

Sarah and the Whammi consists of ten 15-minute programmes that explore particular primary values through a six-year-old child's relationships with her family and friends.

The programmes and supporting activities have been designed to:

- give a focused and stimulating selection of ideas and starting points for the development of children's personal, social and emotional skills
- foster respect for self and others through the development of empathy
- engage, stimulate and challenge young children and encourage them to co-operate with others
- provide teachers, parents and early years workers with a flexible set of practical, play-based activities in line with how young children learn and develop
- promote positive strategies to prevent the development of negative behaviours, including sectarianism

The programmes and the supporting activities could be used to introduce, consolidate or extend work on a particular topic related to personal, social or emotional development. Alternatively, Sarah and the Whammi could act as an early years topic, linking all aspects of the young child's development.

The ideal way to use the series is to record the programmes and then:

- preview each programme and decide on the best time to view with the children
- before viewing a programme, revise and discuss the ideas within it
- view the programme, pausing where appropriate and encouraging discussion
- have some discussion, and then review the programme without pausing
- follow up with the related activities

Programme 1: **A New Baby** – Identity

Sarah, who is six and a half years old and the main character in the programme, is trying to figure out where she fits into her family following the birth of her baby brother. We learn that Sarah is a child of a mixed marriage and that she is also in search of the cultural tradition to which she belongs. To help her in her quest, Sarah creates an imaginary friend, known as a Whammi, who lives in the forest.

- A forest could be set up. The children could paint pictures of the forest and the Whammi and these could act as the background to the forest. Cover a desk with a green blanket and add leaves and plants both inside and out.
- Make an 'all about me' book. Include either pictures or photographs of family, pets, etc.

Programme 2: **Bullies** – Judging by appearances

Due to the new baby, Sarah has to be accompanied to school by David, who is nicknamed Freaky Harris by his peers. Sarah is discontented at first but soon realises that David's personality outweighs his appearance. Whammi also has a similar experience – a strange Whammi (Davis) is chosen to guide it through the forest.

- Put the children into pairs. Get them to draw around each other on sheets of wallpaper. Encourage them to add affirming comments on each other's model.
- Discuss name-calling with the children and why it can be hurtful.

Programme 3: **The Fight** – Injustice

The theme of injustice and the concept of unfairness pervade this episode. David is wrongfully accused by his peers of having started a fight with Mark, one of the bullies. Sarah is too frightened at this stage to stand up for David. In the forest David, the strange Whammi, has the same experience and is blamed for something he didn't do.

- Use musical instruments to accompany a sad story.
- Encourage the children to act out or mime what makes them feel sad and the rest of the group have to guess what it is.

Programme 4: **The Rescue** – Right versus wrong

Sarah, supported by her friend Laura, plucks up the courage to defend David and goes to the principal to tell the true story. She informs the principal that David is in the right and it is the bullies who are wrong. A similar scene is enacted in the forest.

- Invite the children to suggest what problems may arise if we are not truthful with each other.
- Set up a flower shop in the imaginative play area. Flowers tend to be associated with making people feel good or better.

Programme 5: **The Grannible Tree** – Selfishness

Sarah's feelings of selfishness come to the fore in this episode. She is jealous of the fact that her baby brother is allowed to stay with Granny O'Doherty, who owns a sweet shop, whilst she has to stay with Granny Boyd. In the forest the little Whammi also experiences selfish feelings.

- Ask the children to help you plant a branch in a pot of soil. After they wash their hands, begin a baking activity. A simple exercise is to get each child to ice a plain biscuit and to decorate it with sweets as they wish. When dry, wrap in cellophane and hang on a branch to act as a grannible tree.
- In the sand tray, children map out the route to their grandparents' or special friend's home.

Programme 6: **Pointer's Playground** – Respecting differences

In this episode Sarah feels dejected and left out. She feels she is neither a true Boyd nor an O'Doherty; neither a Protestant nor a Catholic. Granny Boyd convinces Sarah that she loves her irrespective of how she looks, what her name is, or what religion she practices. Similarly, in the forest Pointer, the wizard, convinces the little Whammi that despite being a different colour, it too has the right to be respected.

- Make flags from different countries.
- Get individual children to bring in a plastic bag containing items that help to describe their family.

Programme 7: **The Little Princess** – Friendships

A new girl, named Angela, starts at Sarah's school. Despite Angela being spoilt and selfish, Sarah befriends her and fails to find any flaws in her personality. Sarah's friend Laura is not as easily duped. Also in this episode we learn that Sarah's class is going to put on a play based on one of the children's stories. In fantasyland the little princess, who is very bossy and unfriendly, now rules the forest.

- In the puppet theatre get the children to re-enact Sarah's dilemma. Think of ways to solve the problem.
- Write a thank you letter or make a card to say 'thank you for being my friend'.

Programme 8: **Sleepover** – Listening to others

Sarah finds herself caught in the middle between her two friends, Angela and Laura. She tries to solve the problem by encouraging Angela to allow Laura to sleep over at her house too. But finally she realises that Angela is acting unfairly and is very spoilt. In the forest Loribest stands up to the bossy princess. Pointer waves his magic wand and makes the little princess and her wicked stepmother disappear.

- Play Simon Says.
- Tell the children a familiar story like The Three Bears, but make obvious mistakes throughout. Agree beforehand with the children that they are to shout, clap their hands, stand up, play a musical instrument, etc, on hearing a mistake.

Programme 9: **Party Time** – Let's celebrate

It's time to celebrate! Sarah's story has been chosen for the school play, it is the baby's christening and it is also Sarah's birthday. Sarah finally learns to accept her baby brother as part of her family, symbolised by her requesting that he be included in the photograph too. Similarly in this episode, another little pink Whammi is hatched out in the forest. At last the little Whammi has found its family.

- Use play dough to make buns, cakes, etc, as decorations for the party.
- Discuss with the children the purpose of a naming ceremony.

Programme 10: **All Together Now** – Unity

Everyone is reunited. Angela, Laura and Sarah have become friends again. Even David and Mark have made up. All the children take part in Sarah's play. In the forest everyone is happy too. The little Whammi has found its family. The little princess returns as a happy and friendly princess. Now the wise little girl is very content, as all the rules have been made for the Whammis to live together happily.

- In a spacious room, get the children as a group to help keep a balloon in the air.
- Suggest different methods of fundraising, for example, a bun sale or guessing the name of the Whammi, and carry them out with the help of parents. Ensure that the children are aware that the money raised is going to be sent to less fortunate children.

Support material for Sarah and the Whammi

Teachers' Guide: 206880 £3.95

For information and orders, consult 4Learning's annual brochure or visit www.channel4.com/learningshop Email: sales@4learning.co.uk
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Early Years

Literacy and Education for Mutual Understanding



Sarah and the Whammi



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