

## **Why use drama and storytelling in the natural environment?**

We are living in hard times and many people including those we tend to refer to as 'young people' have become disconnected from their own feelings and have a reduced sense of self worth. It is therefore unsurprising that they feel that the natural world is nothing to do with them and have little motivation to discover and explore it.

Stories, myths, illustration dance and drama can help provide people with a different perspective on the world. They help provide a purpose, context and flow to activities while allowing people to feel ownership, empathy and understanding.

The benefit of access to green space is scientifically documented as improving concentration and mental health. Drama therapy is used in a variety of contexts to facilitate personal growth and promote mental health. I am not an expert but it seems to be that a combination of drama and an outdoor setting must be of benefit to participants.

**Hot seating** – Where a character has been put under a spot light and is asked questions from the audience and must stay in character.

**Working in role** – with or with costume assuming the persona of another living thing

**Mantle of the Expert** - When children take on a 'mantle' of expertise they adopt the viewpoint of an older experienced adult who already has expertise and who is working to acquire more expertise because of a particular project. When children take on a mantle of expertise it means that they 'frame' their relationships with other people and with any area of study quite differently than they tend to do when they see themselves as 'pupils'.

**Freeze frame/tableau** – use of the body to represent a picture/snap shot

**Costume** – from a hat or a pair of glasses to full costume

**Story bags/ secret suitcases/ treasure chests** – allows the introduction of objects in an explorative manner encouraging discussion.

**Scene setting** – use of blindfold walk (or similar) with atmospheric reading

**Magic gateway** – use of a doorway as an entry to another land

**Masks** – helpful to reluctant 'actors' as allows separation from the audience

**Traditional /creation stories** – Mummers plays, fairy tales, the Dreamtime – how scientific phenomena were made sense of through story, dance and drama

**Earth Education activities** – all have a story puts the activity in to a wider context

**Drama and storytelling in the outdoors.**

**Some of my favourite story books for engaging people with the outdoors.**

**Jeannie Baker picture books.**

Not just for young children. Beautiful and thought provoking for all ages.

**Window** - A wordless picture book exploring the concept of exponential change. A mother and baby look through a window at a view of wilderness and sky as far as they can see. As Sam, the baby, grows, the view changes. At first, in a cleared patch of forest, a single house appears, A few years pass and there is a village in the distance. The village develops into a city. Sam, now a young man, gets married, has a child of his own and moves to the country. Now father and baby look through a window in their new home. The view again is of a wilderness, but in a cleared patch of forest across a dirt road a prophetic sign reads, 'House Blocks for Sale'

ISBN 0-7445-9676-9 (Hardback) ISBN 0-7445-9486-3 (Paperback)

ISBN 0-7445-9487-1 (Big Book)

**Where the Forest Meets the Sea** - *'My father says there has been a rainforest here for over a hundred million years.'* A boy and his father travel in their boat, 'Time Machine' to a stretch of beach beside a primordial tropical rainforest. As the boy walks among the trees he imagines the forest as it might have been in the past. Dinosaurs emerge, barely perceptible, from a tangle of trunks and vines; the faint outlines of an aboriginal child melt into a background of trees and in the final haunting scene the unspoiled vista readers have toured is overlaid with translucent images of civilisation.

ISBN-Hardback: 0-86203-317-9 (UK) ISBN-Paperback: 0-7445-1305-7 (UK)

ISBN-Bigbook: 0-7445-6301-1 (UK)

**The Hidden Forest** - Ben holds little regard for sea life. When his fish trap is tangled in the kelp his friend Sophie helps him to free it and so takes Ben under the sea where he discovers the enchanted world of the kelp forest and its inhabitants. Ben's experience turns him from fear and exploitation to exploration, wonder and delight in what he finds.

ISBN – Hardback 1-85681-010-0 (UK)

**Stories for very young people;**

**One Hungry Spider** - Jeannie Baker - is a counting book. It also informs young readers of a day in the life of an orbweb spider. The reader is taken from numbers 1 – 10 by means of the spider who has close encounters with his prey and his predators.

ISBN –Paperback: 0-86896-670-3

Into the Forest Education

**Stories for very young people continued:**

**Owl Babies** - Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson

**Percy the Park Keeper After the Storm** – Nick Butterworth

**The Gruffalo, The Stick Man** – Julia Donaldson and Axel Shaeffer

**Jack and the Beanstalk** – traditional, lots of versions

**The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Very Busy Spider, The Very Angry Ladybird** – Eric Carle

**We're going on a Bear Hunt** – Michael Rosen – ISBN: 978-0-744-2323-2

**The Prickly Hedgehog** – Mark Ezra - ISBN: 1854301284

**Meet Zogg** – Anthea Stevenson and Gina Mullarky – [www.cdec.org.uk](http://www.cdec.org.uk)

**Stories for the young and the young once!;**

**Into the Forest** – Anthony Browne – ISBN: 1844285596

**Holes** – Louis Sachar – ISBN: 074754459X

**The Hobbit (Graphic novel)** – JRR Tolkien illustrated by David Wenzel – ISBN: 978-0-261-10266-8

**Harry Potter** series – JK Rowling

**Kensukes Kingdom, Why the Whales Came** – Michael Morpurgo

**The People Who Hugged the Trees** – Deborah Lee Rose – ISBN: 0911797807

Plus anything involving mysteries, puzzles, dragons, battles, magic!!

**Helpful books for activities:**

**Talking to the Earth** – Gordon Maclellan – ISBN: 1898307431

**Celebrating Nature** – Gordon Maclellan – ISBN: 1861631685

**Sharing Nature with Children** – Joseph Cornell – ISBN:1883220734