

Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer

Liz Rhodes discusses ways in which year 2 children can explore themes about looking after our world with this book

You will need

- A big copy of *Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer*; a globe; individual whiteboards; large sheets of sugar paper; large scale map of local area; a copy of *Scrapman* by Carolyn Bear; plenty of found materials – small boxes, cylinders, corks, springs, buttons, and so on.

This week's activities and topics will include:

- Rhyming, number bonds, chanting and singing, rhythm, pollution, recycling, renewable energy, North and South Poles, identifying feelings, instructions, imperatives, time connectives, designing and making a figure out of scrap.

DAY ONE

Shared reading

Show the children the front cover of the book and talk about the illustration. You can see the five little men, but how do you tell them apart? (They all have green heads but – a bit like Teletubbies – they have different shapes on the top of their antennae and different coloured clothing.)

How do you think they look as if they are feeling? Happy, sad, worried, excited? Why do you think they are feeling like this?

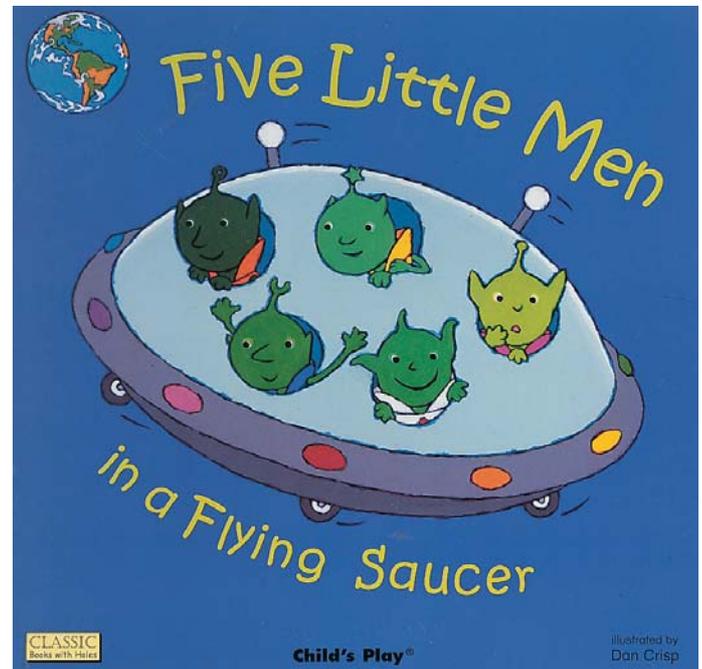
Show the children the back cover. Here we can see the five little men in full. What are they doing? (One is taking a picture of the others, who are busily

cleaning up.) There are some words and music at the bottom of the cover. This is the song we will sing as we are reading the book. Learn the song.

Look at the title page. Here we see the five little men (of course they might be women) boarding the spacecraft. Where could they have come from and where are they going to? What might they have in their suitcases? What are they carrying on their backs (space packs, for moving around in the air individually)?

Now sing through the rest of the book, encouraging the children to join in. The first spread shows the spaceship approaching an industrial landscape and the spacemen look worried.

One leaves the spaceship (spread two) and the rest fly over a congested motorway (spread three). Another spaceman leaves and the rest fly over a jungle which has been deforested (spread four). The three remaining spacemen are looking concerned and one is crying. Another spaceman leaves the spaceship. Spread five takes the spaceship over the Antarctic. You can tell that because there are penguins on an ice floe, and you might like to ask the riddle 'Where will you see penguins and polar bears together?' Answer: 'At the zoo, because penguins only live at the South Pole and polar bears



only live at the North Pole'. Show the two Poles on the globe. The Antarctic picture shows a stricken oil tanker spewing out oil, with a distressed whale caught in the oil slick. Exit fourth spaceman. Spread six takes the spaceship over a landfill site. The last spaceman escapes the spaceship, which is now empty and flies through the sky with a jet plane exuding a polluting vapour trail. In spread seven the spacemen have rejoined the ship and this time they fly over a clear blue sea with whales, dolphins, sailing ships and wind turbines in it. The sand on the shore is clean and children are playing contentedly on the grass, where young trees are being planted. Seeing all this makes the spacemen so happy that they decide to land. Throughout the book there are cut out holes which accommodate the spacemen as they leave the ship,

so you can use these to make the number bonds up to five as you go through the book.

Word level

The whole poem is printed on the final spread. Ask the children to identify the rhyming words ('day', 'away' and 'stay'; 'right' and 'sight').

Independent activity

Ask the children to work on their whiteboards and find words to rhyme with 'men', 'day' and 'three'. Remind them that rhyming words have endings which sound the same and they don't necessarily have to be spelt the same way, for example 'day' and 'sleigh'.

Plenary

Look at the words the children have collected and write them on a large piece of sugar paper. These can then be added to

during the week. Tell the children that on Thursday they are going to do some exciting design and technology work and in preparation for that they must try to bring in as many small boxes, cylinders, corks, buttons, and so on, as they can. They will be making small humanoid figures out of waste and call him or her Scrap-person. If you can get a copy of *Scrapman*, this would be good for story time.

DAY TWO

Shared reading

This time chant the poem instead of singing it. It has a very strong rhythm so you could encourage the children to clap (just two fingers against the palm will preserve your sanity). They may find this difficult to do accurately and should be given the chance to practise. Apart from the number changing at the beginning, the first five verses are the same, so the children should soon be able to chant or sing the poem fluently. You can prompt the number changes by encouraging the class to show the number with their fingers. Start discussing the individual spreads. Ask the children what made the spacemen unhappy in each spread and encourage them to use the correct terms: pollution, environment, rain forest, deforestation, oil slick, landfill site, tipping, renewable energy, recycling. Write these terms on some sugar paper so that they can be referred to again.

Independent activity

Give each child a sheet of A4 paper and ask them to write a sentence about any way in which they think individuals could help to make the world better. They could use ideas they have heard about outside school, such as water saving, composting or recycling and should illustrate their ideas to cover the whole sheet of paper.

Plenary

Share the children's ideas and try to fit them into categories such as recycling, lessening air pollution, saving water. Reinforce the fact that if everyone tries to do just a little bit, then it can make a huge difference. Tell them this example about water saving: if everyone in an average street left the tap running while they were cleaning their teeth, they would waste enough water to fill a swimming pool every week. It can really help the environment if you clean your teeth and use a mug for the water instead.

DAY THREE

Shared reading

Today we shall focus on pollution. What is it? (Pollution is when the air, water or earth are contaminated by substances which prevent them from working properly.

If we pollute the air with fumes, then it is not fit to breathe; if we pollute water, then it is bad for the animals and plants who live in it and it is harmful to drink; if we pollute the land, plants can't grow there, nor can animals live there.)

Why is it bad for our planet? What can we do about it? Go through the book pointing out cases of pollution (industrial pollution, traffic, oil spill, landfill, jet trails). It is important to think about the aspects which we ourselves can change. Looking at traffic pollution, how many children come to school by car? Is it possible for them either to walk or use public transport and do they share their car with other people? If they could walk to school, would this mean that they would have to get up a bit earlier? How could they actually make a difference? Explain that by using public transport many people can travel, but they are only using one lot of fuel.

Ask the children where they think fuel comes from and explain that it is getting increasingly difficult to source. It is a fossil fuel

and will one day run out, so we shall have to think about different ways of generating energy.

Independent activity

Show the children a large scale map of your local area. Ask them to describe how they get to school. This should be set out as instructions, so talk about imperatives (bossy verbs), using the terms 'left', 'right' and 'straight on' and time connectives. No adjectives or adverbs. Ask the children to help you compile a list of time connectives, and display them to help with spelling. If they travel by public transport, the children should only describe their journey to and from the bus stop or station.

Plenary

Look at some of the children's instructions and try to follow them on the large scale map. Do they work? How could we improve the instructions?

DAY FOUR

Shared reading

Today we concentrate on the three Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle. You can download a chart from www.dundee.gov.uk/waste/3rs.htm on which to base your discussion. It itemises ways in which we can save resources.

Just making the children aware is a good start. Look at the page in the book showing the landfill site and talk about how the objects could have been reduced, reused or recycled. Discuss what different items are made of and how they can be broken down so that the components can be used again, maybe in a new form. For example, plastic bottles can be treated so that fleece fabric can be made from them. Reinforce the fact that resources are finite – they will eventually run out – so we have to think of ways of reusing them.

Independent activity

Today and tomorrow the class will work to make Scrap People. The children can work either in pairs or individually to produce a small jointed humanoid figure. They will use the found materials they have brought in. You will need to discuss which body parts should be included – head, body, jointed arms and legs with hands and feet. Ask the children to make a rough drawing of what they expect their figure to look like and a list of what they will need, having shown them what is available.

Plenary

Have a look at what has been produced so far and ask the children to say how they think designs could be improved.

DAY FIVE

Shared reading

Quickly sing through the book, because the children will be keen to get on with their making projects.

Independent activity

The class should carry on with their models. Those who have completed them could go on either of these websites: www.reduceuserecycle.co.uk www.recyclingconsortium.org.uk (which has a particularly good children's section).

Plenary

Have a parade of humanoids. Some children may have decided to make them into puppets. If possible make a display out of the models: hanging them from a line looks very effective. Reinforce once more the importance of looking after our planet and remind the children that everyone can help, even if it's only in a small way.

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