



Curriculum Objectives

Strand Unit: Exploration, creation and performance of dance

- Explore strong and light movement.
- Move with an awareness of the body and the space it moves in.
- Begin to show sensitivity to music when moving.
- Create and perform a dance with teacher's guidance.
- Move in space safely with others.
- Develop poise, balance and coordination while moving and stopping

Strand Unit: Understanding and appreciation of dance

- Continue to develop an awareness of the need for focus and concentration in dance.

Move up a level

Venue

- Hall or quiet outdoor space.

PSSI Homepage

Equipment

- CD player, music and bubbles or balloons.

Reference

- Primary School Curriculum (1999) Physical Education, page 18-19.



ACTIVITY

1 Introduction**Switching on for dance**

Sit cross-legged, facing the children who are all spread out in their own spaces. Remind them to **switch on** for dance:
Switch on

- your ears
- your eyes
- your concentration
- your body.

Warm up and stretching: Visit your warm up bank.

2 Lesson theme: Strong and light movement**Stage 1: Exploring strong movement**

The children sit on the floor and explore the feeling of pressing their two palms against each other. Repeat this exercise a few times, varying the length of time the palms are pressed together.

Now the children experiment with pressing their palms against the floor and then pushing and pressing other parts of the body against the floor.

Discuss with the children how it felt to do this pressing and pushing action.

Stage 2: Exploring light movement

The children sit again and you blow bubbles around them, discussing with the children how the bubbles move – lightly, gently, softly etc.

Now the children stand up and you move through the group blowing bubbles while the children try to dance under/over/around the bubbles without bursting them.

If the floor surface in your hall is not suited to using bubbles, i.e. tiled/wooden, replace the bubbles with a balloon, firstly getting the children to watch while you dance under/over/around a balloon and then giving them a balloon between two.

TEACHING POINTS

- Ensure that each child has enough space to be able to move safely and to be able to see you.
- Encourage each child to focus and concentrate as they begin this lesson.
- Choose from Music Selection 1.
- This exercise is an attempt to help the children internalise the meaning of strong movement in the body, i.e. how does it affect my body when I push/pull/press against something? In this way we are trying to get beyond the standard **move around the room in as strong way** which usually provokes the superficial response where most of the children stomp around, banging their feet on the floor and making a lot of noise.
- Safety is an important consideration, so each exercise is done carefully, especially when pushing down against the floor.
- Encourage the children to describe how the muscles felt when the pushing/pressing action was happening, e.g. tight, hard, strong, sore etc.
- The bubbles are an attempt to help the children to see **lightness** in action.
- This activity gives the children the opportunity to experience the sensation of the lightness of the bubbles as they dance with them.
- Insist that the children do not crowd up and follow you, but wait for the bubbles to pass through them.
- It is a great help to have a second person blowing the bubbles with you, so enlist any available help.
- If using the balloons, ensure you have them blown up before the lesson.

ACTIVITY

3 Conclusion

(a) The strong and light dance

In this dance the children are asked to interpret a **strong** and a **light** piece of music.

Stage 1: Listening to the music

Gather the children in a circle and ask them to listen to two pieces of music, one that conveys very strong and powerful dynamics and the other which has very light and gentle qualities.

Ask the children to identify the **strong** music and the **light** music.

Stage 2: Dancing to the music

Now play the two pieces of music, alternating from one to the other and ask the children to dance to the music, changing from strong to light and light to strong actions as appropriate.

Guide with your voice where necessary:

Let me see what way your body dances when I play the first piece of music. Everyone is moving in a very strong way because the music is powerful and strong. Can you add a strong jump? What speed are you moving at? How do your arms move?

Now the music changes and look – all the bodies are getting softer ...I see some dancers are going on tiptoe, others are turning a lot ...

(b) Cool down activity

Lead the children through stretches for arms, legs and torso, emphasising when the movements are strong and/or light. Conclude by pressing hands together firmly in a prayer gesture. Now push the joined hands up above the head while breathing in deeply and strongly. Release hands and let arms fall gently back to the side while exhaling quietly and lightly. Repeat two or three times more.

TEACHING POINTS

- Choose two pieces of music that have obviously contrasting dynamics. For example:

Strong movement

- Yello, 'More' from *Pocket Universe*.
- Jean Michel Jarre, 'Second rendezvous' from *Rendezvous*.
- Afro Celt Sound System, 'Riding the waves' from *Volume 2: Release*.

Light movement

- Mike Oldfield, 'Sentinel' from *Instrumental Moods*.
- Enya, 'Fairytale' from *The Celts*.
- Enrico Morricone, 'Chi Mai' from *Moods 1*.
- You will need to use either two tapes on a music system which has two tape decks or, if using CDs, you will need access to two CD systems. You should then play one track of music for a few seconds, then pause it.
- At the same time as pausing the first track, start to play the other track. You work in this way, alternating between the two tracks of music, so that they run one into the other, and the children are challenged to respond to the change of music.
- Note: Strong movement tends to be grounded and on a medium to low level while the focus in light movement is more upward and on a medium to high level.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
- Visit your stretching bank.
- Encourage the children to use this time to relax and to refocus as they get ready to return to the classroom.

DEVELOPMENT

Further development for Senior Infants, or if repeating this lesson with Junior Infants:

Repeat the strong and light dance as a partner dance using the follow-the-leader structure.

No. 1 leads for the strong music and No. 2 leads when the music changes to light. Then reverse that order.

- See Lesson 4 – follow-the-leader dance.