



# The Dreaming Tree

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## Teaching Guide

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### RATIONALE AND THEMES

*The Dreaming Tree* is a gentle story, which examines how insecurity in a new and strange environment can limit the opportunities for integration and participation.

The essence of the story falls within the SPHE range of issues and examines the way self image can dictate how we perceive our circumstances. The story also shows how support and encouragement can energise a positive self image and provide the courage to take control of any circumstances.

The themes include:

- Self image / perception
- Courage
- Cultural pride
- Integration & participation
- Anxiety
- Avoidance strategies
- Support and encouragement
- Taking the initiative.

### SUMMARY

Roberto is unable to take the first step towards integration with his new environment. His younger sister, Amanda, has already begun to make new friends, but Roberto is finding it more difficult. It is only when he speaks on the telephone to his granny in Brazil, and she reminds him of the Legend of The Dreaming Tree and the Jaguar King, that he finds the courage to seek his own Dreaming Tree. This sets in motion a chain of events that lead to him achieving his 'heart's desire'.

### APPROACH

Roberto's story is a universal tale of loving family support; with his family's support,

Roberto finds the confidence to adapt to and participate in his new surroundings, and is able to offer his own gifts and talents without fear of rejection.

The approach should emphasise that everyone has both talents and the potential to contribute effectively, especially where circumstances might limit or discourage participation as was the case with Roberto.

Whole class strategies and discussion-led group work should provide an effective focus to examine the issues from the story.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

- **(Read P5):** Fergus never asked Roberto to play. Do you think he was being mean or did he just not think about asking him to play? What do you think Roberto should have done himself and why do you think he did not do it?
- **(Read pp 13 – 15):** Amanda was a good dancer and Roberto thought that she was 'showing off'. His mum said that she wasn't 'showing off' and that it was OK to be proud of things that you can do. Who do you think is right? When do you think that being proud of something you can do becomes 'showing off'?
- **(Read p16):** Why do you think Roberto hated to look different from everyone else? How did he try to hide his embarrassment? Can you think of other ways that people might behave if they were embarrassed? What could you do if you thought that someone you knew was embarrassed about something?

### ACTIVITIES

#### 1. A Friend for Roberto

**(Read pp 8 – 9)** Roberto wants to be friends with the other children in his class; however he is not sure how to begin. Can you help him? What sort of things should he say or do and what should he not do?

Use a class brainstorm to make a list of all the things you think might help him and then in small groups pick the three things that you think will help the most. You could make a little

#### DO & DON'T CARD

for him and decorate it with a helpful picture.

#### 2. The Cúpla Focal

**(Read p 7)** Roberto can speak two languages, English and Portuguese. How many languages are spoken in your school?

If you had children in your school who did not speak English, what do you think the five most useful phrases that you could learn to say in another language to make them feel welcome would be?

Do you think that you could get the phrases translated and write them out on a chart with a picture to show what is being said? Do you think that you could practise them until you could say them easily?

#### 3. Five Gold Stars

**(Read pp31 -32)** Roberto pulled off his jacket to show his green and yellow jersey with the five gold stars – his Brazilian football top. Today he is playing as a striker for Ireland.

Can you use your imagination to write a short match report to describe what is happening?

If you prefer; you could do it as a thirty second radio or television commentary and everyone could listen to you as you say it?

You should try to answer the 5 x W questions in your report. I.e. **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE and WHY**

#### 4. What's in a Name?

**(Read p 29)** Fergus and Shane's black cat is called Snowy as a joke. They have used a word that means the opposite of what she looks like to describe her. This is called 'irony'.

Can you use your imagination and make a list of five creatures or things and give them names which describe the complete opposite to what they are?

For example,

- Lightning the Tortoise
- Slim the Hippopotamus

Etc.

You can add a picture if you like.

#### 5. The Dreaming Tree

**(Read pp11-13)** Roberto's granny told him the story about the boy who found The Dreaming Tree and when he fell asleep in its branches, he met the Jaguar King who taught him many things.

Could you use your imagination to draw your very own Dreaming Tree? What animals would you find asleep in its branches?

If you met the Jaguar King, what do you think he might teach you?

#### 6. The Shirt

**(Read p 16)** Roberto hated to look different. He was so embarrassed because his shirts were colourful that he hid them underneath his sweatshirt.

Have you every worn anything that made you feel embarrassed?

Could you draw a picture of yourself wearing the outfit and describe it?

Could you explain why you were wearing it and what you did to hide your embarrassment?

What would you say to someone if you thought they were embarrassed by something they were wearing?

### CLASS PROJECT

#### ***Growing Up: Last Year, This Year, What the Future Holds ...***

In the story, Roberto is reluctant to join in with the other boys. He lacks the self assertion that will allow him easily to become a member of the group.

The focus of these activities is to provide the opportunity for the children to identify, share and celebrate the range of talents that each of them has.

The thread of the first activity is to help the children appreciate that skill, talent and achievement are progressions and will develop over time. The activity is suited to small groups and the ideas can be prompted initially by whole class discussions.

Using the template below, the children are asked to compare and record the level of personal skill and achievement that they have experienced over a two year period.

The prompts are:

- What could I / was I allowed to do last year?
- What can I / am I allowed to do this year?

The third prompt is a projection activity and can be linked easily to the notion of the 'Heart's Desire' **(p13)**

The activity can be completed when the children dress the figure in the centre in their favourite colours / team kit / outfit, or attach a photograph of themselves doing / wearing something they like.

What I could do last year

What I can do this year

Photograph or drawing of student

My heart's desire ...

## THINKING OF ME / THINKING OF YOU

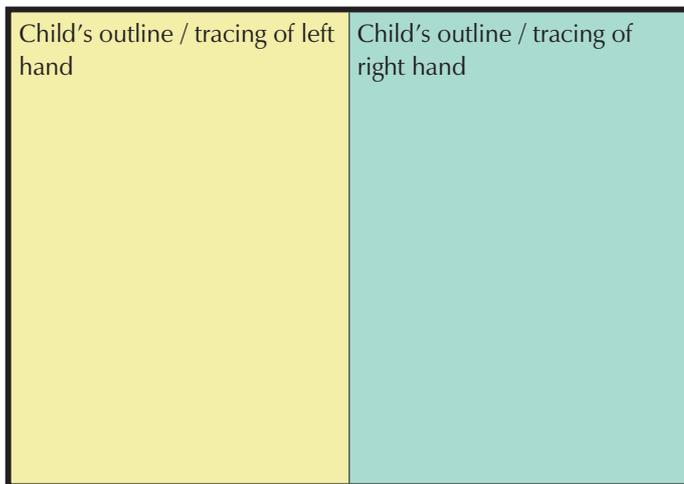
In this activity, the children have the opportunity to identify and acknowledge positive traits in themselves and in others.

The activity should be led initially by class discussion on how to identify positive characteristics. Care should be taken at this stage to discuss how you can and why you should identify and acknowledge positive characteristics in someone that you are in dispute with or that you are not friendly with.

Once the activity is begun it can be most effective if it is completed in silence.

The only resource needed is a blank sheet of A4 and a selection of coloured pens or pencils.

The children are asked to draw an outline of each of their hands onto the blank paper. (See diagram)



The title for the right hand box is 'What I think of me' and the title for the left hand box is 'What we think of you'.

During the first part of the activity, the children are asked to record inside the drawing of their right hand all the positive elements about themselves that they can think of.

During the second part of the activity, the children are permitted to move quietly around the class and leave a positive comment on each other's left hand.

Allowing a variety of colours and handwriting styles adds to their enjoyment.

Simple rules outlined at the start, for example:

- Leave one comment only on each hand
- Positive comments only
- Don't queue up to make a comment; move on and come back later. Etc

should ensure that everyone has sufficient comment on their hands and prevent accumulation of comments on the hands of the more popular children.

Laminating or otherwise preserving the finished product will ensure a more permanent reminder for them of their skills and their peer appreciation.

## BRAZIL: THE ROUGH GUIDE

In this activity the children will have the opportunity to research both factual and opinions-based information and use this to create a simple guide to Brazil.

For age appropriate country information on Brazil you can try:

[kids.nationalgeographic.com/Places/Find/Brazil](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/Places/Find/Brazil)

There will be an opportunity for them to develop a range of literacy skills as they attempt to make their writing brief, concise and interesting.

One classroom strategy could be to present the internet materials as a whole-class activity and ask them to make their own notes on what they found interesting from the presentation. They could then use the notes as the basis for their guide. It can be an interesting strategy to have a delay of a few days between watching the presentation and then using the notes that were made during the presentation to complete the guide. This way the children have the opportunity exercise their recall. This can be done in small groups to stimulate discussion on their recall of what they saw.

Class discussion on the differences between fact and opinion and the impression that these create when they are used; and the use of a simple template (**See below**) can offer the opportunity to explore how these literary forms are used.

1. DID YOU KNOW: (Fact and information: concise and clear)
2. PEOPLE SAY: (Opinion: comment or popular myth)

