

Teach Peace Pack

Assembly: Think before you act:
the legend of Beddgelert



Aim: to show how things can go wrong when we act in anger.

Planning/Preparation: you may like to find a photo of Gelert's grave to display during the assembly

You may want to begin the assembly with pictures of pets belonging to you/ other teachers/children.

1 Introduction: Pets

Ask the children: Does anyone have any unusual pets? What about more usual animals... does anyone have a cat? A hamster? A rabbit? What about a dog? Why do people keep dogs? [Look for answers about loyalty, companionship, and guardianship.]

Explain that you are going to tell a story about a dog whose master thought him to be a good and faithful companion.

2 The legend of Gelert

Near the North Wales village of Beddgelert (pronounced beth-gel-airt), in a field close to the banks of the River Glaslyn, you can find a stone which marks the final resting place of Gelert, the faithful dog of Prince Llywelyn.

Around 800 years ago Llywelyn had a palace close to Beddgelert from where he went out for a day's hunting. Unusually Gelert was not with him. He was waiting joyfully to greet his master. However, on his return, the prince was dismayed to see his dog stained and smeared with blood.

Panicked, the prince raced into his castle to look for his baby son. He found the cot empty and the

bedclothes and floor covered with blood...

Ask the children: What do you think had happened?

3 Continue the story

Prince Llywelyn, furious with rage, plunged his sword into the dog's side thinking he had killed his little boy. When the dog's dying yelp was answered by a child's cry, Llywelyn searched and found the child unharmed beside the body of a mighty wolf, which Gelert had slain. The prince, filled with sadness, is said never to have smiled again. He buried Gelert where today there stands the stone shown in the picture above.

Image location: <http://tinyurl.com/TPP-Gelert>

4 Prince Llywelyn

Ask the children: How do you think Prince Llywelyn felt? [Look for answers about being relieved/happy that his son is safe but sad/angry that he killed Gelert and would miss his friend.] Was he right to do what he did?

5 Barney and the spilt paint

Finish the assembly with an up-to-date story with the same moral.

Explain that you're going to tell them about something which happened more recently, and closer to home...Mr Smith walked into his classroom one day only to find the floor covered in paint. Only Barney was there – also covered in paint. What do you think had happened? *What should Mr Smith do?* [Barney was trying to tidy up, having found the mess.]

6 Conclusion

Ask the children: What can we learn from these stories? [Look for answers about not acting in anger, thinking before blaming someone, finding out the full story.] Finish by reminding them that it's

OK to be angry, but it's what we do about it that counts. Explain that if you get angry, and have a volcano in your tummy, there's lots of things you can do, such as:

- Count backwards from ten
- Take five deep breaths
- Move away and do something different. You can return to the problem when you've cooled down, or you might even find it's gone away!

Follow up activities/resources:

- Watch the online animation of the story of Gelert in English: <http://tinyurl.com/TPP-Gelert-An> and in Welsh here: <http://tinyurl.com/TPP-Gelert-AnW>.

- Act out the story of Gelert and Prince Llywelyn with your class.

- Explore strategies for handling anger, see:

A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Children to Handle Anger, by Whitehouse and Pudney, 1998.

What To Do When Your Temper Flares: A Kid's Guide to Overcoming Problems with Anger by David Huebner, 2002

- For simple mindfulness practices for children aged 5–12 see '*Sitting Still Like a Frog: Mindfulness Exercises for Kids (and Their Parents)*', 2014.

- Other useful books:

The Sand Tray by Don Rowe, part of the 'Thinkers' series for Key Stage 1, written to encourage children to see complex but familiar situations from a number of viewpoints.

Moose by Michael Foreman, Andersen Press Ltd, 2014. Moose is a tale of overcoming conflict and working together.

Two Monsters by David McKee, 2009. Two Monsters is a picture book with a strong message about understanding other people's point of view.

Ask Me by Antje Damm, 2005. For help with Circle Time, simple open question and lovely images.