

Sharing Stories with Helen Docherty

Ideas for using *Abracazebra* in the Early Years Classroom

Introducing the Book:

Show the children **pictures A** and **B** (see other page) in turn. How does this picture make you **feel**? Brainstorm words, e.g. bored / calm / sleepy vs. excited / amazed / curious (what's going on?). What do you think is happening in the second picture? (The zebra is putting on a show) Does the goat look happy about this? Can you **guess** what might happen in this story?

Read the story, and talk about what happened, and why. What was your favourite part? Why?

Imagine you're Goat at three key moments in the story (show them the relevant pages of the book): after Abracazebra's first show, after Abracazebra has left, and when she steps down onto his boat. How do you **feel**? Elicit words, e.g. jealous / grumpy / cross. **Why**? Make a face to show how he's feeling, and then draw the missing features in each of Goat's faces (sulky; guilty and happy / relieved), e.g. with furrowed eyebrows and a downturned mouth. For this activity, use the Goat worksheet on the **Resources** page on my website (**C**). Some older children could write words to describe how Goat is feeling in the thought bubbles.

Now have a go at **drawing** Abracazebra's magic show! (**D**) First, talk about the magic that Abracazebra performs in the story: making a beanstalk grow, juggling hoops, making butterflies and stars appear. Print out one sheet for each child and encourage them to fill in the rest of the picture with whatever magic they like, using plenty of **colour**. They can also draw themselves in the audience. (N.B. Older children can write a sentence to describe what is happening in the picture.)

Make an Abracazebra mask to wear, using the instructions that can be downloaded from the **Resources** page on my website (design by Thomas Docherty).

Act out the story! Clear a space and let the children act the story out while you read it to them. You could assign parts; divide the class into different animal families, and pick one child (or more) to be Abracazebra, one (or more) to be Goat, one to be Pig, Cow, Sheep and Dog. Help them to learn the lines spoken by Abracazebra and the Goat (if they want to), and devise actions to go with the different parts of the story. You could make / adapt some **props**: a boat for some of the animals to sit in, a stage for Abracazebra and a sycamore tree to sit and tell stories under.

Organise a **tea party** and **magic show**. Help the children bake (and decorate) cupcakes in advance. Bring in some real teapots and fill with milk / water / squash. Let some of the children take it turns to be Goat and serve the other 'animals'. Read them the story again, and then let the show begin. Devise some simple **tricks** for some of the children to perform as Abracazebra, e.g. pulling a long string of coloured hankies out of a hat, making a beanstalk 'grow.'

Put Yourself in the Story

As with the Snatchabook activity, take digital photos of all the children in your class, print them out and laminate them. Now draw out and laminate the characters in the story and some features of the

backgrounds. (If you like, you can attach a Velcro strip to the back of the laminates and provide a felt board for the children to stick the characters onto.) The children can now play at putting themselves in the story, either as Abracazebra or Goat, and retelling it in their own words.

(Adapted from an idea by Lisa Pepper and Sam Randall, early years practitioners, and featured in an article in Nursery World by Michael Jones: Our World, Our Story, 18 November 2010.

<http://www.talk4meaning.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/1651.pdf>)

Picture A



Picture B



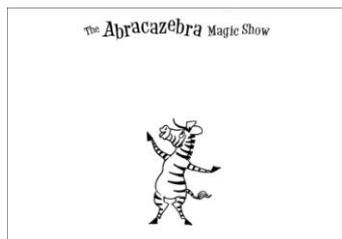
Picture C

How is Goat feeling? What is he thinking?

A After Abracazebra's magic show B After Abracazebra has left C When Abracazebra climbs onto his boat

Three thought bubbles are shown above three goat heads. Each thought bubble is empty, intended for a child to draw or write inside. The goat heads are simple line drawings with horns.

Picture D



These pictures and activity sheets can be downloaded and printed out from the **Resources** page on my website: <http://www.helendocherty.com/resources/>