



Little Red's Picnic Basket – Creative Classroom Activity Ideas

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1 Before the Trip

Do you remember the first time you went to a theatre? It can be a life-changing experience and a great opportunity for learning. We believe that learning through the arts nurtures a unique set of creative and life skills. Before you come, it might be helpful for pupils to know something about where they are going and what they will be coming to see.

There are no hard and fast rules for how to behave in a theatre! Watching live performance is a unique collaboration between the audience and the performers. Whispering to your friend is fine and to be expected from excited children in unfamiliar places. We do not expect our young audiences to sit in silence – it would be strange and unnerving if they did!

Class Discussion

It might be helpful to talk about:

- What is the difference between watching a performance in a theatre and watching TV or a film at the cinema?
- How do these differences influence the way we behave?
- In what ways can you support the performance? *E.g. join in where asked, applaud and cheer, show your energy to the performers.*
- In what ways could you spoil the performance? *E.g. Shout out so others can't hear the actors, don't join in/stay quiet when you could 'make some noise'!*
- The many different aspects to enjoy: the story, the staging, the acting, the costume design, the lighting and sound.

Think about whether to discuss the plot of the play you will be seeing with your class. Often there is so much to take in and young children could find it hard to follow the story. On the other hand, the surprise could be more stimulating.

2 Little Red Synopsis

Curriculum links – English

Themes in the play - Growing up/independence, Safety vs danger, Joy of risk taking (Leaving the path / temptation)

Main Characters

Wolf, Mother, Grandmother, Little Red and the Woodcutter

The Story

A girl named Little Red leaves her home and goes on a journey that takes her through the dark, dark wood.

She is taking a pie to her Grandma, a special pie that she has made herself. Her Grandma is not well so Little Red is going to her house in the forest to cheer her up.

It is the first time Little Red has made the journey all by herself and her mother warns her to stay on the path and go directly to Grandma's.

Little Red sets off and sees many things that could easily tempt her off the path; a fir cone she would like to put in her pocket, a stick shaped like a snake her grandma would like, unusual flowers, a strange bird jumping through the branches that seems to be calling to her ...

On her journey, Little Red meets a charming wolf who tries to trick her. She is too clever for the wolf, at first, but she is tempted to leave the safety of the path and finds herself exploring a world that is both fascinating and dangerous.

On the way she meets other familiar story book characters in the dark, dark wood and even encounters a very peculiar tea party.

Eventually, as night starts to fall, and the danger from the wolves is rising, she runs to the safety of her grandma's house...

But it is too late; the wolf has got there first and has eaten Grandma and is now lying in wait, to eat *her*.

Mum, realising her daughter is in danger, runs through the forest and gets to Grandma's house; she cuts open the wolf's belly and releases the girl and the grandmother.

3 Art & Design

Preparation

Let's get excited about the trip to the theatre! This year, we are inviting school children to create paper birds that will be exhibited at the venue throughout Christmas.

Little Bird - making, drawing, sculpture, science (use of materials)

In our version of the story, Little Red is followed through the forest by a little bird and we are taking this motif as a theme for decorations around the venue. Please find your enclosed template.

You will need: Decorative paper, scissors, a pencil, blue tack or stick glue

How to make it:

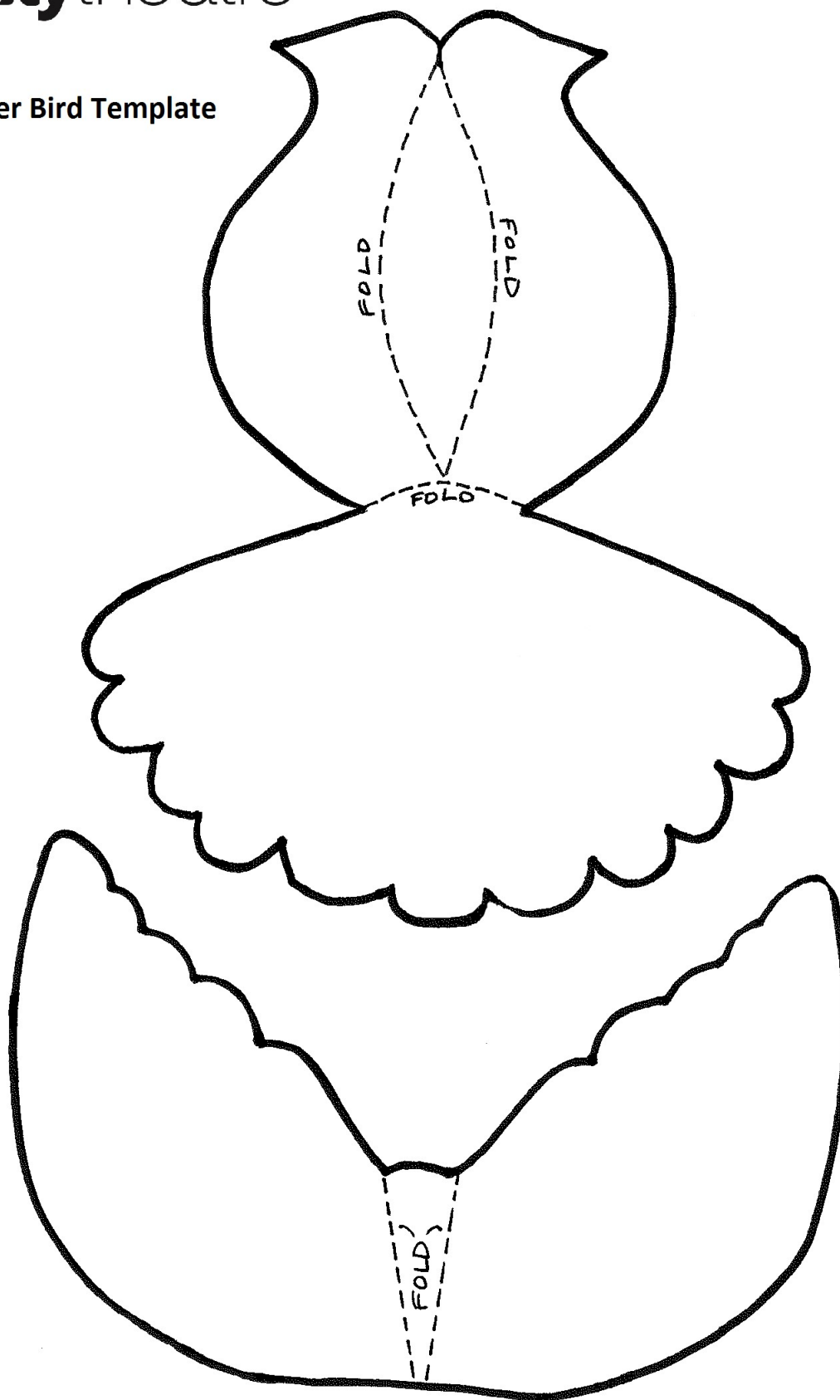
- Using the stencil, cut the bird's body and wings out using decorative or white paper
- Fold along the lines as shown in the diagram
- Secure the beak with a little dot of blue tack or glue stick
- Secure the wings to the body using a glue stick
- Your bird is ready! Now use it to create a display in school or bring it along to the theatre to be part of our grand display!

Art projects are also a great way for pupils to reflect on the performance or deepen their understanding of the story and the characters. Why not create a display or a scrap book based on the class creations and ask the children to talk about their ideas to the rest of the group?

Ask your pupils to draw or paint or sculpt their favourite characters or scenes from the play:

- Trees in the Dark, Dark Wood
- Grandma's House
- Little Red's costume
- The wolf family's house

Paper Bird Template



4 Drama Activities

Body Language - On-your-feet, Physical, Ice-Breaker, Team-work, Ensemble Building

In *Little Red and the Big Bad Wolf*, we have four actors who play different characters throughout the play. In order to change the character they play they will pay attention to the voice they use and also the body language of the character. In theatre this is called the 'physicality' of the character.

A good exercise to encourage children to play with this idea is to ask them to think about which body part their character might lead with. For example, a cunning wolf might lead with his head!

As a group movement game, ask your pupils to move around the room leading with various parts of their bodies; nose, knees, hand, belly for example. Ask them to think about what kind of character might move like that. How might a wolf, a grandma or Little Red move?

Hot Seating - Speaking and Listening, Empathy and Understanding, Imagination and Invention

Hot seating is an established method used by actors to explore a character. The group can rediscover, connect with and invent aspects of the characters from the play through this fun exercise.

The group are settled as one audience for this exercise with a chair set on the 'stage' in front of them. One child is then chosen or picked from volunteers to be the actor each time and chooses a character from the play to become. The audience can then ask any questions to the actor who answers them 'in-character'. The questions can be chosen to explore aspects of the character, to explore some of the ideas in the story or any decisions the character made.

You could encourage the group ask about things that are not specific to the story but are more general for example, "what are your favourite foods / best friends / pastimes, where did you go to school" etc. This way the actor can enjoy making up these aspects of the character.

One Word at a Time - Storytelling, Speaking and Listening, Team-Work, Ensemble Building

Try retelling the story of ***Little Red...*** to reinforce pupils' understanding of the plot and characters, or reinvent some themes and ideas the children may have is also fun!

With everyone standing or sitting in a circle, someone begins a story; 'Once upon a time, there was a...' and each person adds a word or sentence to build the story together as a group.

A variation would be to roll a ball across the circle from person to person to add a different dynamic and make pupils worry less about their turn coming up and increasing attentiveness by taking them by surprise. Make sure that everybody gets a turn!

You can also play the game in pairs, or split the group into two and have one half telling the story and the other half acting it out as it is being told.

Brief Theatre Glossary

Auditorium: The area inside the theatre where the play takes place

Backstage: Any part of the stage and theatre which is out of the sight of the audience – dressing rooms, store rooms, technical boxes

Blackout: When all the stage lights are turned out

Downstage: The part of the stage nearest to the audience or a movement towards the audience

Front of House: The areas of the theatre outside the auditorium

House Lights: The theatre lighting which is usually faded just before a show begins

Props: Short for Properties – Objects that are handled by actors or that are on stage to help to tell the story

Set: The scenery which is built on stage which creates the setting for the play. The set might be made in a way so that pieces can be moved or changed for different scenes

Stage Manager: The person in charge of making sure things get done in preparation for the show, and also during and after the show

Technician: The person or persons who operate the lighting and sound and any special effects for the show. The technician also has to put up the lights and set up the stage for the show

Usher: The people who show you to your seat and look after the audience during the show, interval and after the show

5 Wolf Families

Curriculum links – Science, geography, history

One of the themes in the play is to do with humans' relationship with other animals. The wolf has been the notorious villain of fables and fairy stories for centuries, yet this highly intelligent and sociable animal has done little to warrant its terrifying reputation.

Use these facts about wolves to make a true or false quiz – you will have to add your own 'false facts' though as all of these are true!

Wolf Facts

Wolves are the largest members of the dog family.

Wolves develop close relationships and strong social bonds. They demonstrate deep affection for their family, called the pack or rout.

Wolves are highly adaptable and can live in a variety of habitats.

The wolf was once at home all over Europe including the UK.

According to folklore, it was in the highlands of Scotland that the last wild-living wolf in Great Britain was hunted down in 1680.

Wolves are legendary because of their spine-tingling howl, which they use to communicate.

A lone wolf howls to attract the attention of his pack, while communal howls may send territorial messages from one pack to another.

Once a wolf has found a mate, they usually stay together for life.

A single wolf is capable of catching and killing a deer unaided but when hunting as a pack, wolves can capture larger animals such as deer, elk, and even moose.

Wolves also eat smaller mammals, birds, fish, lizards, snakes, and fruit.

In the last few years through increased efforts to protect and reintroduce wolf populations, numbers have begun to increase across the globe.

Quotes, Stories and Myths

The character of the big bad wolf appears in many myths and tales all seemingly with a lesson to be learned – stay on the path and don't be tempted from safety...



Little Red Riding Hood

The Goat and her Seven Little Kids

The Three Little Pigs

Peter and the Wolf

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Keeping the wolf from the door

Never cry wolf

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

WOLFING DOWN YOUR FOOD

Wolf whistle!

6 Environmental facts

Curriculum links – Science, Geography, History

Another theme in our play is the environment and in particular, the loss of natural resources in our world and the effect this has on the planets' animal populations.

Trees and Humans

Trees are as important to human beings as food and water are.

To keep city air cool and clean, trees should cover at least 40% of city land.

4,000 miles worth of toxic emissions from one average car can be 'cleaned away' by one tree!

Trees and land plants produce about 30% of the oxygen on earth. The other 70% is produced by plants in the ocean.

Trees and other plants keep our air breathable by removing carbon dioxide and pollutants. They also add moisture through transpiration.

Trees reduce costs of using our resources; Shade trees can save money and energy and in cold places, trees can provide windbreaks that can reduce heating bills.

Forests hold soil in place. Trees keep the water from running off the land too quickly and help control floods. Trees take care of our soil and water.

Trees provide shelter, food, recreation, beauty and homes for birds, insects, and other animals.

The cocoa tree, the source of chocolate, is now on the endangered species list!

Humans are destroying trees much faster than they can grow. Imagine how many trees are used all over the world. People cut down trees to make room for homes, industrial areas and motorways.

Trees are used to make paper, furniture, houses and many other products.

Whenever large parts of a forest are cut down, animals lose their homes and everything about the place where the trees grew changes.

What we can do!

All of us, including those of us who live in cities, can change our actions to help preserve our natural world. Here are some ideas:

- Look out for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label when buying wood and furniture
- Encourage your family to recycle all the paper from your household
- Try and use less and always use recycled paper. Using 100% recycled paper saves 24 trees per tonne of paper
- Think before you print! Do you need to print out everything – can you change the printer settings to save paper?
- Plant a tree! Or look for companies selling products who promise to replace the wood they use. Some brands of toilet roll and even tea have made promises to plant trees in an effort to become more sustainable



7 Words and Pictures

Curriculum links – English

Little Red's Word Search

Find your way through the forest of letters to help Little Red tell her story

G	J	P	I	E	R	I	U	G	A
Q	T	I	W	O	L	F	D	N	L
V	X	X	I	T	R	E	E	S	A
E	B	I	R	D	U	O	Y	F	Q
Q	F	O	R	E	S	T	Z	L	L
S	X	F	A	M	I	L	Y	D	K
F	T	G	R	A	N	D	M	A	A
D	P	N	M	D	U	P	U	O	C
G	V	W	X	P	S	L	J	C	R
P	R	E	D	O	G	S	F	V	B

BIRD	FAMILY	FOREST	GRANDMA
PIE	RED	TREES	WOLF

Acrostic Poems

Have a go at creating your own below – I've started you off with WOLF!

Wise	G	T	R
Old	R	R	E
Lost	A	E	D
Friends	N	E	
	D	S	
	M		
	A		

Writing a Story by Kevin Dyer

When you write you have to start somewhere.

I sometimes start with a picture (from a newspaper or off the internet) or an object (like a stone or a shell or something I find hiding in a corner of one of the drawers at home).

With 'Little Red and the Big Bad Wolf' I started with the story that I was told when I was little... and which has stayed in my head ever since.

By the time you get to see my version of the story acted out in the theatre I will have written it,
and re-written it
and re-written it
and changed bits
and changed more bits
and thrown some bits away
and written new bits
and listened to new ideas from my good friend Nina
and rewritten some more
and crossed some lines out
and crossed more out
and so on
and so on...

I will have listened to the ideas of the actors too and used their ideas to make it better.

And there are the songs too of course, written by Patrick: he will have made sure the songs fit the story and I'll have made sure the story fits the songs.

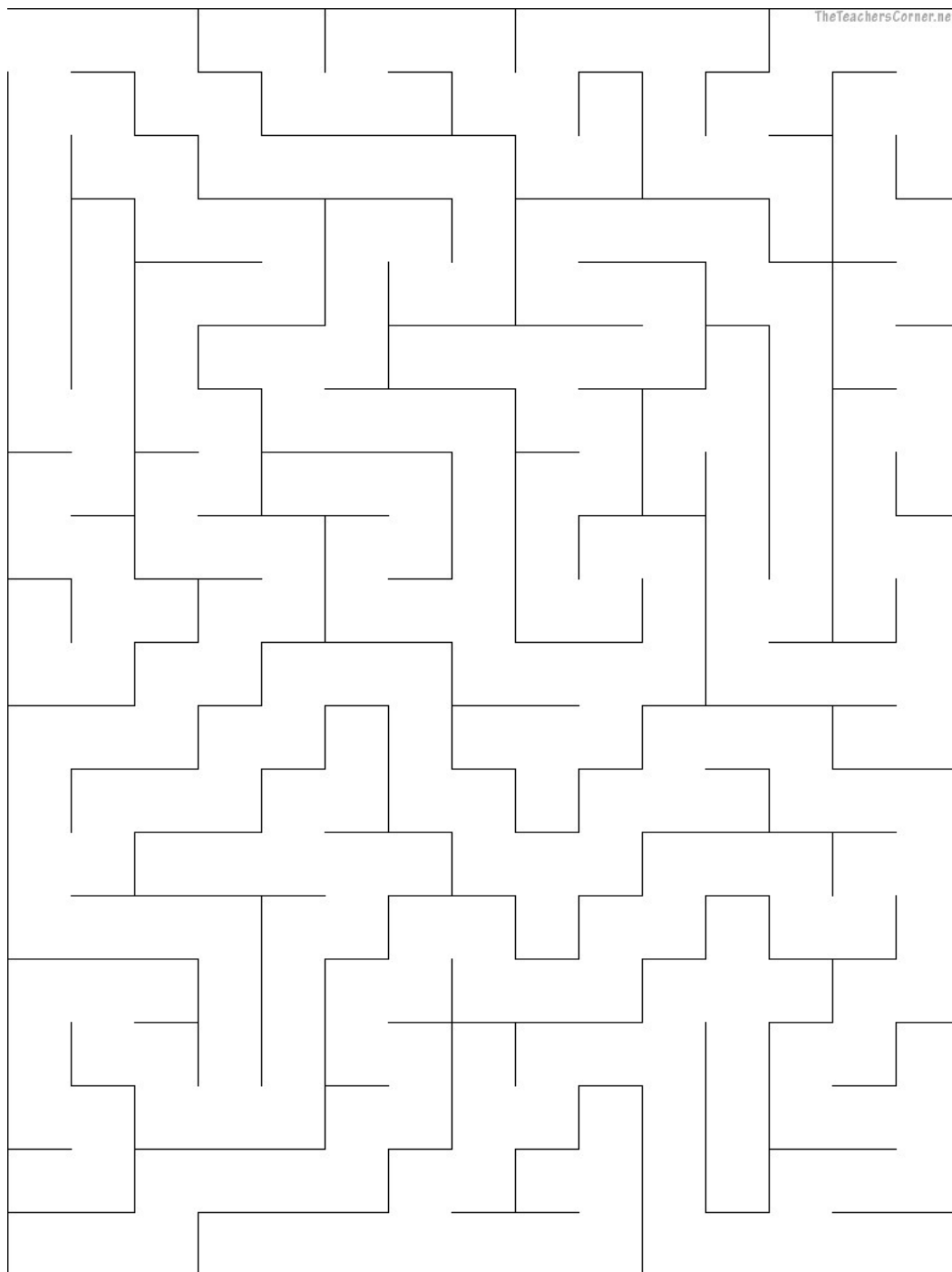
Why not look for a picture or an object that you like and write a story using it as your inspiration?

Dark, Dark Wood

Can you help Little Red find the path through the Dark, Dark Wood to Grandma's?



START



FINISH

Special thanks to:

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Sources and links:

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