



AFRAID of the DARK

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A gentle first experience story about new beginnings,
friendship and finding ways to cope with fear.

Teaching guide created by Rosie Hegarty, 2021



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Activity 1: A Big Thank You!

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Literacy and Writing

Read the story together with the children. In the story, Dad looks after Amy and helps her when she's feeling worried. Ask questions such as: Who looks after you in your life? Who can you talk to if you're feeling worried?

Sit the children in a circle and put a large piece of paper in the middle. As the children tell you different adults who can look after them, draw them onto the sheet. Help to prompt them to think of the adults in their homes and schools who can look after them if they are worried.

Ask the children to write a card to an adult who helps them. Model this to the children first by drawing a picture of the person on the front and then writing a simple message in the middle.

Differentiation:

Less able children: ask the children to say their sentence aloud and have an adult scribe the sentence in their card.

Middle ability children: have a writing frame available to stick into the card.

High ability children: use word bank to help write the card.

Resources: Writing frame for inside card, Word bank



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Activity 2: Happily Ever After

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Expressive arts and design – being imaginative

Amy goes to the library and says she likes books of adventures and far-away lands.

Ask the children: what is an adventure? Can they think of a story that has an adventure in it?

Encourage the children to think of what kinds of characters and scenery are in fairy tales. Make a list and draw pictures as the children suggest ideas such as dragons, fairies and trolls. The more imaginative – the better! If you have any small world characters, see if the children can create a fairy tale land using the figures.

Model drawing your own fairy tale land and ask the children to help you include some exciting characters. Encourage the children to be as creative as they can with their suggestions. Remind them that this is a make-believe land so we can make it however we like! Give suggestions like chocolate waterfalls and gingerbread houses to spark the children's imaginations.

Give the children paper and coloured pencils – they should each draw their own picture of a far-away land.

Differentiation: To challenge high ability children, ask them to label their drawing.

Resources: Paper and coloured pencils, Small world figures (if available)



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Activity 2: Monster Mayhem!

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Expressive Arts and Design – exploring and
using media and materials

Re-read *Afraid of the Dark* and stop on the page starting 'My new room is strange and scary'. Show the children the illustration. Do you think worries really are monsters? What does a worry look like?

Let's imagine that worries are just like monsters, except that we can make them look however we want! Instead of a scary monster, it can look silly. Model to the children drawing a monster with big ears, three eyes and a floppy tail. Ask the children: does that look scary? Explain that a worry doesn't have to be something scary. If we imagine that our worries are just silly monsters, they are much easier to talk about!

Ask the children to draw their own monsters and provide some collage materials such as feathers and google eyes to make their creations come to life.

Display the monsters in the classroom and explain to the children that if they ever have a worry, they can go and get their monster and bring it to the teacher to help them talk about their worries.

Differentiation:

Less able children: provide an outline to support children with lower fine motor skills

High ability children: challenge them to write a name for their monster

Resources: Collage materials, Paper and pencils, Glue



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Activity 2: Dazzling Dens!

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Physical Development – moving and handling

Show the children the image of the children in the den. What a cosy place to relax and spend time with friends! Show children a cuddly toy or character from the classroom and explain that he or she is feeling lonely and needs a place to spend time with friends.

Take the children into an outdoor space and show them the branches, sticks, leaves and ropes. Explain that their challenge today will be to create their own den for the cuddly toy and its friends.

Model to the children building a frame with the branches meeting at the top like the shape of a tipi. Use the rope to tie the branches together at the top. Leave some space for windows and a door. Show the children how to weave some leaves between the branches to make the walls of the den denser.

In groups, support the children to make their own dens. Encourage them to think of ways to make their den their own – for example, decorating it with some flowers or drawing some pictures to go inside.

Keep the dens in the outside area and allow the children to use them for imaginative play during continuous provision to encourage conversations about friendship and kindness.

Differentiation:

Support children with lower motor skills in weaving by giving them larger parts to weave into the den walls.

Resources: Materials for den-building: leaves, sticks, branches and ropes;
Teddy or character from the classroom



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Activity 2: Stargazing

NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Expressive Arts and Design – exploring and
using media and materials

Turn to the end of the book where Amy's bedroom is decorated with stars. Ask the children: how do you think Amy feels in this part of the story? Why do you think she feels like that? Prompt the children to think back to the sorts of stories Amy liked and compare them to how she describes the ceiling. They're both magical! Explain to the children that sometimes when we are feeling unsure or nervous, it's nice to have a space to be where we can feel safe and magical.

Choose an area of the classroom which the children use as a cosy space, for example a reading corner. Tell the children that, as a class, we are going to make that space more magical. Show the children the star template. Model using craft and collage materials to decorate the star with things you love.

Give each child a star and ask them to cut it out and decorate it with things they love, such as hearts, their favourite colours or glitter.

When the children have created their stars, hang them from the ceiling in your area and remind the children that each star was made by them. So when a child goes to that area because they are feeling worried, all their friends' stars will be around them to make them feel a little bit better.

Differentiation:

Support children with poor motor skills by using dual control scissors if available or guiding their hand movements.

Resources: Star template, Craft / collage materials to decorate stars, Scissors, Glue.



