

Gracie and Josh – emotionally and creatively engaging in Drama

Drama is a basic form of expression where students can explore human experience, ideas and values. While Drama is a discipline in its own right, it can be a pathway to other areas, especially the Creative Arts, Music, English, Personal Development (PDPHE) and Human Society and its Environment (HSIE).

As a discipline, Drama incorporates a wide range of forms and styles ranging from mime, narrative drama, role play, improvisation, whole class work, group and solo works, varied interpretation of texts, incorporation of multi media formats and more. Drama study includes knowledge of the dramatic conventions and techniques including speech production, gesture and movement and drama processes. It also includes the range of roles in drama production and performance including, playwrights, actors, directors, lighting and sound designers, multi media designers, dramaturges, set designers, stage managers, costume designers. The drama process involves imagination, role playing, exploration, creating or interpreting story, sharing views in a collaborative process, practicing, rehearsing, performing.

‘Gracie and Josh’ offers an emotionally engaging and relevant entry into drama for younger students.

In a teacher-led process, through ‘Gracie and Josh’, the whole class can participate in discussion, improvisation, devised fictional work, dramatic play and more.

The creation of ‘Gracie and Josh’

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Published Ford Street Publishing

Variety, the children’s charity, approached Susanne about writing a story for children, families and community to share, explore human experience, sing and play and bring hope into their lives.

There was a photo of her daughter Tory, dressed as Incy Wincy Spider stuck next to Susanne’s computer. Her daughter was in a school drama performance as one of the ‘Incy-Wincy’ spiders. The costume design was home-made:-

Materials: a black leotard, black cap, the legs cut from 2 pairs of black tights, socks to stuff the legs.

Method: Stuff the tight legs. Sew 2 legs between the arms and legs on the leotard, creating the effect of 8 spider legs. (View photo.)

Incy Wincy Spider became the inspiration for ‘Gracie and Josh’.

Incy Wincy Spider is a simple, yet joyous story-poem-song showing that children can successfully meet challenges. Incy Wincy can be sung, acted, shared and discussed and is the narrative drive for the picture book ‘Gracie and Josh’.

Ideas, Values, Community (HSIE and PDPHE)

‘Gracie and Josh’ invites kids to play, relate, explore and live each day to the full. It recognises the great challenges of illness, special needs, loss on children and their siblings and community. Children get sad, but have great resilience and when they feel well, the world is bright and exciting. When

they feel sick, they are confused and vulnerable. Children have all the complexity of adult emotions with love, hope, fear, guilt, happiness, powerlessness, courage. However they don't have the experience and skills to deal with it. Siblings develop special relationships which are exacerbated when one of the children faces illness. Story journey drama through 'Gracie and Josh' breaks the silence and opens discussion and understanding.

VARIETY, the children's charity.

Variety Australia is dedicated to empowering children who are sick, disadvantaged or who have special needs to live, laugh and learn. Variety helps young people in schools, children's hospitals and communities across the country.

Variety Australia provides more than \$1 million each month in assistance for children who are sick, disadvantaged or have special needs in Australia.

Variety – www.variety.org.au

Variety proudly endorses 'Gracie and Josh' .

Drama Activities

Incy Wincy climbed up the water spout

Down came the rain, and washed poor Incy out.

Out came the sun, and dried up all the rain

And Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again

1. Read 'Gracie and Josh'

Questions:

What do Gracie and Josh want to be?

How does Gracie help Josh?

How does Josh help Gracie?

Why does Gracie hate Josh's bad week?

Why does Gracie love Josh's good week?

What does it mean when the spider tries and tries again?

How do Gracie and Josh feel when Josh has to take off his cap?

Why do you think the mother holds Gracie's hand too tightly?

When Josh lies in his bed with his eyes closed, how does Gracie feel?

'He's nowhere but everywhere.' Where do you think Josh is?

Why does everyone sing at the end ?

2. Describe the characters of Gracie and Josh
3. In what way is the song-poem-story 'Incy Wincy Spider' like Gracie and Josh's life?
4. Discussion about what feelings children have when they are sick or when their sibling is sick?
5. Class sing and perform 'Incy Wincy Spider.
6. 'Gracie and Josh' as a performance:-

Set design

Costumes

Music

Narrator to read story.

Children from the class act it out:-

Gracie

Josh

Mother

Doctor

Genius Inventor

Students in the movie

Group scenes – school, hospital, movie audience.

The whole class at the end singing 'Incy Wincy Spider'.

7. Cultural diversity:-

Discuss and improvise:-

Incy Wincy Spider in other languages and cultures

Spider stories from Robert the Bruce to Mohammad's spider story

8. Create role plays and stories inspired by 'Gracie and Josh':-

-brother and sister relationships

-creating a movie

-looking after a sick siblings

- creating an invention like the monster inventor

9. Documentary performance

- research children's hospitals

- children in hospital

- Variety the children's charity

10. Emotions in 'Gracie and Josh'.

Discuss and act out emotions in short segments:-

- Anger

- Sadness

- Confusion

- Friendship

- Fear

- Love

'Gracie and Josh' provides an accessible dramatic vehicle that incorporates music, poetry and literature while inviting engagement in key social issues for young children.

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