



PHSE

Jenny and the Worms - Overcoming Fears

Age Group: 10-12

Topic: Values and Identity

Learning Outcome: I know that fears can be overcome.

I can be empathetic to those who are fearful.

Drama Overview: The children will hear the story and then create **Freeze-Frames** of different parts of the story. **Thought Tapping** by the Lead Adult will enable the children to reveal the feelings of the characters at each stage of the story and how the levels of fearfulness change.

Prior Learning: The children will need to hear the story below.

N.B. you could also use this story in science to introduce the idea of microbes which harm and help us.

DELIVERING THE DRAMA

Read the story below, aloud, to the children.

Jenny and the Worms (by Jules Pottle)

Once there was a little family living in a little house on a little street in a little village. Everybody knew everybody and if someone had a problem, everyone in the village would help.

This little family had a mother and a little girl named Jenny. Mrs Boor lived next door and she always waved when Jenny went by. When Jenny was two years old, her mother often took her to the park. They played in the sandpit, they played on the swings and her mother lifted her up on to the bottom of the slide and whizzed her down the last section, holding on tight, so she couldn't fall. One day, her mother packed a picnic and they met friends in the park and they ate sandwiches and played ball. It was a lovely day. Jenny sat on the picnic rug and watched the older children play. Her mother chatted and smiled and lay back on the grass. Just for a moment, her mother closed her eyes.

It was then that Jenny saw it. It was wriggling and pink like jelly. She leaned forward over her chubby toes and grabbed it. It was a worm! She held it high in the air and waved it for all the other children to see... but no-one was looking. So, as babies often do, she put it in her mouth to feel it better. It tasted of earth... and the park... and the smell of rain, so she chewed it up –

delicious!. When Jenny's mother opened her eyes to check on her, she saw the worm, dangling from Jenny's mouth and panicked. She sat up and grabbed at Jenny, pulling the worm away from her. She pushed her finger in the mouth to fish out the bits and she was horrified at how much soil there was in there. She tried to wash Jenny's mouth out, but Jenny didn't understand, and she had swallowed most of it.

That night Jenny was very sick. Her mother took her to the hospital and the doctor said that there must have been many, many germs in the soil. Her mother felt terrible. Jenny had become sick because she hadn't kept her safe.

Jenny soon recovered. She was a big healthy two-year-old and the illness didn't last long. But the memory of that worm grew bigger and bigger in her mother's mind.

Her mother stopped buying carrots and potatoes because they often had little bits of soil on them. She bought tinned vegetables instead. When Mrs Boor from next door came over with some freshly picked fruit from her garden, she threw it in the bin in case it had maggots – baby insects – inside it. She only fed her daughter on food that came in packets and tins as it seemed cleaner and safer.

Then, her mother noticed there were flies and spiders in the house. So, she got rid of those with sprays and powders so that they couldn't make Jenny sick.

When Jenny wanted to play in the yard, that worried her mother too. So, she had all the soil taken away and she put down concrete instead. If leaves blew into the garden, her mother would sweep them up straight away.

Then, her mother noticed that Mrs Boor from next door had a compost heap at the end of her garden and sometimes the leaves and cuttings, that she'd put on the compost heap to rot down, would blow into their garden. Sometimes there were beetles and worms mixed in with the leaves. So, Jenny's mother put up a higher fence to keep the leaves and the beetles and the worms out.

Pretty soon, Jenny began to feel afraid too. Jenny and her mother worried about everything. They stayed inside, safe inside the high fences. But staying locked away from people, from laughter, from sunshine, from the world, is not good for you. It was making them both sick.

Mrs Boor knocked on the door. She hadn't seen Jenny or her mother in a while.

"Are you alright? Can I help with anything?" she asked.

"No, thank you," said Jenny's mother, staying a few steps back from Mrs Boor in case she had dirt on her clothes and hands from her dirty garden.

The next week, Mrs Boor tried again. She could see that Jenny didn't play outside anymore and she was worried. Again, Jenny's mother sent her away.

Again, a week later, Mrs Boor tried again. This time no one answered the door. Jenny looked out of the window. She looked pale and thin and worried. Mrs Boor called through the letter box, "Jenny, where's your mummy?"

"She's ill in bed," said Jenny, "she told me to sit here and wait... so I am."

Mrs Boor had a spare key, so she let herself in and checked on her mother. Her mother looked very poorly, so she called the doctor. Then, she took Jenny back to her own house.

There was a plant with big red flowers on the table by the door. A wasp was flying round the room, landing every so often on the flowers. Jenny screamed and ran into Mrs Boor's arms.

Mrs Boor said, "It's a wasp, it is visiting my flowers to bring pollen so my plant can make seeds for me."

"Won't it hurt me?" asked Jenny.

"Not if you don't upset it. Look!" said Mrs Boor. She held out her hand and the wasp climbed on. She took it to the door and the wasp flew away.

Jenny followed the wasp into the garden. Mrs Boor went too. They found beetles and worms in the compost heap. "Nasty!" cried Jenny, clinging to Mrs Boor again.

"Tidy!" said Mrs Boor. "Look – I bring all the bits of the plants that I don't want anymore – the dead bits, the broken bits and the bits that need cutting back. Then the beetles and the worms eat it up. They turn it into soil – really good, rich soil. Then I put the soil in my flower patch to help my flowers grow. The beetles and the worms are tidying up my garden rubbish. They are nature's cleaners."

"Cleaning. Like Mummy!" said Jenny.

Jenny was fascinated. She even picked up a worm but this time she didn't eat it. Mrs Boor showed her how to make a wormery. They put soil and dead wood and sand in layers into a plastic tank. Then, they put dead leaves on top and added 3 little pink worms. Soon, the worms were dragging the leaves down into the soil and eating them up, leaving little holes in the soil as they worked.

When Jenny went home, she asked Mrs Boor if she could take the wormery with her. She showed her mother, who was horrified.

"Dirty! Dirty worms Jenny – take them away!"

But then Jenny told her about the beetles and the worms being nature's cleaners.

Jenny's mother was very surprised and still she wasn't convinced. But Jenny promised to wash her hands after touching the wormery, and she left it where her mother could watch the worms at work.

Little by little, Jenny's mother got better. Jenny spent each day with Mrs Boor. They picked fruit and vegetables from her garden, washed them carefully and made soup and stews and fruit puddings for all of them to eat. Soon, her mother grew stronger and she was able to come and visit Mrs Boor too, sitting in a chair and watching Jenny helping in the garden. Jenny got very muddy but she didn't get sick. In fact, she looked healthier than ever.

When her mother recovered, she sent for workers to pull up the concrete. Mrs Boor brought lots of her wonderful compost and together they planted a garden. Jenny's mother released the worms from the wormery into the soil. When the flowers began to bloom and Jenny's compost heap began to grow, the wasps and the beetles arrived in the garden too. And Jenny and her mother were delighted. Mrs Boor and Jenny's mother became the best of friends, and they took down the high fence so that they could talk from their gardens every day.

Say: We are going to explore the feelings of the characters in the story. I'm going to ask you to create a **Freeze Frame** with your bodies of different parts of the story. Then I will tap each of you on the shoulder. At this point, in role as the character or object you are representing, you will tell us your thoughts and feelings.

Tell the children to work in groups of 3-5.

Tell the children which part of the story they need to represent first.

Tap children on the shoulder to reveal their thoughts.

What the **Freeze Frame** and **Thought Tapping** might look like...

Lead Adult: In your groups, can you create the scene at the park. I'll give you a minute to talk about who is going to play what in the **Freeze Frame**... OK ready... Freeze!

(Lead Adult **Thought Taps** the children in first group.)

Child A (Mother): What a lovely outing. It's so nice to see everyone.

Child B (Baby Jenny): Bright colours. Funny green stuff on the floor. Ticksles!

Child C (Mother's friend): Oh how Jenny has grown. Has she got any teeth yet?

(Lead Adult **Thought Taps** children in other groups.)

Lead adult: Great! Let's move on in the story to the point where Jenny eats the worm. Have a think... OK ready... Freeze!

(Lead Adult **Thought Taps** the children in first group.)

Child A (Mother): Oh no! Don't eat that worm Jenny. It's full of dirt. Dirt is dangerous for babies. Oh no! I'm a terrible mother. I let my baby eat a worm and now she's going to get sick!

Child B (Baby Jenny): This wriggles in my mouth. Don't take it away, Mummy I like it.

Child C (Worm): Ouch! This being has teeth - sharp little teeth. Wriggle away, wriggle away!

Repeat for other key moments. If fears are not obviously expressed, ask the characters what they are feeling.

Key moments:

- Jenny is sick
- Jenny is in hospital, mother speaks to doctors
- Mother is at the shop and sees dirt on the potatoes
- Mother finds bits of compost and worms in her garden
- Mother is ill and Mrs Boor comes to find Jenny
- Jenny is afraid of the wasps
- Jenny gardens with Mrs Boor
- Jenny takes Mother the wormery
- Mother and Mrs Boor and Jenny garden together