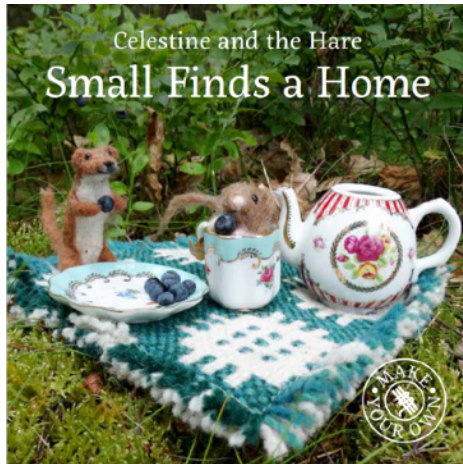


# CELESTINE AND THE HARE TEACHER NOTES



'Hello! Who are you?' said Baby Weasus.  
'I don't know,' said the small thing.  
'I got lost on my own so I hid under  
this piece of bark and hoped someone  
would find me.'  
'Well I found you! Come and have a picnic  
with me,' said Baby Weasus. 'I've got lots of  
bilberries.'  
'Thank you, that would be very lovely,' said  
the small thing.

## Small Finds a Home

In this story, Baby Weasus goes for a picnic and finds a small creature hiding, who has no home. She invites him to come and live with them after they have a picnic.

### Conversation prompts:

Small hides hoping he is found.

Whilst this is an oxymoron, I wanted it written in that way as there are many children (and adults) who hide hoping they are found. There will be children in your class who do that. It will speak to them, a point of recognition for those quiet shy children who don't say 'me me' but want to be noticed and chosen. You could discuss what they could do to help people who are hiding hoping to be found such as at playtime etc. Too shy to ask to join in- maybe a finding bench where you can sit if you feel you want to hide but be found.

Baby Weasus accepts Small without question. You could say that Small is a refugee. "xxx is rather like Small isn't she? She was found and came to live with us at our school"

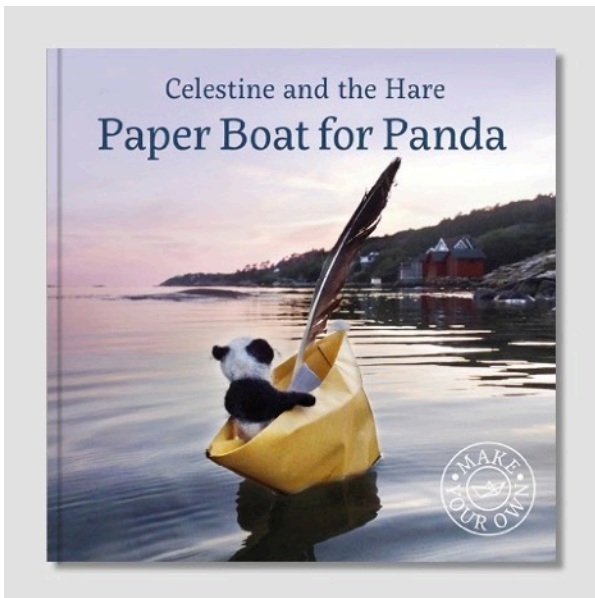
Small sits in the tea cup which makes baby weasus giggle. A difference of culture that can be charming and funny to one child but upsetting to be laughed at by others. One could have talk about what do we do that others find funny/odd? Even if you are different you can still be friends. Everyone is different, some are good at maths, some drawing, we shouldn't say we are the same but embrace our differences. Good, gentle opportunity to talk about them.

Emily says there is always room for one more and we should always make others feel welcome. A good skill for children to work with socially, always room for one more in a game, on the bench etc when they tend to say no, just us, go somewhere else.

Baby Weasus gives up her bed without a thought. She is rewarded with something even better. This story is a good starting point for discussions on new people joining the class, refugees in particular. What can we do like Baby Weasus to make him feel welcome? Perhaps we could weave him a bookmark or a cushion or whatever it might be. Get them involved in the welcoming. They could write a story about who they found lost when out for a walk. What were they? What did they look like? Where were they from? Describing words, draw a picture. Maybe describe the place they came from, how they got there. Often worries and fears will come out in their own stories that you can then talk about with the child. Always emphasising the kindness and being matter of fact.

Where do you think small came from? What do you think he might be?

You can also do some work with photography and illustrating a story by taking photos of teddies or such like.



She found Panda still sitting by the sea,  
 lost in dreams.  
 She gently tapped him on the shoulder  
 because you should always be gentle  
 with dreamers.  
 She asked him to come with her as she  
 had a surprise for him.



### Paper Boat For Panda

Panda longs to sail on the sea. He pretends to sail on the rug. Baby Weasus makes his dream come true for no other reason than to be kind to a friend. The joy in giving because you can. Be gentle with dreamers. That's a bit like xxx we need to be gentle with him sometimes don't we when he's dreaming.



'I made you a paper boat, Panda! Small helped too. It will float for this evening while the sea is soft and smooth and still. I found a feather and put it in the front for you too, to make it extra pretty.' Panda was so happy he started to cry.

Have you ever been so happy you cried? Tell me about it. Write about it. What would you wish for that you could do for one night only. Or if a bit older, even better is what wish would you grant to a friend/family member for one night only. They then have to think about others. The joy in giving to someone else is a good thing to practice.

Could do a secret wish for someone in the class. Make a boat each. You can write wishes on your boat.

Good wishes for the future, or you can write regrets that need to be let go of, and then sail them away if you have access to water where they can sail away. They can write fortunes and sail them in a tub and pick one out and open up to see what it says. Maybe the teacher can write names inside the boat and they pick a boat and have to pair with that person that week - random choice of desk partner except they choose so can't be cross with you, as they chose it. Sailing away regrets can be a good way to let things go and start afresh.

Be prepared to read some heart breaking things though. I had a boy who said his dad was sailing his boat (His dad has been killed in a car crash 3 days earlier).

Boats can be hung in the classroom as a mobile. You can make a sea out of a blue cloth and have your boats sailing on it. They can make a flag for their boat. Who is sailing your boat? Paper cut out person (or creature of course) maybe 2. Where are they going?

Sing a sea shanty. Look at a map of the seas and decide where to sail.

Write poems about the sea, or sailing or wishes.

A sailor went to sea sea to see what he could see see see - plays on words.

Science- how can we make our boat sail for longer. Wax crayon on the paper, candles, foil paper, size of paper, waterproofing materials, Timing floating and logging data.

How much weight can the boat take before it sinks (plasticine blobs work well and good practice at estimating and weighing them to right weight. Who can put the most in their boat? Skills of where to place it as well as how much.



## HONEY FOR TEA

Honey for Tea has lots of eco stuff in it about growing plants and bees. We all know someone who stings when they are scared and sometimes they sting because they are feeling small and scared and not because they are mean. Even if you don't mean to. Discussion on when you've stung a friend when you didn't mean to.



Emily loves to sit by the hive and watch the bees do their little bee dance. She wears her beekeeper's hat when she sits close to the bees. It is easy to get scared and sting when you are a small bee, even though you don't mean to hurt your friends.

Baby Weasus wants to pick flowers for Emily but she says grow some instead. Huge opportunity to create a wildlife garden. Read the story, make the bees and then take them for a walk outside to see if they can find anything that their bee might like. Observation of plants, flowers that they might not notice before. After that, you could talk about what could

we do to help the bees more? Grow some bee friendly flowers. Research what those might be. Grow them on the window sill- good botany lessons there and then plant out. Even better if you can find plants that you can eat too. Sunflowers are magical of course. Nastursiums are easy for little fingers.

Make a bee hotel, butterflies, other bugs.

Wildlife bee garden.

Make a mobile out of the bees and hang in the classroom.

When making the bees, so they don't start swinging them around and smacking each other with them, tell them the rhyme

What do you suppose?

A bee landed on my nose

Then what do you think?

She gave me a wink

And said I beg your pardon, I thought you were a garden!

They can try and land the bee on their nose which is a bit tricky and keeps them focussed inwards and not at each other.

Buzzy poems. Alliteration, onomatopoeia. buzzy fuzzy

Eco projects. Make their own bug out of pine cones, ash keys etc etc. Design a bug on paper, draw it, describe it. What does it eat, where does it live? Favourite plant etc.

Tree species and ID.



### **Finding your place.**

Discussion around books and what sort of book is your favourite. Fiction, non fiction.

King Norty can't read but he is clever. You may have children in your class who can't read. They can identify and see that they can be clever too.

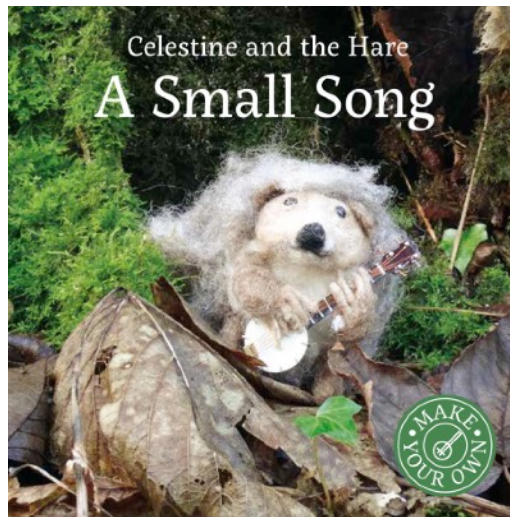
Reading to others is a good thing to do. Read to each other or they can offer to read to a younger class if older. I had the oldest class listening to the learners read for 10 mins each morning. Each child gets practice and is heard, links in playground with big ones, you can match boys up with big boys who think it is cool to read, think about pairings and it can really work. Big ones who struggle to read can get a lot of self esteem from helping little ones with it. Gives the big tough kids an excuse to show their caring side because they have to but it then flows over into other areas such as the playground.

What you reading today? Making bookmarks for others, what would you put on for so and so? Thinking about others. Maybe make some to sell at a fundraiser to buy books for the library or for a charity.

Humour of King Norty using a chocolate biscuit for a book mark. They could think up some other funny things that don't work. Draw them, have a laugh but also good for finding opposites, language, lateral thinking. Maybe a silly use but then also a good use that isn't intended.

This book celebrates all readers, those who like stories, factual books, those who can't read. Baby Weasus is a strong brave girl, Small is a quiet gentle boy who likes butterflies.(gender differences, colours etc.

Lots of discussion around reading styles and books.



## **A Small Song**

Here we revisit Small again and a memory is triggered of his home through music.

What song reminds you of home? Did your granny sing to you?

What nursery rhymes can you remember?

If you have refugees, you can discuss what it might be like to miss your home and everything you came from. Or if you've moved, miss your family or friends. Break ups, missing dad /mum.

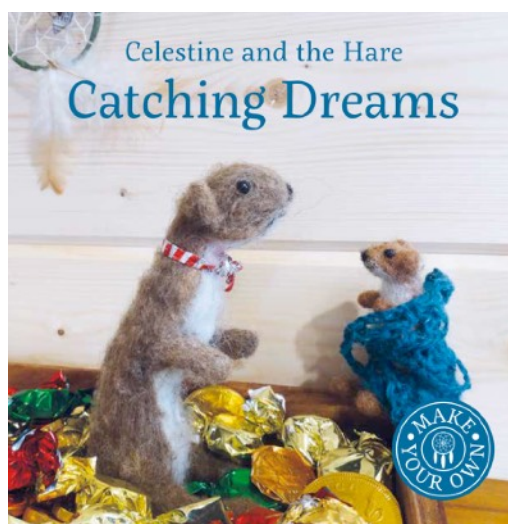
Is there something we can do to help xxx not miss home so much. Is it food you miss? A smell? A song? Sing songs from different countries, listen to different music, folk songs etc.

Learn instruments. Practice. How you have to practice to be good at something. Can link to other things, like writing or reading too.

What instruments could we make? Good science on the rubber band guitar. Can you make an octave? Can you get it in pitch? Can we make drums (very popular) wind instruments from watering cans, junk orchestra. Glasses with water in, bottles blow over them different water in them. Can they fill water bottles to make 3 blind mice or something on it. Pitch, science of more or less water to make different sound. They can figure it out themselves..

Play a tune and see if others can tell what it is. Lots of science of acoustics.

Good way to open a discussion on missing home. Empathise. It is hard isn't it. My class, when I was a teacher learned a New Zealand Maori blessing for their class mate from there and sung it to him on his birthday as a surprise. Made me cry, never mind him!



### **Catching Dreams.**

The main obvious theme is nightmares but there is also the theme of death. I wanted to write a book about what happens if you die? that doesn't tell lies. I was told I'll always be here for you but my parents both died young and weren't. Children can handle death a lot easier than we think if they can find a way to talk about it. This book is a great way to broach the topic of someone close to them dying.

King Norty tells BW who will love her more fiercely and how the circle around her will close that bit more tightly. This is a perfect intro to say who will love you more fiercely when mummy dies? Who is in your tribe and your circle? Talk about the tribe around the child.

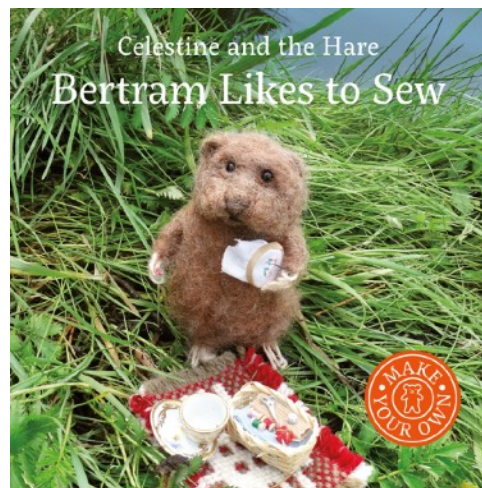
Conversation starters are great.

When I read this story to schools, all the children immediately start telling me about their nightmares. 9 year olds often have quite bad nightmares, there's a developmental stage around this age when they realise they are separate and alone in the world and can often start having nightmares, doing rituals, questioning if their parents are really their parents, struggle, become clingy etc. Talking about nightmares in the day time can be helpful in a matter of fact way. Oh gosh that's a bit frightening isn't it. What does your daddy/mummy/granny do to help you when you have a nightmare? Makes it normal and they see others have them too. Talking them through can help.

I was careful to not say that the dream catcher would always work, because sometimes they don't and nightmares sneak through. Children won't trust you if you say it always will and it doesn't, becomes more frightening. Comforting to say reminder that you are not alone if one sneaks through.

You could get them to describe their perfect dream, what would it be? Write it down. Good story telling exercise and it tells you a lot about the child too!! Make a dream catcher for the classroom that could be one for catching wishes, or catching good deeds and tie a feather or bead on the bottom for the good deeds. Visible reminder of acts of kindness.

Whilst these might be seen as younger books, you can read them to older children too. They can write a story taking a photo of their teddies to illustrate it perhaps for a younger class.



## Bertram Likes to Sew

Bertram isn't like all the other water voles. Bertram doesn't like swimming, he likes to sew. This book is a celebration of being different. All the phrases in this book have been said to me as a child or to me as a parent about my child. I wanted to give parents a hand with answers to the why isn't your child like others... to give those children who aren't like everyone else a place where they are recognised and celebrated.

Every class has a child like Bertram in it. You can use this book as a help for others to appreciate their qualities. That's like xxx isn't it. Celebrate difference, what are you good at? What do you like to do? I was careful to make sure that Bertram tries things because I didn't want it to be a I don't like that so I'm not doing it sort of thing. He tries and he is helpful. His kindness is appreciated and at the end he meets someone who is also different. They are accepting and don't say oh how weird or such.

He is a boy who likes to sew. A way in to gender differences and stereotypes too. Why do we think sewing is girl's thing yet tailors are often men? Discuss what is boy and girl things and how that can change. Who decides? Discuss differences. Is it ok to not like what everyone else does? What do you like that isn't what everyone else does? Interesting to talk about, you may find out some interesting things. Can they write a story about an animal that doesn't like doing what they all do and what do they do instead? Good for thinking about what categorises an animal.

All the comments in this story I have heard said to me or about me or about my son or others I know. (not water voles obviously but know what I mean)

"When are you going to be like all the other children?"

"Well, what if I don't want to be like all the other children?"

It is a struggle to know what to say to people when they ask you why you aren't like everyone else. It is a struggle as a parent to know what to say when someone says it about your child. It is a struggle to know it is ok to just be a bit different and my goodness how dreadful the world would be if we were all the same.

We need people who have different passions and see the world differently because they help us see the world differently too. So often, the thing we are criticised for being or doing is the thing that makes us shine when older. Daydreamers become story tellers, the boy who couldn't name colours but called them happy or angry is now an illustrator renowned for his use of colour, the girl who was quiet and didn't talk to people gives space for others to feel valued and heard.

The current pressure is to write books about girls because there aren't enough about them and I am waiting for people to say oh what a shame it is another book about a boy.

Bertram had to be a boy because a girl who likes sewing is considered normal and a bit hmm stereotypical girly, which is a shame but there we go. So, Bertram is a boy who likes to do what boys do like to do but are told they don't because they are boys and should be out running around being boys and not sewing even though they like it. Bertram does not like swimming. He likes to sew. There is a difference between saying I don't like that and not trying and just being fussy and having a passion that you want to follow. So, Bertram is polite. He tries swimming. Lots because you should try. He answers his critics by kind words as well as kind deeds. There isn't a

big thank you to him at the end for doing good deeds, because really we should just do them without the need for a reward, but he does make a new friend.

I also wanted to write a bit about clothes and how we use them, care for them, what we buy and how we can help the environment too. Mending and darning and making the worn beautiful again. I want to get children mending their clothes, altering old ones, changing them around, which is what I did as a teenager unable to afford new trendy clothes, I went to charity shops and bought old men's shirts. Cut the collars off them and then batiked on them. I love the visible mending movement and want to encourage us all to do our bit for the environment. There is also a page about water voles and how we need to help these beautiful little creatures because our need for tidy is endangering them Our beloved Ratty from Wind in the Willows was a water vole. We need to look out for this little beings.

A lot to do with children around clothes and waste. Have a welly swap, jumble sales at school, clothes swaps, can they repair clothes? They could do it as a fundraiser too if older, sew patches on, look at ways to make other things, turn jeans into bags, so much you can do with clothing, helps those that can't afford the latest new thing too if everyone is swapping or careful. Discuss where clothes come from, or how cotton is made. Working conditions, responsible shopping, don't just get new stuff and throw away old.

The craft at the end is sewing a teddy bear. They can design other animals to make, good for creative skills, thinking, fine motor skills, can they make a teddy to cuddle for those that need one or a younger class? Creative and helpful.





### **Bert's Garden**

If someone annoys us, we can squash them, stamp on them, or we can see what they need and try to help them. I hope Bert's Garden shows in a gentle way that helping and kindness is good for all of us. Environmental issues are so huge and can be so full of doom and gloom and sometimes remote to children too. It is hard for a child to feel that they can actually help a polar bear or a tiger, but we all have back yard wildlife either at home, school or the local park and that is something children can actively help to improve. I hope they will feel a sense of usefulness and making a difference as well as seeing how important it is to be kind to everyone, no matter who or what we are."

Graffeg asked me for a quote about the book and that's what it said. Really it is about kindness and gentleness and caring for each other and cake. I really wanted to do bug houses so I could shout stop calling them bug hotels because they aren't hotels. The bugs don't pay to stay there for a few days, it is their home and we should be building homes for bugs not somewhere we can charge them to stay a bit... a small point really but one I wanted to say.

Bert is kept awake by a beetle looking for a home. Rather than squashing her, he builds her a bug house with Grandpa's help.

She repays his kindness by inviting her friends to help pollinate his garden and scoff the pests. There are some real facts about the beetles and bugs in the story and I had them checked by Dr Beynon at the bug farm. I couldn't put buzzing about as Clock beetles don't fly for example. I rather like the accuracy of things like that interspersed with Bert eating cake made by Grandpa! Lots about kindness and not swatting others, but seeing what they might need.

Lots about eco issues. So many eco issues are overwhelming and too much for young children to deal with. How can you help a polar bear? It can feel a bit too much for children sometimes. I wanted something positive that all children can do to help. Anyone can put a bug house outside, even if made in a plastic bottle and hung out of a window, it can be done. Schools can have bug houses, plant flowers for bees... link to Honey for Tea. Eco systems, food webs, habitats etc. Lots of science and eco work. What's your favourite bug? Stop the culture of stamping on them or screaming about them. Draw them, design your own bug...



## Helping Hedgehog Home

The third book in the Water Vole series features Granny and Grandpa Dandelion and Burdock Vole.

When a new fence is put up, Hedgehog is left trapped outside her garden. Grandpa Burdock and Granny Dandelion must be creative to help her get home.

The hedgehog, though daring enough to build a hot air balloon, is rather shy and quiet and a little overwhelmed by Grandpa and his enthusiasm. We all know people who are so keen to help that they don't stop to ask if advice is wanted or needed and can completely swamp poor hedgehogs who need a little time to gather their skirts and smooth their prickles.

Grandpa comes up with all kinds of mad inventions for getting the hedgehog home.

As usual, I have mixed up the gender roles, so Grandpa bakes the cakes and Granny is the one with the workshop. Bertam also shows that sometimes, words aren't needed, just a sit nearby and a teddy is enough for a quiet prickly person.

At the back of the book, it shows you how to make a papier mache hot air balloon and then I was super lucky that the two fabulous girls Kyra and Sophie from [Hedgehog Friendly Town](#) said they would write some pointers for how to look after hedgehogs at home. They have some great ideas for children on how to make your garden hedgehog friendly and how to make feeding stations and homes etc.

Lots about being helpful in the right way, feeling worried, displacement, missing home, being kind. Gender role reversal with Grandpa baking cakes, Granny has the spanners. Bertram offers a teddy cuddle and a quiet sit down when he can see the hedgehog is scared. Lots of humour. Grandpa's inventions are funny and silly. Can the children design a way to get the hedgehog home? Lots of creative thinking and fun. You could even build them out of recycling and test them out with plasticine hedgehogs. Careful that they don't get splatted though...

Kindness, helping and eco notes about looking after hedgehogs. Perhaps the children could make a hedgehog home in the school grounds, or check the fences for a doorway for hedgehogs. Can they do it at home if they have a garden? Caring for our local wildlife, checking bonfires, leaving a patch wild. Links to Bert's Garden and wildlife gardening.

The hot air balloon could extend to science about how they work, hot air rising. They could make some as decorations for the classroom, there is a post on the [Graffeg Tribe page](#) about making simpler paper ones. Stories of who might go in a hot air balloon, where they might fly to.

Always glad to hear from Teachers what they did with the books and happy to add in extras from you too. You can email me [karin@celestineandthehare.com](mailto:karin@celestineandthehare.com) I am on Twitter too @andthehare and if you do anything with my books, do tweet me and I'll reply and will often post a photo of the animals reading the tweet of the children's work.

Below are a few notes about crafts and their value especially for those that can't sit still.

## **Crafts**

Nimble fingers, nimble mind. Really really important for children to do craft work and be dextrous with their hands. Do finger rhymes with them here is the church and here is the steeple type things. Knitting is fabulous as it has a crossing over movement that exercises the brain.

ADHD, fiddlers, can't sit still-ers.

"They can't bounce off the walls if there are no walls"

Outside in the green for 20 mins is to be said to be effective as a dose of ritalin. If the school can get a pet pig or some such animal, this can be so very helpful. Rather than sending a child out of the classroom, sending them off to give an apple to the pig can work wonders. Time out of the room, time in the green, a non judgemental creature glad to see you when others maybe aren't. Time to give him a scratch and a chat and then back to the classroom. Obviously there are a lot of problems with this but maybe a garden area and plants to water, or a guinea pig or something is doable. Or going to empty the compost bin if can't have animals.

Stick weaving is a simple form of knitting. Really portable and really great for boys. Boys adore it and will do it for hours if they are allowed to have a go and it isn't presented as a 'girly' thing. I had 3 boys at the last festival I did aged about 9 who wove for an hour in silence didn't move... till I had to tell them to leave. One boy said it was the best day ever.

For those fiddlers, adhd type children, stick weaving can be really helpful, as can knitting once they are good at it. Part of their brain is buzzing away and stopping them focussing. What the weaving/knitting does is occupy the buzzy part of the brain so the rest of them can focus on learning. Doesn't create 100% focus but it does allow the 20% or whatever there is there, to focus. I had a 14 year old who knitted in my class- talked to him about it first and he agreed might be helpful. Some of his friends joined in and they knitted squares for blankets for refugees. Simple squares doesn't require counting etc. Stick weaving is a constructive fiddle. They can make ropes for the nursery children to use, or skipping ropes or make strings for hanging things in the classroom. Plait them together to make rugs, do something useful with them so not a mindless thing. You can talk about how the miners used to knit on the way to the mines, or fishermen sewing their nets if they have already been got by the gender thing. Young ones will be fine and the sticks can go in their back pocket too. Great for car journeys, mini bus trips etc.

I went to a school with a mixed class of 5-8 year olds. I was warned about 4 children in there and told not to worry if they didn't listen or were removed from the class. One boy, Charlie had an assistant. It was immediately obvious to me which the 4 were. All boys. They crowded round to talk to me and were desperate to meet the creatures. Charlie kept getting into trouble, he went off to get a drink, spilled the water, bumped into someone else, knocked their seed planting over, cries of Charlie did... Charlie did... I noticed that sometimes Charlie didn't. but of course he had a reputation so everyone assumed he did. He had disappeared and the teacher was threatening that he wouldn't be allowed the story at the end (poor boy needed those stories more than anyone) Anyway, I asked him to come over and tell me who his favourite character from the books was. Now, everyone assumed that it would be King Norty. But no, he said Small. I love Small. And here was a bumbling clumsy boy that was really a bit Small and sometimes stung because it is hard not to sting your friends sometimes when you are small and frightened. I asked him if he could help me. Would he mind holding Small for me ever so gently while I read the story. He'd need to sit near me and be very gentle. Yes please he said. He sat with Small cupped in his hands, gently stroking the top of Small's head for the whole story. Didn't move a muscle. First time he'd sat through a story.

Ask a child who is their favourite character and why. It will tell you something about that child. Make your most dangerous child your safety officer. The one who might set fire to things, the one who is in charge of reminding you to put the candles out. The one who cuts things to remind you to collect all the scissors in. Count them up for you. They are hyper aware of these things so use it. All these children need praise and recognition.

Who is hiding hoping to be found. Notice the Smalls in your class, allow them to be invisible sometimes when they need to, be gentle with your dreamers, give them time, don't put them on the spot but give them a moment. If they are going to be asked to read out loud, let them see which passage and know so they can try it in their head first. Tell them how clever King Norty is, even though he can't read. Not reading doesn't mean you are stupid. Charlemagne was illiterate.

Me and school visits.

I can do school visits and pick up on any of these themes and can also do virtual Skype visits from my Shed if money is tight. See my website for details. I am also happy to do some work with teachers on crafts and the above. I taught in a `Steiner school for 20 years and was classed by Ofsted as an outstanding teacher. I was the first Steiner teacher to gain secondary QTS through teaching at a `Steiner school. I was part of a gold star Comenius project working on portfolio style learning for children and peer feedback. Happy to share these sorts of things on a school visit.

Books published by Graffeg

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