



teacher's resource pack

The Ceilidh Tree

2008

# The Ceilidh Tree

## Teacher's Resource Pack

This teacher's pack has been designed to give both teachers and children inspiration for arts related activities linked to themes from the show *The Ceilidh Tree*:

- Woodland animals
- Woodland animal habitats
- Storytelling and song

Ideally the sessions should be taught in a gymnasium with preparatory work being done in the classroom.

### Activity 1 - Musical Animals

#### ***Introduction***

This expressive arts game will help children to become familiar with creatures who live in particular habitats. The game could be adapted to support topic work in the classroom. Musical Animals takes inspiration from the action games Musical Statues and Simon Says. The game utilises skills in expressive movement, visual art and use of imagination.

The work has been split into a minimum of three sessions that could last up to one hour each. The time required is dependant on the size of the class, the work rate of the children and how in depth the teacher wishes to explore the topic. An initial introductory session could be a practical visit to a natural environment where the children have been introduced to the actual creatures and habitat. e.g. nature reserve, national park, park or woodland. Ideally, this would be supported by the input of the ranger service.

#### ***Session 1***

On returning to the classroom the teacher would lead a discussion on the animals the children have seen in *The Ceilidh Tree* (*badger, owl, robin, hedgehog, rabbit, worms and slugs!*) or on the visit and investigate further other kinds of creatures that might be found in a woodland environment – other birds, mammals, amphibians, insects etc.

Books, pamphlets, photographs, soft toys etc should be at hand to help with identification. At this stage limited information on the creatures is needed. We want to **identify them** and **recognise or remember where they live**. The teacher might want to show the children pictures of dens, burrows, holts etc. It is good to have a range of creatures so that there is not too much duplication in further sessions.

The children then draw/paint/collage a picture of one of the creatures on A4 sheets of paper. The common name of the creature and the child's name are also clearly printed on the paper. Discourage the children from copying as **you are looking for a range of creatures**. Photographs may help this process but are not essential as the exercise is as much about individual expression as accurate drawing.

### ***Session 2***

We are now ready to prepare the movement vocabulary. Bring the children together in a circle. Go round the circle so that each child can introduce their drawing. The teacher introduces the idea that we are going to devise (make up) a movement for each of the creatures.

The teacher might lead a discussion about how each creature might move, what their life is like and use photographs or video to look at actual footage of movement. The teacher should lead a movement session with children including a stretch and warm-up before focusing on specific movement qualities as light, heavy, fast, slow, moving in a straight line, moving in a more sporadic fashion etc. This will help children who are less confident with movement to understand a bit more about how their body can move and about how they could interpret the movement of another creature.

As an imaginative exercise it would be preferable if the actions come directly from the children's imagination. As each child creates a movement for their creature, the rest of the children learn each individual movement so that we end up with a vocabulary of actions and movements. The teacher should point out the specifics of each movement and help the children to accurately copy each other. It is likely that there will be duplicates. This is not a problem as the children will have created their own individual response. Play a piece of music and let the children move around the room as their creature.

### ***Session 3***

Now we are ready to play the game. The teacher leads a warm up and stretch session before going over the animal movement vocabulary with the class.

The teacher plays music – traditional Scottish folk music or classical music appropriate to the environment.

When the teacher stops the music s/he holds up one of the drawings and the children have to remember the associated movement. The session continues going through the range of drawings/creatures. The game could be played competitively with the last person to complete the movement being eliminated and sitting out, if the teacher feels this approach is appropriate for the children they are working with. The specific educational outcome is **to learn the names of each creature** and **become familiar with their physical characteristics**.

### **Additional work**

To expand the work from individuals to the whole group you could look at home environments and have the children join together to create static visual statues of nests, dens, burrows etc. as part of the game vocabulary.

These activities can also be used for other environments e.g. - seashore, moorland, highland etc.

### **Activity 2 -Sensory Stories**

In this sensory based task children can explore the use of the senses in a fun and interesting way through music, materials and objects to create their own stories and drama about woodland creatures and their habitats.

- a) In bags or in bowls (anything as long as the objects inside are unseen) place interesting objects that could be connected to woodland life that the children will be able to spend time touching, smelling and exploring without the use of their eyes. Some suggested objects could be:-

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. twigs  | 5. leaves   |
| 2. soil   | 6. fake fur |
| 3. stones | 7. feathers |
| 4. bark   | 8. moss     |

These objects do not have to be the exact item, they could be objects that you feel may resemble them e.g. cold silky material to resemble water.

When the children are feeling and/or smelling the objects you could ask them to use words to describe the texture and smell of the object before they try and take a guess at what the object may be.

- b) Once all the objects have been guessed you should bring them out of the bags or bowls and allow them to be seen. Were they all correct? Ask the children to pick an object they liked the best and on white A3 paper invite them to draw a woodland picture of their own and **include their favourite object.**

It may be helpful for this part of the task to play woodland noises or atmospheric music to help the children in their creative journey.

You may wish to use paint, crayon, pen/pencil or oil pastel. However, to continue the idea of using sensory objects, you may wish to offer a choice of textiles or other materials for the children to glue or tape on to their picture. These could include:-

- |                |                                       |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Sand        | 8. String/Thread                      |
| 2. Felt        | 7. leaves                             |
| 3. Feathers    | 9. Card                               |
| 4. Glitter     | 10. Multi-coloured Wooden Matchsticks |
| 5. Bubble Wrap | 11. Beads                             |
| 6. Pom Poms    | 12. Shells                            |

- c) In a circle ask the children individually to describe what is going on in their picture. Once this is completed, create a woodland story together as a group using some of the ideas from the pictures.  
By adding in some drama principles, you could use some ideas of your own which are perhaps influenced from the children's pictures and encourage them to role play **while you are story telling**. This can often be a fun and effective way for children to recreate a story you are telling using actions and/ or noises. Music could also be played to again add to the story telling atmosphere.

### ***Additional work***

The story you and your class create could be showcased at a sharing with other pupils and/or parents with their pictures on display and a trail of the sensory objects for people to follow.

### **Activity 3 – Daytime Monsters!**

#### **Daytime Monsters**

#### ***Daytime monsters***

***I've heard said***

***Come out to play by the light off day***

***While we're tucked up in bed***

***They have no feathers***

***They have no fur***

***And I've been told that they wear clothes***

***Some are boys and some are girls***

***Daytime monsters run around laughing, playing games***

***If you see one, you'd better run, better fly, better fly away***

Draw the children's attention to the part of the show when Owl sang the daytime monster song and explain that we are going to create our own daytime monsters.

## ***Session 1***

Visual Art Activity – Creating your own daytime monster.

Simple puppets can be made using socks or paper plates.

Use: pom poms, buttons, felt shapes, googly eyes, pipe cleaners etc to create the form of the creature.

Children can name their creature and describe how they live, move and do.

## ***Session 2***

After a quick re-cap, play some appropriate music (e.g. In the hall of the Mountain King) and get the children to move around the room with their puppets. You could create a simple painted backdrop together and use a table on its side to create stage for the children to explore very simple puppetry movement. The children can begin to create very simple interactions of talking from behind the table e.g. Saying "Hello" to the audience, making the noise of their monsters. Two monsters meeting and having a nonsense conversation.

## ***Suggested background research and materials***

- A guided visit to a local nature reserve, country park or RSPB centre
- Literature and photographic materials – school library, internet
- Videos or DVDs showing the creatures in action – schools library services are a good source of natural history resources
- Music - Scottish folk or traditional music, classical music, background sound effects or soundscapes.
- A range of classroom art materials: - paper, crayons, coloured pencils and pens, paints and brushes. Assorted craft materials.
- Useful websites:

Badgers - [www.badger.org.uk](http://www.badger.org.uk)

Scottish Natural Heritage - [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

RSPB – [rspb.org.uk](http://rspb.org.uk)

Hedgehogs – [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk)

Owls – [www.owls.org](http://www.owls.org)

Scottish Wildlife Trust – [www.swt.org.uk](http://www.swt.org.uk)

Woodland Trust – [www.woodland-trust.org.uk](http://www.woodland-trust.org.uk)

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