

Shh! We Have a Plan

Teachers' Notes



About the Book

Chris Haughton is a children's book author, designer and illustrator from Ireland. *Shh We Have a Plan* came out in March 2014 and won the Association of Illustrators award for Children's Books for 2014 and the Junior Magazine Picture Book of the year 2014.



Before coming to see the show, you may wish to read *Shh! We Have a Plan* by Chris Haughton. These activities can be enjoyed before and after seeing the performance and focus on fine arts, science and social development/community values. Our production differs slightly from the book...but we will leave that a surprise for when you see the show!

Fine Arts

The Characters

Design a 'fact sheet' about our characters in *Shh! We Have a Plan*. Pupils could answer questions such as: Who are the characters? What are their names? How do they know each other? What age are they? Why are they out in the woods? Why do they want to catch the bird? What will they do with the bird if they catch it? There is no right or wrong answer and creativity is encouraged!

Puppet Making

The birds in *Shh! We Have a Plan* are all puppets controlled by a puppeteer. Pupils could work together to create and perform a puppet show. Using card, paper or even socks to make puppets, the children can recreate their favourite moments of the show. Try using recyclable objects that may have been otherwise thrown away! Music could also be added for a theatrical effect and pupils can practice conveying emotion, personality and story through the movements of their puppets.

Mime

Shh! We Have a Plan is a nonverbal piece. The actors use their facial expressions and body language to convey emotions and story. In small groups, pupils could choose a scenario and act it out for their classmates without relying on their voices. The remainder of the class can watch and take turns to guess the nature of the scenario being performed. These scenes could be taken directly from the show or could be every day scenarios, perhaps picked from a hat!

Science

Nature Walk

Take a walk outdoors. What wildlife can you see in the sky, on the ground, or even beneath the earth? Write it down or perhaps take a picture/video. When you get back to class, draw, paint or recreate the animals you encountered on your adventure. Pupils could use natural resources from their travels such as leaves, sticks, stones and feathers within their art work!

Soundscape

Step outside and listen to the sounds around you. What can you hear? Record or make a note of sounds you hear and identify, or perhaps imagine, the type of creature that would make those noises. Back at the classroom, pupils could get into small groups and create a soundscape for their classmates. Using pace and volume to change the mood, pupils could recreate the sounds they heard outdoors with their voices, musical instruments or objects from around the classroom. The remainder of the class could close their eyes and visualise the world being created. As well as recreating the sounds of your own surroundings, the soundscape could be created for a wild jungle, a sandy beach or a dark swampland. The possibilities are endless!

Research Activity

Research different types of birds to see what you can find out about the brightly colored birds from *Shh! We Have a Plan*. What kind of birds could they be? What habitats might they live in?

Social Development/ Community values

What's in the Bag?

Each of the characters in *Shh! We Have a Plan* carries a bag or backpack on their journey. What do you think is in each bag? On a table lay out a small bag and several different objects that may be needed on such an adventure. As a class, discuss and debate which objects are the most important to take with you, explaining why. Everyone must agree on the item before it gets packed in the bag!

Questions for further exploration

Why did the characters want to catch the bird?

Did any of the characters think about the well-being of the bird?

How do you think the bird felt when the characters tried to trap him?

What happened when the characters finally stopped chasing the bird?

How does the play differ from the book?

Do you think the characters will treat the squirrel at the end of the play any differently?

In the dedication at the start of the book, Albert Einstein is quoted as saying "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." What do you think this means in the context of the story?

More information on *Shh! We Have a Plan* can be found at:

www.chrishaughton.com

www.cahootsni.com