

# THE STORY of the UNIVERSE

## TEACHER'S NOTES

Materials contained in this "The Universe Story" Pack:

- Introduction
- Script
- Words of songs
- Notes on the words of songs
- Music Sountrack(.mp3)
- Music & Voice (.mp3)
- (CD with songs as numbered on the script will be sent free of charge on request)
- Recommendations for the use of the above materials

*In the replication of this material please endeavour to use recycled materials.*

Recommendations for use of the above materials with  
Primary School Children

- Who: 3rd, and/or 4th and/or 5th class
- Time: one and a half hours each week for three to five weeks
- How: Begin by getting children to say who they are, where they live etc:  
e.g. Mary Murray,  
Dolphin Street,  
Galway,  
Connacht,  
Ireland,  
Europe,  
The Earth,  
The Universe.
- Show the children the bible, explain that in Genesis 1 there is a story that tells how the world was made. This is the story that we adults learned. Paraphrase it for them. Then explain that there is now another story put together by scientists, poets, theologians etc. Elicit this story from them using the information in the script, the songs and the notes on the words of the songs.
- Write down the names of every "character" (i.e. sun, insects, human, reptile etc.) in the story on slips of paper and invite the children to pick one at random (or pick two or three depending on class size). Guide them as they research their particular character, using available resources.

**Important Note:**

Explain that this story is about living beings/species of the natural world and not about Walt Disney-style characters or other animated cartoon figures. Encourage the children to talk about the habits/characteristics of the individual plant or animal or planet or whatever they have picked, without reference to its relationship to the human. For example:

*"I am a crocodile and I live in the waters of warm countries. When I hatch my eggs I carry my young to the waters edge in a pouch in my mouth, there, both myself and their father protect them by watching them from the river bank".*

**And NOT:**

*"I am a crocodile and humans are afraid of me because I can kill them" or "humans use my skin for shoes, handbags etc" or "I am an oak tree and people make furniture out of me" or "I am a salmon, people love to eat me".*

- The word 'action' in the script suggests points where the story can be dramatised – students could act out the various roles or characters of the story (as described above), e.g. 'I am the fireball and it is from me that everything we know has come'. Another example, *land*: 'I am a bog in Ireland. I am host/hostess to a wide variety of flowers and creatures' (name some).
- In the acting out the children can dress up, dance, sing, use masks etc., as appropriate to the situation and time allotted.
- The CD/Music can be replaced by the children's own recording or with the children playing their own instruments.
- Choose one or more children to be script readers and train them to read the script slowly, clearly, with emphasis and feeling allowing time for actions and songs.
- Allow time for checking out the contributions of each participant before finally presenting The Universe Story for themselves, or for other classes. It works well if done in a participative way, e.g. the leader/teacher prompts/invites the planetary characters to come forward in line with the script, e.g. 'do I hear birds singing?' To allow for playfulness the teacher might say 'Look I see a spider chasing a fly'.
- Any songs using nature could be incorporated also.
- It could also be presented as an end of year event for parents, for inspectors, Green Flag awards etc., and could even involve the whole school in presentation!
- Encourage the children to keep a nature journal - loose-leaf binder - for example, for photographs, drawings, pictures, articles, poems, songs, stories, customs and project notes. Encourage them to notice the natural world and to talk about what they see.
- Working on nature projects, e.g. school garden, studying various life cycles etc., tree planting, organic flower and vegetable growing throughout the year.
- Spend time teasing out implications of living in harmony with nature.

**A Word of Caution:** while we adults are aware of the current ecological crises (global warming, water and air pollution etc.), it is important for us not to burden the young with anxieties about the state of our planet, but rather our hope is to re-awaken in them a love of the natural world.

- Consider applying for the Green Flag for schools if you have not already done so.
- Go n' éiri libh.