

The King with Dirty Feet

A folktale from India

Recommended Key Stage: KS1

Synopsis

The King refuses to have a bath and as a result, ends up with very smelly feet! Eventually, he agrees to wash them but discovers that they get dirty again very quickly. He asks his servant to solve this problem, but he just keeps making it worse. Until a stranger uses his mistake to fashion a solution – the world's first pair of shoes! From then on, the King can keep his feet clean and smelling fresh.

Part 1: Share the Story

Watch the video **Stories from the Woodshed: The King with Dirty Feet**.

Show the children a map of the world and show the journey from India to the UK. This story has travelled very far to be here.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Questions

- What did you think of the story? What was your favourite part?
- What did you think of the King? How would you describe his character?
- Would you like to be a King? Why?
- Is there anything you hate doing that you have to do?
- How would you feel if you were the King's servant?
- What would you do to solve the problem?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Story Walk - Students stand in their own space around the room. - Tell the story slowly using Resource A - As you tell it, the students use the space to mime it while staying in their space. The people calling the King names, the King having a bath, Gabu finding solutions, etc. - Try doing this with no sounds, just expressions.	Story Switch - Break up students into pairs. Throughout this activity announce "switch!" so each student gets a turn - In pairs, students try to retell the story using only facial expressions and actions, while the other student can translate these into the story - One student can try and tell the story entirely in sounds and sound effects, while the other students have to narrate from this.
Dress Up/Imaginative Play - Dress up like the royal characters in the story. - Use fabric pieces (not the really big blankets and sheets) and ribbons/string to "make" shoes. - Try walking in them. What are the problems? - Who might wear the shoes you have created? - Look at images of platform shoes' Would you like to wear shoes like these? What activities would be more difficult in these shoes? - Imagine wearing very tall platform shoes and play with the stilts.	
If the mirror could talk: - Choose five children for this game and four chairs set out in a square – four of the children sit in the square with the other child walking into the middle in character. - Imagine they are the King in the story. When the King walks into the square, each child sitting in a chair becomes a mirror. When the King looks into one of the 'mirrors', his reflection can give him some advice. - Choose a moment in the story – e.g. when everyone is calling the King names for being so smelly. What might his reflection tell him? They might tell him everything will be okay; they might tell him not to listen to people who are rude to him, or they might tell him he needs to have a bath! Each mirror might give different advice. - Try the activity again with a new character in the middle – e.g. the King's servant. What might the mirrors say to him when he is trying to fix the problem? Or when the King is angry with him?	

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Creative Challenge: Can you think of another everyday problem that could be fixed? What if the King hated having his fingernails trimmed? Or what if he hated reading because he couldn't see very well? Can we think of ways to help him? Can you think of... • The problem • Two attempts to fix the problem • The invention that was created to solve the problem Draw this as a comic strip/ storyboard to show what happens at each step.	Act it out Children act out different parts of the story in small groups. Each group should choose one moment from the story to perform, e.g. 1. The King refusing to have a bath and the rest of the kingdom laughing and calling him names. 2. The King finally having a bath but then getting his feet dirty straight away. 3. Gabu trying to find a solution to the problem and the King getting cross each time. 4. Gabu finally finding a solution and making the King happy, but all the villagers are unhappy. 5. The old man making the first pair of shoes and solving the problem. Each group should have at least one narrator telling their part of the story. When one group has finished, the next group can get up to start, so that the whole class is working together to tell the story.
Investigating shoe designs • Look at the picture of platform shoes called chopines from 17th century Italy on Resource B. • How are they different from the shoes you are wearing today? • If you have play stilts, let the students attempt walking on them. • Discuss whether they would like to wear these shoes? • Would they solve the king's problem? • What makes shoes comfortable? • Design a new pair of shoes for yourself or for a royal story character	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

King Midas (Ancient Greece)

The Coming of the Unicorn (Scotland)

The King and the Cockerel (Iraq)

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1 PSHE

- simple hygiene routines that can stop germs from spreading

KS1 Design and Technology

- shoe designs: design purposeful, functional, appealing products for themselves and other users based on design criteria

Resource A

Story Walk

The King with Dirty Feet

- Once there was a King who hated bath time. Because he never washed, his feet got smellier, and smellier, and smellier!
- The people could smell him from a mile away – pong! They would call him all sorts of names behind his back.
- The King didn't like this very much, so he decided to take a bath and clean off his smelly feet.
- He had a lovely bath in the river – he scrubbed and scrubbed until he was sparkling clean!
- But when he got out of the river and stepped onto the ground, his feet were immediately dirty again! He couldn't believe it!
- The King called his servant Gabu and told him to solve the problem, or he would chop his head off
- Gabu tried to sweep all of the dirt away... but the dust got everywhere!
- Then, Gabu tried to mop the ground... but he just made big muddle puddles!
- Finally, Gabu laid out a great carpet made of leather, it covered the whole kingdom...
- The King took a bath and tried out the new carpet. When he took a step, his foot stayed clean! The King was finally happy!
- But, with the carpet laid out over the kingdom, nothing could grow... And all the people and all the animals were very, very hungry.
- Eventually, they went to the King and begged him to remove the carpet. But the King refused.
- Until an old man stepped forward and said he could solve the problem. He took out a knife and cut around the King's feet. Then, he used string to attach the leather to the bottom of the King's feet.
- They were the first pair of sandals, and they worked! Now the King could wash his feet and keep them clean.

Learning Resources

Resource B

Here's a 17th century solution to the problem of the King with dirty feet.

These shoes were made in the 17th century in Venice, Italy. They are called chopines. They were meant to be convenient for ladies who wanted to keep their skirts clean when they walked through the dirty streets. Over time they were made so tall that the ladies needed servants to support them as they walked around.

Have a go at walking on stilts if you have them. That is probably a bit like walking on these chopines! What would life be like if they were your everyday shoes?



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