

Active Citizenship Using Drama

A Stone's Throw



L1

Lesson 1: Family Relationships and Conflict

This lesson relates to the central character in the film, Jack, a teenage boy who is 15 years old. He had lived with his mother and father but now lives with his grandad as his mother has a drink problem and his father is in prison. Pupils explore family relationships and the possibility of dealing with conflict at home and leaving to live with a grandparent.

Planning	
Prior Learning	<p>Pupils should have gained prior knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active citizenship; • justice and lawfulness; and • human rights and children's rights.
Learning Outcomes	<p>Pupils will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss conflict in the home; • think about and ask appropriate questions of others; and • use waxworks, hot seating, tableau, conscience alley and improvisation effectively.
Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities Focus	<p>Pupils will have opportunities to develop the following:</p> <p>Being Creative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use waxworks, tableau, thought tracking and conscience alley • Use improvisation <p>Working with Others and Self-Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in pairs and in groups of 3 or 4 • Respect the views and opinions of others, reach agreement, be able to compromise and give and respond positively to feedback <p>Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make and justify decisions • Be able to discuss personal viewpoints with appropriate reasons.
Attitudes and Dispositions	<p>Pupils will be encouraged to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to new ideas • Flexibility: being flexible when using a more practical drama approach • Respect: demonstrating a more caring and respectful attitude towards others.
Resources	<p>An open space in the classroom Film and script of 'A Stone's Throw' Definitions of waxworks, hot seating, thought tracking and conscience alley</p>

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Suggested teaching and learning strategies

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Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show pupils the film 'A Stone's Throw'. • Ask pupils to clear a space in the centre of the classroom by moving the tables and chairs to the sides and stand in a circle. • Lead a class discussion using prompt questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>How does conflict generally start at home?</i> – <i>Who is generally involved in family conflict?</i> – <i>What are the problems that cause conflict?</i> – <i>How does it end? Threats, verbal/physical abuse, silence etc.?</i> – <i>How can family conflict be resolved?</i> • Warm up: Introduce a short warm up with the following exercises. 								
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Breathing exercises</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to breathe in through the nose for a count of 3, hold the breath for a count of 3 and breathe out through the mouth for a count of 9. Repeat inhalation and hold for a count of 3 and increase exhalation to 12, 15 and 18. Repeat by humming on exhalation. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stretching</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to tighten the muscles in the hands by making a fist, increase the tension through the arms, into the chest, torso, legs and feet, and then slowly release the tension from fingers to toes. Tighten and screw up the face and then slowly relax the face to a wide smile and a yawn. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Facial expressions</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to make facial expressions of being sad, happy, worried, angry, confused, frightened and arrogant. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gesture</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to add a gesture to the facial expression such as angry with a fist, a threat or warning with a pointed finger, worried with a hand to the mouth, innocence with open palms, kicking the sofa in a rage, staring at a phone in surprise etc. • Stretch the arms in the air and reach as far as possible by going onto toes. Repeat as a diagonal stretch, curl up with arms around knees and then repeat the sequence. </td> </tr> </table>	Breathing exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to breathe in through the nose for a count of 3, hold the breath for a count of 3 and breathe out through the mouth for a count of 9. Repeat inhalation and hold for a count of 3 and increase exhalation to 12, 15 and 18. Repeat by humming on exhalation. 	Stretching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to tighten the muscles in the hands by making a fist, increase the tension through the arms, into the chest, torso, legs and feet, and then slowly release the tension from fingers to toes. Tighten and screw up the face and then slowly relax the face to a wide smile and a yawn. 	Facial expressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to make facial expressions of being sad, happy, worried, angry, confused, frightened and arrogant. 	Gesture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask pupils to add a gesture to the facial expression such as angry with a fist, a threat or warning with a pointed finger, worried with a hand to the mouth, innocence with open palms, kicking the sofa in a rage, staring at a phone in surprise etc. • Stretch the arms in the air and reach as far as possible by going onto toes. Repeat as a diagonal stretch, curl up with arms around knees and then repeat the sequence.
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Launch (continued)	Vocal exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve articulation by learning the articulation scale B, D, F, H, G, M, N, P, T, W. Repeat the sounds loudly, softly, as a whisper, angrily, shyly etc.• Speak the words 'Da', 'Ma', 'grandad', 'hateful', 'clinker', 'pub' etc. in the same way – softly, angrily, sadly etc. and add gestures such as finger pointing, a fist or open hands.
	Grouping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils walk around the open space and the teacher asks them to get into groups of 4. Numbers will not evenly divide in the class each time and the teacher asks the remaining pupils 'how many groups of 4 are in the class and how many are left over?' The teacher repeats the exercise using groups of 3, 6 etc.

Activities

Activity 1: Waxworks

- Remind pupils of the first line in the film when Jack says 'This is me.'
- Ask a pupil to stand in the middle of the circle as a still image or waxwork of Jack.
- Use the following prompts:
 - How should he be standing? (Create his stance, gesture and facial expression.)
 - What is he wearing?
 - Describe his hairstyle.
 - Does he have a watch?
 - What might be in his pockets?
- Ask the pupils in the middle to say the phrase, 'This is me, Jack.'
- Repeat the exercise with different pupils in the middle of the circle. (Pupils may decide that the character is a female character called Jackie.)

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Activity 2: Tableau

- Ask the pupils to work in pairs. Ask each pair to find a space in the room to work and discuss what might lead to conflict in the home between a teenager and parent/s.

Tips

For example:

- *coming home late*
- *coming home smelling of alcohol or smoke*
- *not eating*
- *dressing inappropriately*
- *leaving an untidy room*
- *not working at school or being late for school*
- *being on their phone too much*
- *sending inappropriate texts*
- *lying to a parent*
- *using bad language.*



- Invite each pair to choose one and create a tableau of their own to suggest domestic conflict without violence. Remind pupils that there should be no physical contact in using tableau and no speech is required, but the pupils should be able to articulate their thoughts and feelings if requested.
- Support the pupils in creating different tableaux and perhaps ask the class to look at some of the tableaux. It is not necessary to show the class every tableau, only choose one or two that might be interesting.

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Activity 3: Hot seating

The aim of this activity is to develop background information on the character of Jack to be used in Activity 4.

- Ask pupils to return to the circle. Lead a class discussion on what might cause conflict in Jack's family situation. These questions should help to build some family background for Jack. The teacher and the class can create and decide what information to add to the drama.

Tips

For example:

- *Is he an only child?*
- *Why is his mother out a lot?*
- *Does his mother have a job?*
- *Why was his mother mostly at the pub?*
- *Does his mother have a drink problem?*
- *Does his father work?*
- *Where does the family income come from?*
- *Does Jack have a part-time job?*
- *Who are Jack's friends?*
- *Why did Jack's father go to prison?*
- *Is it his first time in prison?*
- *How long will he stay in prison?*



- Remind the class of the scene where Jack argues with his mum. He says 'That was your last chance mum. You might as well live at the pub. I've heard it all before.'
- Select one pupil to be Jack and sit on a chair at one end of the room. If the class has not used hot seating before, model the strategy by being Jack and help structure open questions for the class to ask.
- Ask the class to form groups of 3 or 4 to come up with an interesting question that must be answered by Jack.

Tips

Questions may include:

- *What do you enjoy most in school?*
- *Who are your friends?*
- *Can you tell us about your mum?*
- *What did you row about with your mum?*
- *Why is your dad in prison?*
- *Can you tell us about your last visit to your dad in prison?*
- *Can you tell us about your grandad?*



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- Repeat the activity with different pupils in the hot seat as Jack.

The teacher can decide which information they need to retain in order to develop an appropriate background for Jack.

Activity 4: Improvisation

Ask each group to find a space to work and devise a short improvisation based on the information they have developed from the hot seating strategy and the text from the film. Remind pupils that they do not need to write a script, but should structure their scene with a definite opening, development and ending.

- The improvisations should:
 - include Jack as the central character;
 - provide some insight into Jack's relationship with his family and friends; and
 - show why he has decided to live with his grandad.

Tips

You may wish to use these suggestions as prompts for some of the groups:

- *his mum and her friend having a row with him at home*
- *his mum and her friend or barman having a row with him in the pub*
- *his friends meeting his grandad at school or on the street*
- *a parent/teacher meeting*
- *bringing his friends to visit his grandad*
- *his friends asking/taunting him about his mum or dad*
- *his dad being arrested at home*
- *going to court to his dad's hearing*
- *visiting the prison and talking to the warden and his dad*
- *going to the shop and meeting a nosy neighbour*
- *going to the doctor and meeting a social worker.*



- Move around the room to view the pupils as they work. You may choose to show the class some of the improvisations that reflect an interesting approach. The content and process are more important than the presentation and the pupils should be able to review what they have learned from the improvisations.

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Activity 5: Conscience alley

- Ask pupils to form two straight lines facing each other to form an alley (no more than 12 pupils with 6 on each side).
- Ask one pupil to take on the role of Jack and one pupil to take on the role of grandad. Both stand at the opposite ends of the lines.
- Ask the rest of the class to sit around the space as observers.
- Tell the class Jack is leaving his home to go and live with his grandad.
 - *What is he wearing?*
 - *Does he have a case or bags?*
 - *What does he take with him and what is he thinking?*
- The pupils who form the alley become his conscience and speak his thoughts as he slowly walks towards grandad. Jack cannot move down the alley until each pupil speaks loudly and clearly. Jack can mime closing the door for the last time, putting the key in his pocket and picking up his bags.

Tips

One side of the alley could be positive thoughts, for example:

- *'I can't wait to live with grandad.'*
- *'No more rows and shouting.'*
- *'I'll never be lonely again.'*
- *'Grandad is my hero.'*
- *'His house is always warm.'*
- *'I love my grandad.'*
- *'He lets me watch what I want on TV.'*
- *'Grandad gives me money to buy chips.'*
- *'Grandad always has lovely food in his house.'*



The other side of the alley could be negative thoughts, for example:

- *'I will miss my bedroom.'*
- *'Am I doing the right thing?'*
- *'I feel so sad.'*
- *'This house was my home for 15 years.'*
- *'Will my Ma be alright on her own?'*
- *'I'm never going back to visit my Da in prison.'*
- *'My Da only wants money or drugs.'*
- *'I hate my Ma and my Da.'*
- *'Will I ever come back to this house?'*

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- When Jack reaches grandad, he might speak. For example: 'Hello son. Are you hungry?' or 'Come in Jack. Your room is ready for you.'
- Ask the pupils who have been observing and listening which of the thoughts they can relate to.
- Repeat the conscience alley exercise using different pupils and different thoughts.
- Ask pupils to create a verbal diary entry for Jack and add one of the thoughts they heard or one of their own. They might begin, 'Today I left home to live with my grandad. I felt ...'
- Ask a small number of pupils to share their verbal diary entries.

Debrief

- Ask pupils to find a chair and return to the circle.
- Lead a class discussion using prompt questions such as:
 - *What did you learn about family conflict?*
 - *What were the circumstances that caused the conflict in Jack's home?*
 - *What rights does Jack have as a young person?*
 - *Which of the drama strategies worked well? (Waxworks, hot seating, tableau, conscience alley and improvisation.)*
 - *Did Jack do the right thing? (The teacher may lead a brief discussion on Jack's decision to leave home and live with his grandad. His mother is probably an alcoholic and he rows with her a lot and his father is in prison and wants money and drugs.)*
 - *If Jack needed help at this time, where could he go?*
 - *What is Jack's mental state at this time?*
 - *Who can help him?*

You might wish to discuss Jack's mental state and ask the pupils about their awareness of online support groups, counselling and information and help organisations such as:

- The Samaritans
www.samaritans.org
- Lifeline
www.lifelinehelpline.info
- Home Start: Support and Friendship for Families
www.home-start.org.uk
- Young Minds: Fighting for young people's mental health
www.youngminds.org.uk