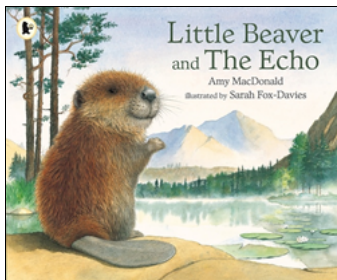


Storykit: Loneliness



Little Beaver and the Echo by Amy MacDonald and Sarah Fox-Davies

Summary

Little Beaver is unhappy. He lives at the edge of a big pond and is all alone; he has no siblings and no friends. He is so sad that he cries and as he does so, he hears someone else crying on the other side of the pond. He sets off in search of the other sad creature and a new friend. On his journey he meets others who are alone and lonely: a duck, an otter and a turtle. Together they continue the quest to find the crying creature. On meeting a wise, old beaver, they learn about the Echo and realise they have become friends. Little Beaver and his new friends are happy and understandably so is the Echo. A simple and touching story with beautiful watercolour illustrations of soft, natural landscapes and delightful characters. This book was nominated for the Children's Book Award.

The author's website: <http://amymacdonald.com>

About Amy MacDonald: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_MacDonald_\(writer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_MacDonald_(writer))

Little Beaver and The Echo – video story: <http://prod.signedstories.com/story-world/families-friendships/little-beaver-and-echo>

Sarah Fox-Davies illustrations: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/557250153865854104/>

Themes: Loneliness, sadness, friendship

Recommended age range: KS1

Orientation

Create echoes for: “Why are you crying? I’m Lonely! I need a friend.” Children act as the Echo when you read the story aloud.

Script available: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/little-beaver-and-the-echo-wrkshts-and-script-6316534>

Activities	Empathy skills practised	Learning approaches
<p>Exploring sadness and loneliness Discuss why Little Beaver is sad at the start of the story?</p> <p>Encourage children to make the sad face that Little Beaver might make. (How do we look when we are sad – body language and facial expressions):</p> <p>Discussion - do children understand what loneliness means</p> <p>Help children explore what loneliness feels like Find an empty room (or use a tent) in the classroom and during the day allow some children to take turns to spend a short time in the room/space on their own. Children describe how being completely alone feels.</p> <p>The words are recorded and displayed.</p> <p>Then children spend time in the same room/space in groups of 3 or 4. They are asked them to say how it felt different being in the space with other people.</p>	<p>Emotional literacy Recognising their own and others’ feelings</p>	<p>Discussion Immersive activity</p>
<p>Finding Friends Make finger/lollipop puppets (simple ones e.g. ears, nose, whiskers etc.) and act out the story.</p> <p>Act out the friends, Little Beaver, Duck, Otter and Turtle, chatting on the boat and asking questions of each other. Draw/paint pictures of each character and list what is known about each as</p>	<p>Recognising others’ feelings. Imagination</p>	<p>Discussion, drama, role-play, art, research, design technology</p>

<p>role play develops – creating a Profile of each character</p>		
<p>What is similar and what is different about each of the friends The four ‘friends’ are very different– list obvious differences e.g. Duck has feathers, a beak, Otter and Beaver have fur, Turtle has a shell. List similarities e.g. they can all swim, they are all lonely, they all want to help.</p> <p>Children could do this with their friends too</p> <p>Group discussion about why the four animals become friends.</p>	<p>Emotional vocabulary building. Recognising and valuing difference. Appreciating others’ feelings. Self-awareness</p>	<p>Role-play, compare and contrast, discussion</p>
<p>Friendship foods – cake: each child brings in one of the ingredients and they mix together to create the friendship cake. The same can be done with a mixed salad or fruit salad.</p> <p>Play the Friendship Game - Little Beaver transports his friends in a boat: Row the boat – children run around, teacher calls out a number e.g. 3 and children have to sit in groups of three and row together. Run around again, new number called out.</p>	<p>Collaboration and reflection</p>	<p>Cooking, games</p>
<p>How does Little Beaver feel to have friends? Children imagine they are Little Beaver and write/make a card for their new friends describing the difference having friends has made.</p>	<p>strong imagination to enter into others’ feelings</p>	<p>Creating writing and art</p>
<p>Pro-social action Create a Friendship area in the playground for children who feel lonely. Class members take on the role of playground mentors, chatting and playing with the children who go to the “Friendship area”. Support a charity helping the lonely: http://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org</p>	<p>Pro-social attitudes and behaviour</p>	<p>Leadership</p>



A note about Storykits

Empathy Storykits aim to help children understand other people through a story and characters. The text is used as a springboard for discussion, activities and social action.

Empathy skills supported by Storykits

- Stronger ability to imagine, understand and reflect on other people's perspectives and feelings
- Wider vocabulary to recognise and share own and others' feelings
- Stronger empathic communication skills: deep listening and conversation
- More developed social values which turn feelings of empathy into moral actions in the home, school and community

Note for teachers

- Some books used will deal with sensitive issues, it will be important for teachers to know the book well.

How to use

- Teachers could read the story aloud to the class in suitable sections, with some activities taking place as it progresses and others being completed when the story is read, or each child could read the text on their own.
- Teachers might choose to do all the activities or just those most appropriate for the class/ group.