remains a vital tool in spreading awareness, compassion, and understanding when confronting problematic issues like domestic abuse, which can take many forms, both physical and emotional. Victims in these situations are often advised to leave their abusive partner, but as Jenna and Earl's relationship shows, it's not always that easy. Domestic abuse unfortunately is a very real issue: statistics obtained from The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence show that intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime and 4 in 10 men and women have experienced at least one form of coercive control by an intimate partner in their lifetime.

To get an idea about how love goes bad in the American Musical, take a look at Jenna in ***Waitress*** (see the scene on [page 7](#) and song on [page 8](#)).



DISCUSSION

- Are there any trends you can spot regarding how domestic abuse is portrayed in musical theater? When are these portrayals realistic or exaggerated?
- Which techniques and genres do the composers and writers use to depict Jenna and Earl's relationship?
- What is the role of music in portraying abuse on stage? Do you think it lessens or augments the impact of the subject matter? What makes these methods effective?

Lesson Plan:

Personality Pie

OBJECTIVES

In this activity, students will reflect on and concretely express elements of their own personality to consider how different traits make up a whole person. This activity promotes individual reflection, partner work, and group discussion to build the following skills: self-reflection, metaphorical thinking, social bridging, and creative writing.

MATERIALS

“Personality Pie Worksheet” (p. 13)
Whiteboard or chalkboard
Writing utensils

PROCEDURE

Set Up

Provide each student with writing utensils and a copy of the Personality Pie Recipe Worksheet.

Process

1. **What ingredients make up a person?** Ask students for positive words that can describe a person’s personality. For three minutes, allow the group to brainstorm and record as many words as they can on a whiteboard or chalkboard.
 - Examples: adventurous, bold, courageous, creative, friendly, humorous, imaginative, intelligent, inventive, passionate, shy, thoughtful, tough, etc.
2. **What are the three most distinctive elements of your own personality?** Ask students to write down three words they would use to describe themselves in the first column of the Personality Pie Recipe Worksheet (“I Think I am...”). Students should keep their words private for now. They can use words from the brainstormed list or think of new ones.
 - Example: I think I am...
 - tough
 - bold
 - imaginative
3. **What are three words your friends would use to describe you?** Students partner up and brainstorm three words to describe each other. Students should not share their “I think I am...” words with each other at this point. Remind students to be thoughtful about their answers and pick the most descriptive words they can think of. Remind students to focus on positive words. Write down these three words in the second column of the Personality Pie Recipe Worksheet (“Others think I am...”).
 - Example: Others think I am...
 - petite
 - soft
 - energetic

Lesson Plan: Personality Pie, cont.

4. **How could you translate these adjectives into the ingredients of a pie?** Ask students to think in metaphor by equating the adjectives on their list to food items. Translate the words they chose to describe themselves into ingredients for pie filling; translate the words others use to describe them into pie toppings. Be creative!

- Example:

I think I am...		Filling Ingredients:
<u>tough</u>	=	<u>nuts</u>
<u>bold</u>	=	<u>cinnamon</u>
<u>imaginative</u>	=	<u>marshmallow</u>
- Others think I am...

		Topping Ingredients:
<u>petite</u>	=	<u>blueberries</u>
<u>soft</u>	=	<u>whipped cream</u>
<u>energetic</u>	=	<u>coffee beans</u>

5. **If you baked this pie, what would you call it?**

If you were going to bake it and put it on a menu, what would you call it? Encourage students to be creative, descriptive, and allow their title to tell a story.

- Examples: "The Snow is Melting and the Ice is Crunching Under My Feet Pie,"
"Totally Nuts SAT Freakout Pie"

Extension

- Describe Your Pie** - Write 1 or 2 descriptive sentences describing the taste, texture, and experience of eating a slice of your personality pie.
- Draw Your Pie** - Students can draw a picture of a cross-slice of their pie, labeling and coloring all of the ingredients in proportion (think about proportion in terms of personality!).
- Guess Whose Pie** - All the pie worksheets are shuffled together and distributed through the room (students should not get their own or their partner's recipe). Students get two minutes to read the recipe they receive. One at a time, each student guesses whose personality pie recipe they have.
- Bake a Feeling** - Create a recipe using words describing how you feel after various experiences, both positive and negative: your birthday, getting in trouble, working out, listening to your favorite music, etc. Compare the recipes you come up with.
- Bake for your Friends or Family** - If you're baking a personality pie about your best friend or a member of your family, what kind of pie would you bake? Why? Is it similar to your pie? What are the similarities and differences? Why are you good friends? What makes a good combination?

Starting Points for Reflection

- How well do the ingredients of your personality mix with each other? Do they all blend together or are there any ingredients that stand out?
- Did the words you picked for yourself match the ones your partner chose? Do you think others see you in the same way that you see yourself? Do you think someone else you know would have chosen different adjectives to describe you? What makes you think this?
- Do you think all of the words really describe you? Does your personality sometimes change? When?
- In *Waitress*, why do you think Jenna bakes pies? What do the names and ingredients of her pies tell you about her personality?

Worksheet

Personality Pie

What are the ingredients of your personality?



I think I am...



Filling Ingredients

Others think I am...



Topping Ingredients

Pie Name _____

Description

Lesson Plan: Order Up!

OBJECTIVES

This fun, high-energy game will focus students to build the following skills: listening, collaboration, pattern recognition, social bridging, multitasking, characterization, perseverance, and vocal production (make sure the yelling and screaming is supported).

MATERIALS

ABC's of Diner Lingo Sheet (optional, p. 16)

PROCEDURE

Set Up

This is a circle game. Rules are introduced ONE AT A TIME in order to scaffold the complexities of the pattern. One person starts in the middle (HERO). The rest are evenly distributed in a circle (OTHERS).

Goals

- HERO wants to get out of the middle by tricking an OTHER into making a mistake or stealing their spot in the circle, making the OTHER the new HERO.
- OTHERS want to stay in the circle by distracting the HERO and maintaining strong focus.

Process

The HERO has a repertoire of commands to trick the OTHERS. If the OTHER responding to the command does not give the proper response, they switch places with the HERO. The HERO may approach an OTHER and say one of the following commands:

- **"How many all day?"**: The OTHER must interrupt the HERO with the word "Freeze" before they finish their phrase (i.e. "How many all-" "Freeze!").
- **"Freeze!"**: OTHER must remain silent and not move or be in the middle.
- Hero may approach an OTHER and call out a three-person configuration of their choosing and count down REASONABLY from ten. If the group does not strike the correct pose, the OTHER who makes the largest mistake is in the middle.
- **"Coffee"**: OTHER pointed at puts hands on their hips. OTHERS on either side link arms with them and pretend to sip a cup of coffee with their other hand and all say "ahhhh".
- **"Bacon and Eggs"**: OTHER pointed at puts their arms in the air and pretends to sizzle like bacon in a pan. OTHERS on either side put their hands over their head to form an egg shape.
- **"Toast"**: OTHER in the middle crouches down on the ground. OTHERS on either side of him/her turn toward each other and put their arms up in the air, like the sides of a toaster. OTHER in the middle then pops up like a piece of toast and says "BOING!" or "POP!"
- Be creative and make up your own!

Lesson Plan: Order Up!, cont.

The OTHERS also have a repertoire of tricks to try and distract the HERO. These should be introduced one at a time by the facilitator:

- **"Dine and Dash"** Two OTHERS make eye contact, they feel a connection, they nod to one another, and they may change places in the circle while flailing their arms (safely) and yelling "dine and dash!"
 - » The HERO can steal an open place while the OTHERS are dashing.
- **Knife Throwing** An INVISIBLE (imaginary) knife is introduced to an OTHER. The facilitator chooses an OTHER to throw the knife first. The knife throw movement is:
 - » palms together like prayer, point at one's target and slide one hand down the other palm vigorously, ending pointed toward the player, vocalize a "snick" or "swack" when the knife is thrown.
 - » The target must "catch the knife" by clapping, then they must continue to pass the knife to another player.
- **Give it the Works** The facilitator gives an OTHER one invisible condiment (ketchup, mustard, relish, etc.) at a time that must be thrown around the circle. The facilitator must ensure that the objects are always being thrown around and not "kept" by OTHER in the circle. Process of throwing objects is like this (assume that the object is ketchup):
 - » Holder holds the invisible condiment aloft and says "Ketchup?" (i.e. "anybody want the ketchup?")
 - » Interested party across the circle responds with "Ketchup!" ("I'll take it!")
 - » Holder indicates that he or she will toss the ketchup by saying "Ketchup..." ("OK, here it comes!")
 - » Interested party pretends to catch the ketchup, responding with a final "Ketchup." ("Got it.")
 - » The HERO may not "catch" the invisible objects.

Extension

For a more challenging game, substitute these classic diner lingo terms for the commands in the game (or use any terms you want from the ABC's of Diner Lingo sheet on the next page):

- "Coffee"—"Belly Warmer"
- "Bacon and Eggs"—"Grunt and Cackleberries"
- "Toast"—"Raft"
- "Freeze"—"86"
- "Ketchup"—"Paint it red"
- "Mustard"—"Paint it yellow" or "Mississippi Mud"
- "Relish"—"Grass"

Starting Points for Reflection

- What did we do in this game?
- Was this game fun? What did you enjoy most about it?
- Was this game difficult? What was most difficult about it?
- What changed about how you played the game when you were in the center of the circle versus a part of the circle?
- What strategies did you use during the game to avoid all of the distractions around you?

The ABC's of Diner Lingo

When diners first popped up in America, servers and short-order cooks quickly developed their own code words and phrases for the food and people in the diners. Below are a few classic diner lingo terms and what they mean.



Keela Settle, Jessie Mueller, and Kimiko Glenn in *Waitress*

Axle Grease—Butter

Aggies—Sausages

Belly Warmer—Coffee

Blue-plate special—daily meat, vegetable and potato dish special

Cackleberries—eggs

Cut the grass—no relish

Dine and Dash—leave the restaurant without paying the bill

Dowse it—cover it in sauce

Eighty-six—cancel the order and/or a menu item has ran out

Eve with a lid on—apple pie

Fog—mashed potatoes

Foreign entanglements—spaghetti

Give it shoes—make it a takeout order

Grun—bacon

Hail—ice

Hope—oatmeal

In the alley—served as a side dish

Italian perfume—garlic

Jack—grilled American cheese sandwich

Java—coffee

Keep off the grass—no lettuce

Kiss the pan—cook the eggs over easy

Life preservers—doughnuts

Lumber—toothpick

Mississippi Mud—mustard

Motor Oil—syrup

Nervous pudding—Jell-o

No cow—without milk

Old maids—prunes

On the hoof—cooked rare

Paint it red—put ketchup on it

Pipes—straws

Raft—toast

Ruff it—add whipped cream

Sand—sugar

Sea dust—salt

Tube steak—hot dog

Twelve alive—a dozen raw oysters

Velvet—milkshake

Virtue—cherry pie

The Works—add all the condiments

Wreck 'em—scramble the egg

Yellow paint—mustard

Yum-yum—sugar

Z—mushrooms

Zeppelin—sausage

Lesson Plan:

Waitress Dodgeball

OBJECTIVES

This is a high-energy game cultivating the type of teamwork, focus, and physical demand of working in the foodservice industry. Students will be physically active while working on the following skills: teamwork, multitasking, hand-eye coordination, balance, and prioritization.

MATERIALS

Water pitchers
Plastic or paper water cups
Plastic or paper plates
Dodgeballs
Tables
Chairs
Buckets

PROCEDURE

Set Up

This game is recommended for outdoor play if possible. Split the group into two teams and divide each team into SERVERS and CUSTOMERS. Set up two RESTAURANT areas, including a bucket in the middle of every dining table and a glass and chair for each CUSTOMER of the opposing team. Set up an obstacle course for the SERVERS to maneuver through during the game. Create a KITCHEN by placing a stack of many plates of different shapes and sizes on a table far away from the two restaurants.

Goals

- SERVERS want to bring all of their plates to their tables without any CUSTOMERS emptying their water glasses.
- CUSTOMERS want to trip up the SERVERS by emptying their water glasses.

Process

- SERVERS fill the water glasses of all CUSTOMERS.
- CUSTOMERS must try to empty their water glasses by using only their straws (may not use their mouths) to transfer the water in their glass to the bucket on their table.
- SERVERS must walk as quickly as possible, without running, to the other side of the playing space, retrieve either a plate OR a water pitcher (they cannot carry both at the same time).
- In order to fill a CUSTOMER's glass with water before it gets empty, SERVERS must carry a pitcher of water from the KITCHEN through the obstacle course to fill the glasses. If the pitcher runs out of water, the SERVER needs to bring the pitcher back to the KITCHEN to refill it.
- In order to deliver a plate to a table, SERVERS must take one plate at a time from the KITCHEN and balance a small dodgeball on the plate while taking it back to the table. If the server drops the plate or the dodgeball falls off of the plate, the SERVER must take their plate and ball back to the KITCHEN and start over.

Lesson Plan: Waitress Dodgeball, cont.

- Once the SERVER reaches the table and drops off the plate and the ball, the customers may not leave their seat, but they may throw the dodgeball at the SERVERS (from the shoulders down only) to try to throw them off.
- If a CUSTOMER's glass is ever emptied of water, the SERVERS in that restaurant must bring ALL of the plates back to the KITCHEN.

Endgame

The first team whose SERVERS bring all the plates to their tables wins the game. Play again and switch the SERVERS with the CUSTOMERS on each team.

Extension

For a more challenging game, create additional obstacles for the servers and customers (e.g. servers must walk on one leg, servers can only use one hand on the plate, customers must empty a larger glass of water, etc.)

Starting Points for Reflection

- What did we do in this game?
- Was this game fun/difficult? What was most fun/difficult about it?
- What are some of the strategies you used as a server or a customer? Did you have to change strategies during the game? Which strategies worked the best, and which ones didn't work so well?
- How did you decide to split your time between the different tasks you had to perform?
- How did you communicate with your team members?
- Do you think being a server in the game similar or not similar to being a server in a restaurant? In which ways?