



The Ark

The Ark, Dublin Dance Festival
and Arts & Disability Ireland
present



The Race

Created by Marc Brew

A MOVE Commission, co-commissioned by
The Ark, Dublin Dance Festival and Arts & Disability Ireland

A Resource Pack for
Teachers & Educators
Aimed at children from
Junior Infants - 3rd class



DANCE
4+
AGES

The Race is a delightful and innovative retelling through dance of 3 Aesop's fables: *The Hare & the Tortoise*, *The Lion & the Mouse* and *The Ants & the Grasshopper*, where these classic stories have been adapted and retold as one piece exploring issues of collaboration, persistence and ingenuity.

The ideas in this pack support learning in Drama and Dance as part of a cross-curricular, multidisciplinary project which can take place over a number of days or weeks. In this pack we explore the 3 original fables in more detail using a range of drama, movement and dance activities.

Most of the activities will need space so, if you can, make room by moving the tables to the side and stacking the chairs to enable the children to move safely and freely around the room.

Resource Pack created by Joanna Parkes

The Race : An exciting new dance piece for children aged 4+ ; inspired by Aesop's Fables and presented by The Ark, Dublin Dance Festival and Arts & Disability Ireland.

From acclaimed international choreographer, Marc Brew, *The Race* entwines three of Aesop's Fables to create a fun, interactive and colourful world of animals, puppets, theatre and movement. Cheer with our cast of animals as the Tortoise and the Hare set off for the finish line; join the Grasshopper in gazing with fascination at the Ants collecting food for the winter ahead, and root for the little Mouse as she faces down the mighty Lion! Watch as their journeys unfold through beautiful movement and dance, and share in the lessons they learn along the way.

The Race made its World Premiere as part of Dublin Dance Festival 2023. Presented by a cast of disabled and non-disabled dance artists, all performances will have integrated ISL and are also accessible without captions, thanks to the show's highly visual style. Audio description and touch tours will be available for every show but will require advance booking. Every performance is relaxed in nature, offering an inclusive audience experience that is welcoming to children who are neuro-diverse.

Curriculum links

There is only 1 strand in the Drama curriculum which consists of:

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Cooperation and communication in making drama.

The following Aims within the Drama Curriculum are explored in this Resource Pack:

- To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills
- To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving the problems presented on the journey through the drama

Exploring and making drama - The child should be enabled to;

- Use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in the drama
- Develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action

Reflecting on drama - The child should be enabled to;

- Use reflection on a particular dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action
- Experience, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience

Cooperating and communication in making drama - The child should be enabled to;

- Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the drama text is being made

Dance - Strand Unit: Exploration, Creation and Performance of Dance

Relevant Aims in the Drama Curriculum that are explored in this Resource Pack:

The child should be enabled to

- Explore the movements of different parts of the body and the ways in which the body can move in space using simple bodily actions such as travelling (walking, running, skipping) and jumping, gestures and stillness
- Explore and create movement at different levels, using different pathways and forming different shapes in space
- Explore an appropriate range of dynamics in movement
- Explore and communicate through simple body movement a range of moods or feelings
- Respond imaginatively through movement to stimuli such as words, stories, poems, pictures, music



Teacher's background information and Warm-up game

Introduce the class to who Aesop was and the idea of a fable

What is a fable?

A fable is a type of story, often involving characters that are animals, or natural elements such as the wind or sun. They usually have a short, clear storyline and can be quickly told. Fables weave morals or a life lesson of some kind into their endings, some learning we can take away to reflect on and think about. Although these fables were written a long time ago, many of the morals or lessons are still as relevant and meaningful today.

Who was Aesop?

There are many uncertainties about who Aesop was but what is known for sure is that he was a storyteller from Greece, born around 620 BC. He may have been a slave from Ethiopia originally who was subsequently freed from slavery because he was so intelligent and witty; he may have had a physical disability and a speech impediment; he may have died around 560BC and may actually have been murdered – so lots of uncertainty about the details of his life. But what we do know is that the stories or fables he told are still read, performed and re-enacted today and have as much relevance today as over 2000 years ago.

As a storyteller, Aesop collected around 600 stories, some which he may have created, others he would have heard and collected and retold himself. As an oral story teller, he didn't write them down but they were passed on from person to person over many generations. The stories or fables have lessons or morals, and were told to children during Aesop's life and retold to people in every generation since.

Why are many of these stories about animals?

Animals are often used instead of people in fables because the animal characters help to keep things simple and identifiable in a way that more complex human characters can't, and they often have strong physical attributes or characteristics which we can identify with such as: hares being fast, tortoises being slow, and ants hard-working. The animals are portrayed with certain key characteristics which people have long attributed to them, such as foxes being clever and cunning, lions being proud and grasshoppers enjoying relaxing in the sun. These animal characters make the stories more fun and engaging and it might be easier for people to empathise with animals.

What about Proverbs?

Proverbs are similar to fables as they have a moral or lesson for us to think about. Ask the children to discuss the following proverbs in pairs and see if they can work out what they mean;

- Don't cry over spilt milk
- Don't judge a book by its cover
- The early bird gets the worm
- A friend in need is a friend indeed
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket
- If at first you don't succeed, try try again
- Two heads are better than one.

Recalling the Play – Ask the children

- What animals do they remember from *The Race*?
- Which animal did they like best?
- What was their favourite moment?
- Do they have any questions after seeing *The Race*?
- Would they like to know more about any of the animals?

Warm-Up – Moving as animals

Ask the children if they remember how the different animals moved in *The Race*:

Can they move like the Hare? making sure not to bump into any other Hares.

How did the tortoise move? slowly and steadily move around the room.

The ants march around in straight lines – can everyone march like an ant?

The Grasshopper jumps from place to place on its long back legs.

The Animal Parade:

Print and cut out the animal shapes found in this pack.

- Put the animal shapes face down on the table and ask for a volunteer to turn over one shape and hold it up for everyone to see.
- Once everyone knows what the animal is, ask the children to move around the room in the way they think that animal moves – trying to make sure no one runs into or touches anyone else.
- After a few moments, call everyone to freeze! – and then ask for another volunteer to choose another animal.
- The animal shapes include: giraffe, elephant, peacock, butterfly, eagle, horse, sloth, kangaroo, penguin, bear, camel, hen, worm, squirrel, frog.
- Can the children think of other animals that move in a distinctive way?

Another version of the Animal Parade is to mention a way of moving and the children name an animal that moves in that way such as: hop, skip, jump, run, slither, slide, glide, fly, swim, burrow, climb, soar, hover, creep, crawl, wriggle.

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Tempo Game:

Ask the children to sit in a circle on the floor and give each child a lollypop stick. Ask each child to pass a lollypop stick to the person on their left – explain that they will be passing and receiving a stick at the same time. Start very slowly so everyone's hands are moving at the same time and pace. Everyone can say PASS together to help keep everyone in rhythm. Gradually ask the children to start passing the sticks more quickly. Keep building up the speed until it becomes a challenge and then slow it down again.

Ask the children what happened when things got too fast and they couldn't keep up.

Observational Game – What's changed?

Ask the children to look around the room and then cover their eyes. Quietly move or remove 12 items in the classroom – making some of them quite obvious and others more subtle. Ask the children to open their eyes and look around to see what's moved or changed. When they have noticed 8 things that have been moved they can put up their hand: hear 1 suggestion from each child.

Storytelling - Tell the children the original version of this Fable:

The Hare & the Tortoise

A Hare was making fun of the Tortoise one day for being so slow.

"You're such a slow-coach. Do you ever get anywhere?" he asked with a mocking laugh.

"Yes," replied the Tortoise, "and I get there sooner than you think. Let's have a race and prove it."

The Hare was much amused at the idea of running a race with the Tortoise, but for the fun of the thing he agreed. So the Fox, who had consented to act as judge, marked the distance and started the runners off.

The Hare was soon far out of sight, and as he was so confident of winning the race he decided to take a break and he lay down under a tree to take a nap until the Tortoise should catch up.

The Tortoise meanwhile kept going slowly but steadily, and, after a time, passed the place where the Hare was sleeping. But the Hare slept on very peacefully; and when at last he did wake up; the Tortoise was near the finishing line. The Hare ran as fast as he could, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time and Tortoise won the race.

Well Done Tortoise – Slow and Steady won the race!

What is the moral of the story? What do the children think the story is telling us?

The moral is that the Tortoise won the race because he was steady and kept on going. He was resilient and did not stop or give up when things got tricky. The Tortoise also looked about, seeing and noticing things, appreciating the world around him.



Different ways of moving – Fast and Slow

In this story the 2 animals, The Hare and The Tortoise, move in different ways and at different speeds. The Hare is fast and speedy and the Tortoise is slow and steady. Ask the children to consider that sometimes it's good to be quick and at other times it's better to be slow and to take care.

Ask the children to move around the room and to imagine the following situations and think if moving quickly or slowly would be a good idea:

- You are walking along the road and you hear a loud roar and you look around and a huge, fierce T-Rex is coming up behind you – should you move quickly or slowly?
- You are carrying a 5 -tiered Birthday cake that you've just spent ages making for a friend – is this time to move quickly or slowly?
- You are walking through the woods and you hear a loud noise - a tree is falling down behind you – are you going to move quickly or slowly?!
- You are walking on a narrow bridge over a deep valley with a fast-flowing river at the bottom – is this time to move quickly or slowly and steadily?

Can the children think of other times in real life when it is important to be slow and steady and to keep going? What might go wrong if we do everything too quickly? And at other times when is it a good idea to be quick and speedy?

Observation: Looking and not looking around

Ask the children to walk quickly around the room like the Hare, making sure they don't bump into anyone but without looking around or noticing things around them. Ask the children to sit down and cover their eyes – ask them some observation questions about things in the room – e.g. What is beside the sink? What is on the teacher's desk? etc. How much have they noticed? Then ask them to walk around the room slowly, to look all around and observe details and the room around them. Ask them similar observational questions and see if they've noticed and taken in more.

Tortoise's different feelings

What feelings did Tortoise have in the story? How did he feel at the start of the story? In the middle of the race? At the end of the race? Collect the words the children suggest.

Tortoise's different feelings

Tell the children that you are going to pretend to be the Tortoise in the story. Show them a scarf or prop you will wear to signify when you are pretending to be the Tortoise.

Tell the class that the Tortoise is feeling sad because the Hare is laughing at him and making fun of him because he's slow. He's feeling upset and wants help from the children – can the children think of things to say to help the Tortoise and help him feel better?

You could start by saying "it's not fair, Hare is so mean to me, he's always laughing at me – saying you're so slow, you're such a slow coach. At least I'm not always in a rush, always rushing about like he is. I see things around me and stop to talk to people but he still makes fun of me and it's making me feel very sad. Can you help me?"

Collect the ideas and suggestions the children share to help the Tortoise. As a class can they come up with some slogans and sayings that would help Tortoise to keep going when he's feeling tired. Would they be helpful to have up on the wall in the classroom? Such as: Don't give up Tortoise! Keep Going! When the going gets tough, the tough keep going! Never fear, the finish is near!

The Lion and the Mouse

Recall what happened in *The Race*:

- What do the children remember about the Lion and the Mouse from *The Race*?
- What happened to the Lion when the hunters came into the forest?
- What did the Mouse do to help the Lion?

Movement- Big and Small, Proud and Nervous

The Lion is big and proud. When he walks around he wants to show everyone that he is very important and powerful. Ask the children to move around the room like the proud Lion. When moving like the Lion, encourage them to take big steps and think of words like Stride, Strong, Proud, Powerful, and to take up as much space as possible, to be as big and tall as they can.

What about the Mouse? The Mouse is small and nervous. She takes up as little space as possible. Ask the children to move around the room like the mouse? When moving like the Mouse, encourage them to take very small, quick steps and to think of words like scurry, scuttle, scared, shy, and to move as if they were very small and tiny.

On your signal, ask the children to transition from being big and proud to small and nervous.

Ask them to think about using different levels when they move: high up and low down - and to change how much space they take up in the room.

In pairs, ask one child to move as the Lion and the other as the Mouse and ask them to move around the room together, showing the very different ways in which the two animals move.



Storytelling - Tell the children the original version of this Fable:

The Lion and the Mouse

A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's paw. Roused from his nap, the Lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her.

"Spare me!" begged the poor Mouse. "Please let me go and someday I will surely repay you." The Lion was much amused to think that a little Mouse could ever help him. But he was generous and finally let the Mouse go.

Some days later, while walking through the forest, the Lion got caught in a big hunter's net. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roars. The Mouse knew the voice and quickly found the Lion struggling to get free from the net. Running up to him, she gnawed and nibbled at the net until the Lion was able to get out and get free.

"You laughed when I said I would repay you," said the Mouse. "Now you see that even a little Mouse can help a big Lion."

What is the moral of the story? What do the children think the story is telling us?
"A good deed never goes to waste. The kindness you show has a way of coming back to you in unexpected ways".

The Lion laughed at the mouse and dismissed his help because the lion thought nothing as small and insignificant as a mouse could ever help him. The lion learned that even the smallest creature, like the mouse, can be a great help. This fable teaches us that everyone, no matter their size or strength, can make a difference.

Also the lion shows kindness to the mouse by not killing him for disturbing his sleep. His act of kindness comes back to him in the form of the mouse's help.

Drama Activity – Paired Improvisations

Scene 1: Other ways the mouse can help the lion

We have seen the Mouse use his teeth to nibble at the net and free the Lion. What else could the little Mouse do to help the Lion?

Ask the children to get into pairs – one of them will pretend to be the Lion and the other Mouse. Ask them to think of other ways the Mouse could help the Lion. When they have thought of an idea, ask them to pretend to be the Mouse and Lion and to bring that moment to life, showing what the Mouse does to help. These little scenes are all happening simultaneously around the room and are not 'performed' although the children can share and exchange their ideas and suggestions.

Some prompt ideas: the Mouse could pull a big thorn from the Lion's foot, scratch an itch on the Lion's back, get sticks out of his mane, free his tail from a thorny bush or clean the Lion's teeth – very carefully and only when she really trusts the Lion!

Ask the children to swap roles and see if they can come up with a second suggestion as to how the Mouse can help the Lion. Or they could think of how the Lion could help the Mouse.

Junior / Senior Infants: This paired activity could be a challenge for Junior or Senior Infants so use Teacher in Role instead and tell the children you are going to pretend to be the Lion in the story and the children can become the Mouse and individually come forward with suggestions of how they could help you as the Lion.

Scene 2: A friend in need is a friend indeed- The Lion and Mouse become friends.

Ask the children to imagine the Lion and Mouse become friends afterwards and help each other all the time. Ask the children in their pairs to make up a scene showing how they could both help each other all day long. Remind them that the Lion is very big and the Mouse is very small.

Drawing or writing activity:

Suggest the children draw a picture or write a short story showing how the Lion and Mouse become friends and help each other.

Write a letter from the Lion to the Mouse apologising for being dismissive and thanking the Mouse for his help – this could be an individual exercise or a whole group writing exercise whereby the children suggest what the Lion could say and the teacher writes it all down.

The Ants and the Grasshopper

- Ask the children what they remember about the Grasshopper and the Ants in *The Race*?
- What did the Grasshopper want? What was he always looking for?
- Did the Ants help him?

In the original story the Grasshopper is described as being relaxed and care-free in the summer. He enjoys making music and relaxing in the sun so much that he doesn't bother to collect up or store any food for winter. The Ants, however, are busy all year round collecting food and getting ready for winter.

Movement – Different Weathers and Times of Year

The Grasshopper loves relaxing in the warm summer sun. Ask the children to walk around the room as if it's a lovely, warm sunny day. Encourage them to imagine the warmth of the sun on their faces and to walk in a relaxed, carefree manner. Sitting on the floor, ask the children to think about how the different kinds of weather changes how we move and get about. Ask the children to walk around again but this time it's far too hot! They're in a desert, surrounded by miles of sand and there's no shelter from the sun. How does that affect how they move around the room?

Ask them to now imagine they are at the North Pole in a snow-storm. The snow is blowing in their faces so they can't see and the wind is so strong they can hardly move- how does that affect how they move?

Ask the children to move around the room again but, on your signal, they change the weather they are imagining around them. Encourage them to exaggerate their movements, to use all of their bodies and to think about how they transition from one type of weather to the next.

Extension Activity: instead of imagine the weather is happening around them the children could move like the weather itself so they could move around the room as the wind, swooping, swooshing, spinning and turning, or a the snow - falling lightly and gently at first, then building up speed and strength, as the rain as it splishes and splashed in a puddle, as the sun - dabbled sun through tree leaves or strong and oppressive as in the desert. Again encourage them to explore levels, pathways, dynamics and transitions.

Storytelling - Tell the children the original version of this Fable:

The Ants and the Grasshopper

One bright day in late autumn a family of Ants were bustling about in the warm sunshine, drying out the grain they had stored up during

the summer, when a hungry Grasshopper, his fiddle under his arm, came up and humbly begged for a bite to eat.



"What!" cried the Ants in surprise, "haven't you stored anything away for the winter? What in the world were you doing all last summer?"

"I didn't have time to store up any food," whined the Grasshopper; "I was so busy making music and enjoying the sunshine that before I knew it the summer was gone."

The Ants shrugged their shoulders in disgust.

"Making music, were you?" they cried. "Very well; now dance!" And they turned their backs on the Grasshopper and went on with their work.

What is the moral of the story? What do the children think the story is telling us?

This story tells us that there's a time for work and a time for play and people should strike a balance between work and play, if they want to be prepared for the future. Another moral of the story is about teamwork and what you can achieve if you work together.

Movement - Expressing feelings

- Ask the children to think about how the Grasshopper felt at different times in the story. In summer he was happy, relaxed and cheerful but when winter arrived he felt worried and anxious as he had no food stored up.
- Ask the children to move around the room thinking about how the Grasshopper felt. How do we move if we are feeling happy and relaxed? How do we show these feelings with our bodies? How does this change when we feel worried or anxious? How do these feelings change the way we move?
- Include other emotions and feelings and ask the children to think how these different feelings change how we move; excited, sad, nervous, proud, bored, angry, very afraid, very happy. Encourage them to use all parts of their body, to bring in the ideas we explored before about using different levels, pathways and using different speeds of movement.
- Sitting on the floor can the children express these feelings using just one part of their body – such as just their feet, their fingers, their elbows or their shoulders. Encourage them to explore and experiment.

Drama Activity – Teacher in Role and Whole-group Role play – Should we help Grasshopper?

Ask the children to imagine they are a group of ants, marching about, collecting and storing food. Remind them that sometimes the food can be bigger than the Ant, such as a big leaf- so they may struggle at times. Ask the children to move back and forth across the room in straight lines, carrying imaginary food to a central storage area. They might work in pairs to carry some very large (imaginary) item of food. After a moment, ask the Ants to sit down and take a short rest. Start to address the other Ants - making it clear that you are also pretending to be an Ant with them. You might start by saying "Oh dear, I feel a bit bad about Grasshopper. I know it's his fault that he didn't collect any food in the summer but still I feel bad that he's hungry. Do you think we should give him some food? We have plenty and often we've extra supplies left-over in the Spring. What do you think?"

React and respond to the children's comments. Could they come up with an agreement with him? Maybe the Grasshopper could help the Ants in some way if they give him food. When the children have come up with some ideas of how they might be able to help Grasshopper, suggest that you could step out of being an Ant and could become the Grasshopper instead - and respond and react to the Ants' suggestions.

Drawing Activity - Ask the children to draw a picture showing what the Grasshopper could do to help the Ants if they agree to share their food with him. The drawing could also show how the Ants enjoy dancing to the Grasshopper's music when they've finished work at the end of the day.