

Imagined Worlds- Drama in Early Childhood

'Jill and the stolen bucket' presented by Tanya Batt

In this drama, the children meet Jill of the famed 'Jack and Jill' duo. The children find Jill unable to fetch water as her bucket has been stolen by a Magpie, who has flown with it up to the top of a very high tree. Children are encouraged to fetch the bucket and return it to Jill but discover that the Magpie has plans of it's own and is unwilling to return the bucket in question.

What you may need

Adult in role

Ideally this drama requires two TAF, however it is possible to present with just the one adult. The two roles for TAF are Jill and the Magpie. The Magpie can always be played by a puppet.

Props

Storytelling apron. Shawl or scarf for Jill. Feather boa or the likes for the Magpie. Bucket.

Music

A lively track for the bucket dance (refer to music selection)

Warming ourselves up

*Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.*

Simple stretches using nursery rhymes and the storytelling apron.

A storytelling apron is very much like a 'normal' apron, except that it consists of numerous smaller pockets which conceal various items or symbols. If you are thinking of making a storytelling apron, bright coloured cloth and velvets are both visual and tactile appeal. The smaller pockets create a labyrinth of intrigue, each containing an item - a small tin frog, animal finger puppets, a knitted toy soldier, a toy china tea pot, a rubber spider, a model boat etc., which can be drawn from the pocket and used in a variety of ways. Objects can be changed and children can bring along their own items of significance to put in the pockets.

Choosing from the apron can be done in many ways. Turn taking can be facilitated through a song or chant. At the end of each round an item can be chosen and a nursery rhyme sung and moved in response to the choice.

Children form a circle. Song can be sung as child/adult wearing the apron skips around the outside of a circle. When the song is finished, the apron wearer stops and the child he/she has stopped in front of is the person who chooses from the apron.

Song

*What have you got in your apron
What have you got in your apron
What have you got in your apron
At Playcentre today.*

Chant

*I have an apron
The colours are lovely and bright
When..(child's name) looks in the pocket
I wonder what she/he will find.*

Alternatively, with a smaller group, the apron can be laid flat like a mat on the floor and selected from.

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Some movement ideas using well known nursery rhymes.

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Sitting on the floor with soles of feet joined together, forming a diamond shape with the legs.

Twinkle, twinkle little star

(arms stretching up, alternate stretches from side to side, as if trying to catch stars with hands)

How I wonder what you are

(Kicking the stars with your toes)

Up above the world so high

(Spinning around the universe on your bottom)

Like a diamond in the sky

(making stars with as many different body parts as possible)

Twinkle, twinkle little star

(arms stretching up, alternate stretches from side to side, as if trying to catch stars with hands)

How I wonder what you are

(finish by making a star shape with you whole body)

Row row, row, your boat

Row row, row, your boat

(sitting position with knees drawn up to chest, back straight)

Gently down the stream

(arms stretching high and alternately to the side)

If you see a crocodile

(Stretch legs wide into a scissor stretch, then snap shut)

Don't forget to scream

(springing arms and legs open)

Standing stretches

Humpty, Dumpty sat on the wall

Humpty, Dumpty sat on the wall

(Sitting crouch - as if you are sitting on an invisible chair)

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall

(relax body and roll back wards onto the floor, rock and then jump up onto feet again)

All the Kings horse and all the Kings men

(Galloping in a small circle)

Couldn't put humpty together again

Twist body from side to side , with lose arms, as if your torso is saying no)

Incy wincey spider climbed up the water spout

Incy wincey spider climbed up the water spout

(bending top half of your body, so that it hangs over slightly bent knees, hands creeping on floor, then creeping them up legs to the top of your body)

Down came the rain and washed poor incy out

(Spinal release, letting the top half of your body collapse, arms swinging down)

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain

(uncurling into a wide star shaped standing stretch)

So incy wincey spider climbed up the spout again

(return to first position, creeping hands up your body)

Content

Introducing the drama

* Establish a fictional context.

There a number of ways this drama could be introduced. I first wrote this drama, as a drama within a drama. The overall drama was centred about the children's' decision to take part on 'an around the world boat adventure' with

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captain Mc Clary. In preparation for this voyage, the children had to raise funds for ships provisions and adequately stock the ship. One part of this preparation was visiting 'Jill' up on the 'hill' to fetch water for the ship's water tanks. Their motivation to assist Jill was driven by their need for water. However, the drama could be simply introduced through the TAF in role, where the TAF (out of role) simply suggests in today's drama she has a friend that needs some help, or that TAF thought that in our drama today we could meet a nursery character. TAF indicates that the children might have heard of her- Jill, she had a friend called Jack. Lets go up the hill and fetch a pail of water.

* Putting children into role

In this drama the children do not need to be in a specific role. They can simply be themselves.

* Beginning the drama

I suggest to the children we climb the hill to meet Jill. I suggest to the children that it is a very large hill, and wonder how we will get up it. This usually brings a torrent of suggestions. Walking, climbing, jumping, driving, skate boarding etc. Suggestions are sung or acted out. This is a fun activity that gives children the opportunity to burn off some energy.

*Jumping, jumping, jumping up the hill
Jumping jumping jumping, we're still jumping still.*

TAF can assess the rate of the climb, by asking children if they think they have arrived at the top yet. Once the top is reached, TAF in role as Jill can be introduced. "Today, Gale is going to play the role of Jill." Show children the clothes that Gale will wear. These may be a shawl or scarf. "Gale is going to put on these clothes and when she comes back she won't be Gale anymore, she will be playing the role of Jill." TAF goes into role as Jill.

* Presenting the problem

Children meet Jill, who greets them. "Are you the people who I just saw, jumping up the hill." Children agree and recount their various modes of locomotion. "Yes, it's a large hill to climb, I don't often get people up here. Have you come to visit me?"

Children answer yes, and may at this point say that they have come to fetch water. At which, Jill apologises and says that she would like to help them but she no longer has a bucket. If children do not raise the issue of fetching water, then Jill can say that she is very glad they have come as she has a problem. Her bucket has been stolen and she can no longer fetch water from the well. A magpie has stolen her bucket and taken it up to the top of a very high tree.

* Elicit explanations and possible solutions from the children.

The children may offer their own buckets. Jill can thank the children and explain, that she would really like her own bucket back, as it was a very special bucket, a present from Jack. Children offer to climb tree. Jill can seem both pleased and concerned -

"What, you could climb up that very tall tree?" or "It's a very tall tree, how would you get up the tree?" or "Have you climbed trees before?" or "I would like to know that you could climb the tree safely, how would you keep safe?" Jill's questioning generates a wealth of answers - ladders, ropes, hang gliders, special boots, skateboard pads, previous tree climbing experiences etc Jill is satisfied that the children know how to climb the tree safely. She explains, that she would like to come with them, but ever since she fell down the hill, she gets a bit dizzy, so she'll wait at the bottom of the tree.

* Follow those suggestions and develop the action to work towards a solution.

Jill leaves. TAF (out of role) works with children to prepare and climb, using the children's suggestion. These ideas can be narrated but children usually enjoy acting them out. Again TAF climbing with the children, can be asking if they can see the Magpie. Once the Magpie has been spotted, the climb can stop. Before meeting the magpie, TAF (out of role) can ask the children if they think that the Magpie will give back the bucket or how should they go about getting the bucket back from Magpie. Sometimes the children suggest snatching the bucket or acting in a violent way towards the Magpie (who is generally seen as the 'wrong doer'). These suggestions can be discussed in the group, "Is snatching the way to get what you want?" The great thing about drama is that ideas can be suggested and trialed. One group I worked with insisted on trying to steal the bucket back. When this happened the Magpie became distressed and even more determined to keep the bucket, at which point the drama was stopped, and as a group we reflected on whether our decision to steal it back had been successful. Agreeing that it hadn't we tried something different.

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*** Presenting the problem: Part two.**

TAF goes into role as the Magpie with bucket. TAF out of role can ask children what the magpie is doing, when they meet it. Eating, sleeping, feeding etc. Magpie may greet children and ask them what they are doing up the tree, or as often is the case, the children abruptly demand the bucket back. Magpie can act surprised and ask why the children want the bucket., or insist that the bucket belongs to it. Children refute this, saying that it belongs to Jill. Magpie may plead innocent saying, that she just found the bucket. In this case children can again establish rightful ownership. Magpie is reluctant to surrender bucket as she has been using it as a nest. She shows the eggs that she has laid in the bucket. If she gives back the bucket she will have no place to keep her eggs.

*** Elicit explanations and possible solutions from the children.**

Children suggest that Magpie builds her own nest. Magpie responds that she has to keep the eggs warm. If she flies away to build a nest the eggs will get cold and die. Children suggest that they could build a nest. If children suggest keeping the eggs warm, Magpie can respond with concern that the children might squash them, or that they might hatch why she is away, and think that the children are their parents. Magpie quite like the idea of the children building her a nest but is suspicious. Would the nest they build be as good as the bucket? What would they make a nest from. Magpie listens to children's suggestions, and is slowly convinced. If the children build her a new nest then she would be able to give them back the bucket.

*** Following those suggestions and developing the action to work towards a solution.**

TAF may need to come out of role at this point if she is the only adult working with the children. Otherwise children can move to another part of the tree where they are to build the nest, leaving TAF in role.

Creation of nest can be narrated, acted out, or sung.

Song: Nest building song

Children form a sitting circle. Children take turns to move (skip, jump, fly) around the circle, while the rest of the group sings the nest building song. At the end of the song, the child/ children have a chance to say what they have collected and where they have collected it from and place the imaginary item in the centre of the circle.

*(Child's name) flies low, (Child's name) flies high
(Child's name), flies around the world, to build a nest for Magpie
(Child's name), flies far, (Child's name) flies near
What has(Child's name) found to build a nest right here?*

Once the children are in agreement that the nest is completed, Magpie is invited back to to inspect the nest. She comments and the various materials, the strength and warmth of the nest. Satisfied and delighted with the new nest, her eggs are transferred, and Jill's bucket returned.

*** Resolve the story, bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion.**

Children climb back down the tree, where they are greeted by Jill, who is eager to hear how they managed to get the bucket back. Drama can then end with the recitation of the nursery rhyme and acting out of fetching he water, or with a celebratory ' Bucket dance'.

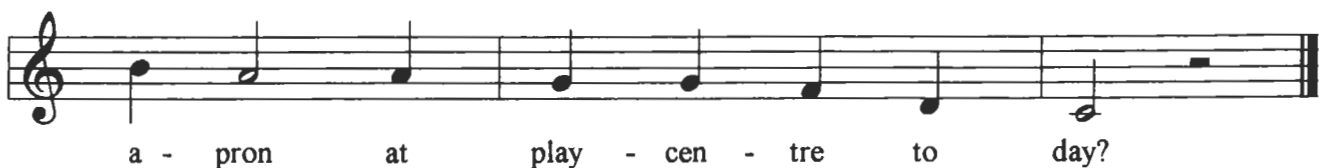
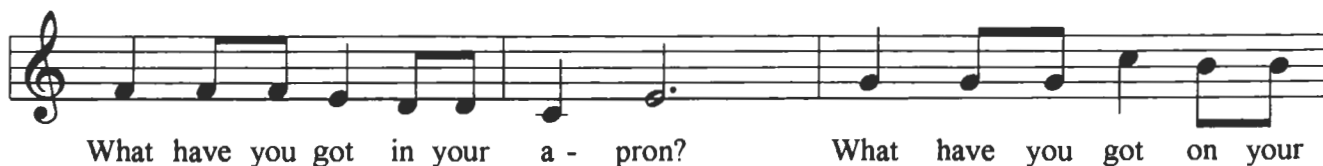
Bucket dance.

Children form a circle. Each person has the opportunity to dance in the middle of the circle with the bucket i.e. over the bucket, around the bucket, balancing bucket on different body parts, lifting bucket etc. The bucket is then handed to another person.

Jill and the stolen bucket

What Have You Got In Your Apron?

Source unknown



(arms stretching up, alternate stretches from side to side, as if trying to catch stars with hands)

How I wonder what you are

(kicking the stars with your toes)

Up above the world so high

(spinning around the universe on your bottom)

Like a diamond in the sky

(making stars with as many different body parts as possible)

Twinkle, twinkle little star

(arms stretching up, alternate stretches from side to side, as if trying to catch stars with hands)

How I wonder what you are

(finish by making a star shape with your whole body)

Action Travelling Song

(Going To Kentucky)

Trad. American



Jump-ing, jump-ing, jump-ing, We're jump-ing up the hill. Oh,



Jump-ing, jump-ing, jump-ing, jump-ing, We're still jump-ing still.

The children meet Jill, who greets them: "Goodness me, you look a bit tired. How did you manage to get up the hill?" or, "Are you the people I just saw jumping up the hill?" The children say that they are and recount their various modes of locomotion. "Yes, it's a large hill to climb, I don't often get people up here. Have you come to visit me?" The children answer yes, and may say that they have come to fetch water.

Presenting the problem

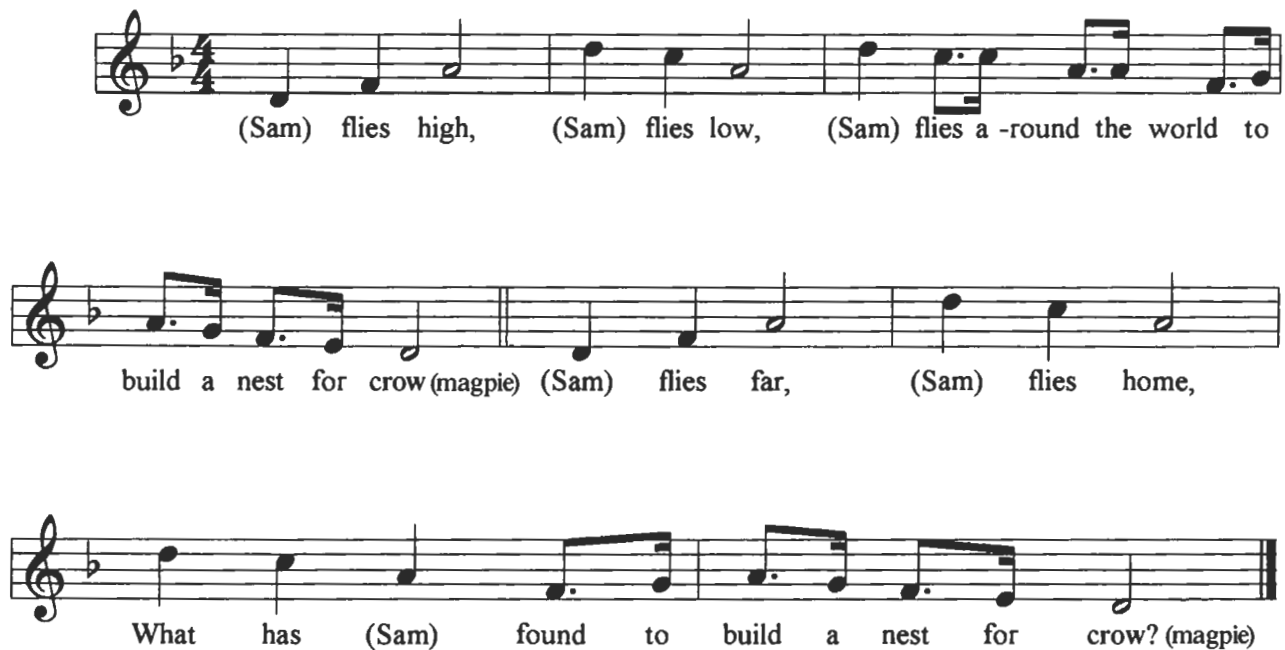
At this point Jill apologises and says that she would like to help them but she no longer has a bucket. If the children do not raise the issue of fetching water, then Jill can say that she is very glad they have come as she has a problem. Her bucket has been stolen and she can no longer fetch water from the well. A magpie has stolen her bucket and taken it up to the top of a very high tree.

Discussing and problem solving

The children may offer their own buckets. Jill can thank the children and explain that she would really like her own bucket back as it was a very special bucket, a present from

Nest Building Song

Tanya Batt



(Sam) flies high, (Sam) flies low, (Sam) flies a -round the world to
build a nest for crow (magpie) (Sam) flies far, (Sam) flies home,
What has (Sam) found to build a nest for crow? (magpie)

innocent, saying that she just found the bucket. The children can again assert Jill's rightful ownership. Magpie is reluctant to surrender the bucket as she has been using it as a nest. She shows the eggs that she has laid in the bucket. If she gives the bucket back she will have no place to keep her eggs.

Action and consequences

The children suggest that magpie build her own nest. Magpie responds that she has to keep the eggs warm. If she flies away to build a nest the eggs will get cold and die. The children suggest that they could build a nest. If the children suggest they can keep the