



Move up a level

PSSI Homepage

## Curriculum Objectives

## Venue

## Equipment

## Reference

## 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.
- Show sensitivity to rhythm changes and phrasing in music.
- Respond with sensitivity and imagination to the use of a story as a stimulus for dance.
- Create and perform a dance with a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Move in space safely with others.
- Develop increased 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.
- Watch the dance of others with courtesy and respect.
- Hall or quiet outdoor space.
- CD player, bubbles, the story of **Noah's Ark**, animal posters and music.
- Primary School Curriculum (1999) Physical Education, page 40-41.



## ACTIVITY

## 1 Introduction

**Switching on for dance**

Stand 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: Revisiting strong and light movements**

Sit with the children in a circle and briefly repeat the activities for exploring strong and light movement used in the Infants and First/Second Class dance programmes:

(a) **Strong movement**

Guide the children through an exploration of the feeling of strength /tension that occurs in the muscles when pushing or pulling the palms together/apart.

Now instruct the children to push and press other parts of the body against the floor.

(b) **Light movement**

Now walk around the circle blowing bubbles while the children 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, place a towel in the middle of the circle and blow the bubbles over the towel, asking the children to move their arms as lightly as the bubbles.

**Stage 2: Moving to strong and light music**

Repeat the exercise introduced used in the Infants and First/Second Class dance programmes:

Play two pieces of music, one that conveys strong dynamics, and a second that conveys light dynamics.

Ask the children to move to the music, changing from strong to light, and light to strong actions as appropriate.

Guide with the 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 ...*

## TEACHING POINTS

- Ensure that each child has enough space to be able to move safely and to be able to see you.
- Remind the children to sit correctly to ensure correct alignment of the spine.
- Choose from Music Selection 1.
- Remind the children to perform each task 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.
- Insist that the children do not crowd up and touch the bubbles, but wait for them to drift around them.
- Encourage the children to describe how the muscles feel when moving the arms lightly, e.g. relaxed, soft, floppy.
- Play 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*.  
 Ennio Morricone, 'Chi Mai' from *Moods 1*.

## ACTIVITY

**Stage 4: Exploring strong and light movement using the story of Noah's Ark**

Ask the children to recall the outline of the story of Noah's Ark.

Now ask them to focus on the beginning of the story and to list the working actions involved in building the Ark.

Write the list of words on the blackboard/chart paper, e.g.:

Sawing, chopping, digging, pushing, pulling, lifting, painting, sewing, shovelling, brushing, hammering, stacking, polishing, washing, measuring, carving etc.

Highlight some words that require strong, powerful movements and others that are more suited to light, delicate, careful movements.

Now ask the children to move with strong/light actions in response to words which you call from the list of working actions.

*Now I'm going to call out different words from the list we've made and I want you to do some actions that would explain these words.*

*Show me some actions for chopping. What part of your body do you use? Show me the effort it takes to lift the heavy axe. What are you doing with your legs?*

*Now I'd like you to paint around the window ledges very slowly. Reach up high to the tallest window and now paint very low. Be careful how you use the brush. You need to speed up now because time is passing and Noah needs to get the job done.*

*Now pick your own working action and show me if you have to move strongly or lightly or maybe a little of both ...*

## TEACHING POINTS

- 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. Remember that 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.
- Challenge the children to bring out the dynamic qualities of strong and/or light as they might apply to the words heard.
- Encourage the children to go beyond simply **acting out** the word and challenge them instead to bring out the **dance** in the actions by reminding them to use a variety of body actions, levels, pathways, directions and speeds where appropriate.

## ACTIVITY

**3 Conclusion****(a) Building the Ark dance**

The children are asked to create a short solo dance by linking together the movements involved in three different building actions.

**Stage 1: Demonstrating the dance**

Ask the children to observe while you demonstrate the following steps. Choose three different work actions from the list compiled, e.g.:

- 1 **Digging:** Perform a digging action, exaggerating the thrusting of the shovel into the ground and the throwing of the earth over the shoulder. Repeat this action three times, facing a different direction each time.
- 2 **Sewing:** Now run in a curved pathway to another space in the hall and kneel on the ground. Perform the delicate sewing action with tiny, fast stitch work, gradually slowing the speed down and exaggerating the size of the sewing action, i.e. bigger, bigger, bigger...
- 3 **Brushing:** Now move to a new space and begin the brushing action while moving to the right three times, and then to the left three times. Then freeze in final position.

**Stage 2: Creating the dance**

The children create and practise their solo dances.

**Stage 3: Performing the dance**

The children all perform their dances to music. Repeat a few times.

Now half of the children performs for the other half.

## TEACHING POINTS

- Encourage the children to watch the demonstration closely.
- Assist the children as needed. Some children may need help getting started.
- Remind the children that each action must be performed in a different space in the hall and of the need to use different body actions and different pathways as they move from one space to the next.
- Encourage the children to vary body shapes, levels, directions and speeds in their working actions.
- Remind them that it is important to highlight the strong and light moments of their dance.
- Encourage the children to have a definite starting position, a clear sequence of movement and to hold the finishing position.
- Choose from Music Selection 2.
- Remind the children that some solos will be longer or shorter than others depending on the building actions chosen and how the dancers move from one place to the next in their dance. It is important that each dancer holds absolutely still in his/her finishing position until the music fades out.
- Encourage focus and concentration from the performers and silence from the audience.

## ACTIVITY

(b) **Cool down activity**

Ask the children to stand in a space facing you and lead them through some stretches for the legs, arms and torso.

Conclude with everyone standing still, feet close together and rise onto tiptoes. Try and balance by focusing the eyes (a technique called **spotting** in dance) on an object directly in front of you (e.g. a window ledge, picture on the wall etc.). Hold for a count of three and lower to the floor. Repeat one more time and finish.

## TEACHING POINTS

- 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 Fourth Class, or if repeating this lesson with Third Class:**

The children are given time to revise and practise their solo dance. Arrange them in pairs. Dancer **Number 1** performs for dancer **Number 2** and vice versa. The child watching tries to guess the building words used by the dancer in his/her solo.

If desired, both dancers can teach each other their solos and link them together to form a partner dance using a follow-the-leader format, i.e. **Number 2** copies **Number 1** as s/he dances and then **Number 1** copies **Number 2** as s/he dances.