

The Bird in the Forest

This resource was produced in partnership with Oxygen for The Story Exchange project (focusing on *how oral storytelling can support teachers to improve emotional literacy in the classroom?*). Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

A Jataka tale, also known as The Brave Little Parrot

Recommended Key Stage: 1 and 2

Synopsis: A little bird lives in a forest that becomes ravaged by fire. Instead of fleeing from the fire the little bird is determined to save their tree and put out the fire. It flies to a stream, collects water on its wings, then flies over the fire and shakes off the water. The Gods watch its efforts, laughing at the bird until the Eagle God takes pity on the little bird and helps to extinguish the fire.

Part 1: Share the Story

Start by sharing a map or a globe with the children and show them where India is. This is where this story originates. The Bird in the Forest is one of the Jataka tales - the Jataka tales are a collection of fables and stories about the future Buddha, and they are dated between 300 and 400AD.

Listen to Chris Smith telling the story.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Key Stage 1 Questions	Key Stage 2 Questions
- What was your favourite part of this story? - How do you think the parrot felt when his friends didn't stay to help? - How did he feel at the end of the story? - What values did the little parrot show? - Why did his friends leave? How do you think they felt? - What do you think the Eagle God was thinking when he started to cry?	- What was your favourite part of this story? - What would you have done if you were Little Parrot's friend? - What could Little Parrot have done differently? - Was Little Parrot right to stay? Is there a right or wrong thing to do here? - What lessons can we learn from this story? - Would you save your home if it was just you left?
- Which characters were determined? What were the characters determined to do and how did they show their determination? - Do you think the little bird gained the sense of achievement when the fire was extinguished? Can you explain your response? - What was the reason for the Eagle God flying down to see the little bird? What was his purpose? Was he planning on helping put out the fire?	

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Drama/Oracy Activity	Emotional Literacy Focus
Perform the Story with a Soundscape (Resource A) - To begin with focus on one section of the story, for example: the beginning when everything is fine and happy. - Encourage the students to identify the feelings in this section and then to think about which sounds can be heard. Link in the use of instruments (including the voice) - how can the sounds help to convey the emotion of the scene? - Slowly develop the story through the sounds that can be heard, the emotions felt, and the instruments chosen (anything can be an instrument - crumpling paper for the fire, whistling for the bird). - Some students could be actors while others provide the soundtrack. - The performance can be performed for another class or in assembly. Conscience Alley - The children should split into two lines with a path running down the middle. - One child walks along the path in character and listens to advice from each participant. - One side of the path will give one side of the argument, with the other side giving the rebuttal. E.g. One side may tell the Parrot that he should stay and put out the fire because his home is very special, while the other side may argue that he should fly away because his own life is more important. - When the child in character gets to the other end, they should announce their decision. Play a Game: Fire and Water Game This game is a version of 'Craters and Volcanoes'. Instructions for the game can be found in Resource B.	Role Reversal - Working in pairs, one student is the little bird, and the other is one of the bird's friends. - The little bird's role is to persuade their friend to stay and help put out the fire and friend's role is to try and persuade the little bird to flee the forest. - After the students have had some time to try out the roles, they reverse them and try to argue the opposing point of view. - Share good arguments from both sides. - Which side has the most convincing arguments? - How easy/difficult was it to reverse their thinking to argue for the other point of view? If the mirror could talk - Choose 4 children to sit in chairs in a square in the middle of the circle. 1 child walks into the middle in character – this could be Little Parrot, the Eagle God, the parrot's friends. - The children sat on the chairs are acting as mirrors and can take it in turns to give the character advice. They can also give the character some hard truths if appropriate. This helps the children to empathise with the character and delve deeper into their feelings. - This can then be carried out in groups of 5 for the rest of the class to have a go. Play a Game: Water Race (KS2) This is a team relay race and should be done outside as it involves spilling water. Instructions for the game can be found in Resource C.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Design	Freeze Frame Feelings
Draw a picture of the Brave Little Parrot. What does bravery look like to you? What is a brave character like on the inside? Encourage the children to write the character's thoughts and feelings inside their picture. They can choose key moments from the story and explore how the parrot showed bravery and his conflicting thoughts and feelings in these moments.	Children work in groups to freeze frame one part of the story. They should think carefully about what the characters are thinking and feeling in this moment. When they present their freeze frame, do some thought tapping – tap the children on the head and ask them to express what their character is thinking. If each group chooses different moments in the story, you can track the character's changing thoughts and feelings throughout the story. Older children could prepare a series of freeze frames to tell the story, each with a caption to describe the key moments of the story.
Creative Writing Challenges • If the little bird were to write a Thank You letter to Eagle God what would it say? Consider: how much the little bird loves its home, the effort that went into putting the fire out, how much the bird appreciates the support it got and what will happen now the fire is out. • What if a different animal were to try and save the forest, for example: a snake? How might it go about the challenge? Who/what could come to help?	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Other Jataka tales:

The Monkey and the Crocodile (also known as **The Monkey's Heart**)

The Turtle Who Wanted To Fly (also known as **The Talkative Turtle**)

The Hare in the Moon

The Monkey and the Mango.

Other stories on the theme of determination:

Quackling (Europe)

The Tortoise and The Hare (Europe)

The Little Red Hen (Europe)

The King and the Cockerel (Middle East)

How The Stars Came Into The Sky (North America)

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1 PSHE

- to recognise risk in simple everyday situations and what action to take to minimise harm
- about how to keep safe at home (including around electrical appliances) and fire safety (e.g. not playing with matches and lighters – opportunity for fire service visit to school)

KS2 PSHE

- how to predict, assess and manage risk in different situations
- about hazards (including fire risks) that may cause harm, injury or risk in the home and what they can do to reduce risks and keep safe

Geography – different environments, climate change, natural disasters, habitats

Design and Technology – designing a way to solve parrot's problem or designing a new home to meet parrot's wants and needs

Science – living things and their habitats

Learning Resources

The Story Exchange was a Paul Hamlyn funded project run in partnership between Oxygen and the Story Museum focusing on the inquiry question: *how can oral storytelling support teachers to improve emotional literacy in the classroom?* Storytellers from the Story Museum worked with class teachers in seven Oxfordshire schools to co-teach sessions which have been distilled into these resources to share with the wider community.



<https://www.oxygenoxfordshire.com/>

Learning Resources

Resource A – Soundscape

Read each section, which relates to the narrative of the story.

Students echo with the suggested sounds and actions or make up some of their own. The action group can be split into two groups for sections of the story where two different actions can be performed

Read aloud narration	Sound effect	Action
In the forest lived a little bird who loved its home completely.	chirping or birds rustling of leaves – rubbing hands on clothes or flipping through pages of a book	Group A be trees waving their arms Group B be birds, flapping their wings looking happy
One day Little Bird smelt something different – it was a fire raging through the forest	frightened squeaks of animals crackling of fire – crinkling of paper	Both groups - Birds and animals smelling the fire then animals escaping (slowly), looking scared
Little Bird called out to its friends, “Help, don’t go. We must do something.” But they fled in fear.	sounds continue as before	Both groups can echo the words spoken by the narrator then continue to run away
Little Bird flew down to a stream and dipped its wings into the water and then tipped its wings to drop the water on the fire. Little Bird kept trying to extinguish the fire.	Rain stick to make water sounds. Turn a tap on so water is dribbling out Hiss and make blup/bubble noises with mouth Rub hands on clothing to make a rushing sound crinkle paper for the fire	Both groups - birds fly to river to scoop water up and drop it on the fire Look desperate and determined Keep up the movements
In the heavens the Gods watch the little bird and laughed because the task was beyond what Little Bird could achieve alone.	tinkly bell sounds light tapping on drinking glasses and cups	Group A are the Gods looking down at the bird, laughing and pointing Group B – continue trying to put fire out
The Eagle God flew down to Little Bird “Listen, little bird,” said the Eagle God, “You must fly away. Your attempts to put out the fire won’t work and you will die.” “I don’t care if I die,” cried Little Bird. “I love my home and I will do everything I can to save it.”	Continue to make fire sounds and water sounds	Group A – Eagle God – repeat the words spoken Group B – Little Bird – repeat the words spoken

Learning Resources

The Eagle God was so moved by Little Bird's determination that it began to cry	crying sounds	Both groups – Eagle God – shoulders shake, rub eyes and chest hitches
Large tears fell from the Eagle God's eyes on to the fire	plip, plop sounds fizzles, hiss sounds crackle of fire	Both groups – carry on crying
The fire went out! Little Bird returned to its tree top home and all the other animals and birds soon returned.	crackle of fire gets quitter and stops cheer	Both groups – stop to watch the fire go out. Look amazed Both groups- cheer and high five

Learning Resources

Resource B – Fire and Water Game

- Divide the players into two teams, one team is the Fire Team and the other is the Water Team. Separate them in the playing space – teams should be facing each other with an empty area in the middle.
- Place an even number of small plastic cones (plastic bowls or cups could be used instead) around the empty space. Half the cones are placed upright – fire, and the other half are placed upside down – water.
- Give the teams a short amount of time (1 or 2 minutes is usually enough) to turn over as many cones as they can to match their team designation. So the Fire Team turns as many cones as they can to be the right way up while the Water Team turns cones upside down.



- Players have to move about the space and should not 'guard' any cones and the cones cannot be picked up and moved about.
- After the allotted time, see how many fire cones and how many water cones there are. The winning team is the one with the most cones in their orientation.

Resource C – Water Race game

- Each team can pick a bird type to be e.g. eagle, sparrow, blackbird, hawk, etc
- Each team is given a bucket of water to be the stream (the water could have food colouring added to it to make it easier to see), a cup to be the bird's wings and a clear bottle to be the fire.
- Place the fire bottle away from the team (e.g. 10 metres away)
- Taking it in turns the players fill the cup from the stream bucket, run to the fire bottle and carefully pour the water into the fire bottle, then run back and give the cup to the next team member who repeats the process.
- The winners are the team to fill up their fire bottle first. If the water is coloured, then it is easier for teams to see how much they have filled their clear fire bottle.
- This game is a good one to play outside as water will be spilt!