

Giant- Catcher Adventures, a sample drama lesson for First and Second Primary Classes *(Featuring Gerry/ or Geri the Giant- catcher to depict a hero/heroine)*

by Triona Stokes

Duration: 40 minutes

The drama aims to facilitate young children playing in role as giant catchers in a bid to develop their understanding of character motivation through narrative development. It also seeks to engage children in creative problem-solving and its expression through the art form of drama.

Resources: Music to accompany guided imagery (e.g. *Princess Bride* soundtrack or other action/adventure film score)

Sample props (for differentiation purposes) – rope, netting

Role Signifier (e.g. hat) for teacher role of king's courtier

Stimulus: **'Wanted' poster** (e.g. *Hero wanted to rid the Kingdom of two Giants. Reward offered. Meeting in Town Hall at 4pm*)

Introduction: To establish a fictional kingdom of olden times, the children are invited to participate in a context-building exercise. The teacher, in role as the king's courtier, welcomes and thanks all the giant catchers of the land for joining him/her today in the tower of the king's castle overlooking the village. A reconnaissance mission has been called by the king, for giant-catchers to re-familiarise themselves with every aspect of the kingdom in a bid to track down new troublesome giants. Suggestions offered from the children can be recorded pictorially on a map as desired, to **create a shared visual representation of the kingdom**, which can be referenced in future lessons also. Each child is invited to complete one of the following sentences. When one structure has been exhausted, the teacher can introduce the next: **'In** the village I can see; / **Near** the village I can see'; / **Beyond** the village I can see'.

Note: It is worth spending some time at this stage. Teacher may need to scaffold the children to help with suggestions - perhaps clarify at first if everyone understands what a village is and what is so very special about 'ours'. Continue, for ex. 'I heard there is a beautiful well/rose-garden/playground.... children continue their suggestions, taking time to talk about various features – would they play there? have picnics? etc. - these can be recalled later on when describing the depredation the giants get up to. The exercise leads into the next strategy:

Guided Imagery (or Teacher-in-Role): Children are invited to close their eyes and sit to take part in an imagined journey to a musical accompaniment. Using as many of the children's suggestions as possible, the teacher, as the king's courtier, narrates this short guided imagery describing the context and features of the village where we have been safe from giants for a considerable time. But two quarrelling giants have been roaming the kingdom in recent days causing havoc, falling about; breaking things; causing earth tremors, etc. Pause for children to imagine scenarios reported from the village to the king. These are of great worry to the king, who simply used to call on Gerry (Geri) the giant-catcher to overcome these problems. Alas, Gerry (Geri) is now old and frail and cannot move as quickly as he/she used to. ...

Development: The 'Poster Wanted' stimulus is presented for consideration in groups of three. Teacher might urge the children to try for the reward – I wonder what it will be? Children can **discuss** ideas for giant-catching and tools that may be of assistance. These ideas can be practised in **small-group improvisation**. Children play out their giant-catching ideas in their groups of three, showing how they could approach his capture. Ideas are shared amongst the class group and samples are showcased in shortened form as sequences.

The Meeting: Children in role as villagers are invited to attend the meeting, facilitated by the king's courtier. The role of the courtier is to **elicit reports of sightings of the giants**, to get a sense of their nature and whereabouts and how best they might be approached (an example might be to relay sightings/accounts of the wayward giants. It will be stressed that the king would like **evidence** of the giants' capture as he wishes to receive them unharmed.)

The nature of the reward can be elicited here also and agreed. If children seek advice or assistance from Gerry, this can be addressed through a message relayed or Teacher-in-role, as preferred e.g. 'Gerry advises to separate the giants on catching them to prevent further trouble'. The pre-prepared props can be referenced either as 'gifts' from Gerry. (The actual rope does not need to be used, children will happily mime).

Children decide on best approaches to take (combining several ideas from the group where possible). As the king has asked for evidence, we will present the stages undertaken in picture form to him. Children are invited to create a **cartoon strip** (Three or four 'pictures' or freeze frames) of the giant-catchers overcoming the problem. (Children can be reminded to play mindful of existing classroom rules, if deemed necessary).

Conclusion: The cartoon strips can be presented to the king's courtier who presents the reward, with the assistance of a child volunteer in role as king, praising the villagers for their efforts. Alternatively, the presentation of the reward ceremony could be brainstormed, improvised and/or scripted and played out by the class group, including a king's speech called out from the castle balcony to trumpet blast. In this event, each child can take a role, including royals, giant-catchers, courtiers, jesters etc. Gerry (Geri) the giant catcher may also attend.

Possible follow-up Adventures

- Show/write/draw how the reward was used in the village
- **Depict new giant-catching adventures** accompanied by Gerry/ Geri in other towns or villagers - i.e.:
- **New damage** is discovered following a giant's party in a neighbouring kingdom and the villagers' advice is sought.
- What happened next? Create a drama episode featuring **disgruntled giants** who have been captured in previous lesson. They protest their innocence and demand to have their side considered. (*Perhaps it turns out that one of them has a bone to pick **with a child called Jack** who grew a massive beanstalk and climbed up to his castle and stole his golden hen, harp etc!*)