The Story of the Lion and the Jackal – teacher's notes

You can watch the story on video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSNQk-xZ7Vw

Background Information

About five hundred Jataka tales can be found in the Buddhist Pali and Sanskrit texts. The word Jataka (pronounced Jah-ta-ka) means birth, and these stories are traditionally said to be accounts of the past lives of the Buddha as he pursued the path to Enlightenment. Buddhists would not necessarily take the stories to be literally true – they would look for a deeper meaning in them. In the texts the Buddha is often depicted as telling a Jataka tale to illustrate a point or clear up a misunderstanding. All the Jataka tales demonstrate the central Buddhist teaching of the Law of Karma: that actions have consequences. Selfish actions lead to suffering and selfless actions lead to true happiness.

The Lion and the Jackal is a well-known Jataka tale which even features in comic books in Buddhist countries. It is said that lions and jackals often live together in the same area. This story explains how they may have first become friends. This is a helpful story to relate when friendships in class are put under strain by careless talk. This programme would also be appropriate if issues of discrimination, such as racism, need to be explored.

Programme synopsis

Story

A young lion gets stuck in the mud and is rescued by a jackal. The lion and the jackal become firm friends and decide to live together, with their two families. All goes well until some of the older lions become resentful of the jackals. Their moaning and complaints create a rift between the two families but the trust between the young lion and the jackal saves the day.

Themes

- Helping others
- Friendship and trust
- Gossip and telling tales
- Being sorry

Recalling the story



The Lion and the Jackal worksheet

The sequencing activity is designed to help the children recollect the main aspects of the story. Recall with the children the main points of the story. The pictures may be enlarged and used as support. The children may then:

- Cut out and match the sentences to the pictures.
- Order the sentences and copy them out to match the pictures.
- Write their own sentences for each picture, using illustrated key words as support.
- Free write the story, using the illustrations and key words as support.

Explore and respond

Drama

<u>A trust game</u>

Instructions to the children:



- Get into pairs.
- One of you close your eyes and let your partner lead you carefully and gently around the room.
- As you are leading your partners, remember that they cannot see. Take them by the arm and guide them carefully. Don't let them bump into anything or anyone. Show them they can trust you.
- Swap places with your partner and repeat.
- Discuss the experience with the children:
    - How did it feel to be led? Did you trust your partner enough to be able to keep your eyes closed?
    - How did it feel to lead? Did your partner trust you?
    - What else could you do to help your partner trust you more?

Discussion

Trust and making promises



The lion promised not to hurt the jackal. The jackal trusted him.

- How do you know when to trust someone?
- Who do you trust?
- Do you ever make promises? When? To whom?
- Is it ever right to break a promise?

Helping



The lion was stuck in the mud. He thought he was going to die. His family didn't know where he was so they couldn't help him.

- What was the lion thinking as he lay stuck in the mud?
- What did he think when he saw the jackal?
- Why did the jackal decide to help the lion?
- What would have happened if she hadn't helped him?
- How did the lion thank the jackal for helping him?
- When do you need help?
- Who are the people who help you?
- How do you thank the people who help you?
- In what ways can you help other people?

The Lion and the Jackal thank you letter worksheet



After the above discussion, the children:

- Write a letter to thank someone who has helped them.
- Draw or write about how they help others

Drama

Chinese Whispers



Instructions for the teacher:

- Write on cards a selection of simple phrases, e.g., "Jo's got new blue trainers with red laces," or "I like fish and chips with lots of salt and vinegar."
- Ask the children to sit in a close circle with you.
- Choose one of the cards without letting the children see the words.
- Whisper the phrase to the child sitting next to you.
- That child whispers exactly what they have heard to the next child, and so on around the circle.
- The last child says what they have heard out loud.
- The teacher reads out the original phrase from the card. Has it changed?

Play as many times as you wish.

Discussion

Gossip and moaning



The lions and the jackals had been living happily together, but when food became scarce some of the old lions began to grumble.

- Why wasn't there enough food for everyone?
- Who did the old lions blame?
- How do you think the jackal felt when he overheard the old lions grumbling?
- What happened when he passed on the tale to the other jackals?
- How do you feel when people say things about you that aren't true?
- Can you think of times when passing on stories that weren't true has caused unhappiness?

Saying sorry



The old lion snatched the pup's bone and moaned about the jackals. When he realized the trouble and unhappiness he had caused, he felt sorry.

- What did he do to show he was sorry?
- What do you think he said to the jackals?
- What does it mean, “to apologize”?
- Is it easy to apologize?
- Can you tell me about a time when you were sorry for something you had said or done?
- Did you apologize? What did you say?

Lion and Jackal saying sorry worksheet

After the above discussion, the children:



- Draw or write about what the old lion did to show he was sorry.
- Draw or write about what they can do or say to show they are sorry.

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