

ALFIE GREEN and the Fly-Trapper

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JOE O'BRIEN

Teaching Guide

By Peter Heaney

RATIONALE AND THEMES

These books present the magical world of Alfie Green. Together they create a wonderfully humorous world of exaggerated characters and animated flora. Woven through the magic is the essential thread of mischief that every child will identify with. Alfie is irrepressible, and with his friend Fitz, they tackle a series of zany adventures with comic invention.

Although the books are aimed at the younger reader, the themes are universal and will create a rich and vibrant resource for class discussions and activities, particularly lending themselves to development through drama, visual arts and literacy. The main themes are:

- Dealing with bereavement
- Bullying
- Supporting others
- Developing coping strategies
- Emotional well-being
- Trust / Self esteem
- Following rules
- Feelings

APPROACH

These books are written as a series of adventures for Alfie. Each is a discrete story. For the richness of the character to develop, however, a series approach should be considered. Activities and discussion points are suggested for each book and overall activities are suggested at the end for those who have read a number of books in the series.

The pace, plot and characterisation within the books are versatile enough for them to be used either as individual readers or to be read to the class as a group.

SUMMARY

A forgotten tin of maggots metamorphoses into an unpleasant plague of flies for the Green household. When the volume of flies overwhelms his Venus Fly Trap plant Alfie enlists the help of magic and employs the services of an eight headed, razor toothed Giant Fly-Trapper. The problem with the flies is quickly sorted but now Alfie has a new problem. The Giant Fly-trapper has an insatiable appetite and when Mad Aggie Walsh's cat from next door appears on the menu, Alfie takes the Wise Old Plant's advice and returns the Fly-Trapper to the Belching Bogs of Arcania where he belongs, dealing with along the way with the attentions of a giant worm and a prickly headed, snout faced, beady eyed, stumpy legged, foul breathed Nanabur.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Read pp.8-11. If someone is sad do you think it is right to tease him or her? Can you think of a better way to cheer them up?
- Read pp.51-54. It was very dark in the mine. Why do think the dark is so frightening for some people? Are there any fears that we all share? What can people do to overcome their fears?
- Read pp.27-37. The Wise Old Plant gave Alfie a very clear rule about how to handle the Giant Fly-Trapper. Alfie didn't pay enough attention and the rule was broken. Why do you is it important to follow rules? What rules do you think should apply to your class?

ACTIVITIES

1. Look on the bright side

Read pp.8-11. When Bobby came home from his fishing trip he looked miserable.

Draw two large smiley faces in your copybook. Then write into each smiley face all the things that make you either sad or happy.

Make out a time line for your day and list all the things you do. Draw a smiley face beside each to show whether they make you sad or happy. If you count them do you have more happy faces than sad ones?

2. Flapping around

Read pp.12-16. The magpie was very frightened and panicked when he couldn't get out of the kitchen.

Do you think you could mime his actions as he flew around? Be careful during your mime that you don't actually knock things over or bump into people. Remember, the magpie didn't actually hit anything.

3. Warning! Warning!

Read pp.51-54. The warning outside the Nanabur mines was written in Arcanian. Only the plant could read it.

Write a sign in a strange language. How would you make sure that people would know it was a warning sign? Think of the colours of the letters and their size and shapes.

4. A poem

Read p.61. Alfie has fallen into a pit full of slimy squirmy worms. Write a poem to describe what he experiences. Draw a picture to describe what happens in your poem.

5. Glad to be home

Read pp.73-74. The Giant Fly-Trapper is home at last in the Belching Bog.

What do you think that he told the other Fly-Trappers about his time in Alfie's world and the things he saw there?

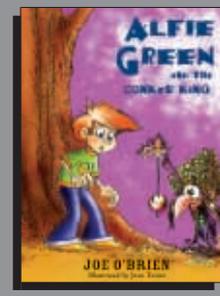
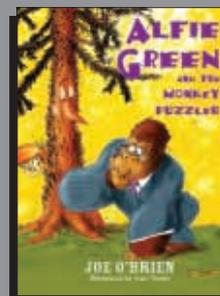
Write a short description and draw an illustration of what he told them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, JOE O'BRIEN



Joe O'Brien is an award-winning gardener who lives in Ballyfermot in Dublin. He is well known and has a high media profile including regular guest appearances on his local radio station, WDAR 96 FM. He is also highly involved with children's group projects.

Other books by Joe O'Brien



Alfie Green and the Monkey Puzzle
Alfie Green and the Conker King