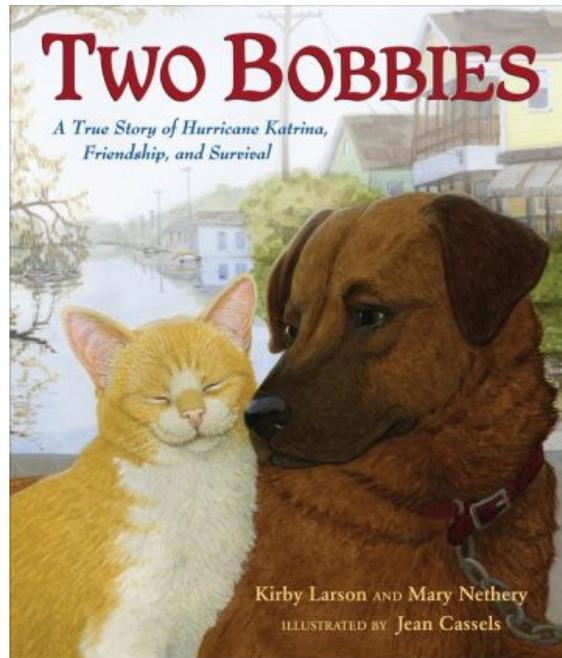


One, Two, Three Bobbies

A movement based lesson for coping and building resilience in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy



Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival

by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery

Grade: K-4th (Ages 5-10)

Time: 40 minutes-1hr

Theme: Expressing feelings through movement and language post natural disaster experiences and trauma.

Objective: Through a play-therapy approach of exploring the feelings of a cat and dog in response to Hurricane Katrina, children will explore their parallel experiences and feelings, through language and movement. The Two Bobbies is a true story, and both animals were survivors. Children will associate with being survivors, not just victims.

Materials Needed: Two Bobbies by Kirby Larson and Mary Nethery or story summary below, Poster board/whiteboard and markers, instrumental music

Why Dance?: "Dance is movement. Movement is change. Moving with one's whole body, with and against gravity, one learns to both yield and resist, to feel one's strength and to feel one's vulnerability, to try on new qualities of action and behavior. This is what it means to be fully human," American Dance Therapy Association.

***Please read Teacher Resources before executing the lesson.**

Lesson Plan

Greet the children at the door and walk them over to a seated circle. Calm music should be playing as they enter. Depending on whether you teach these children on a regular basis, and have a routine, welcome approach may vary.

Warm-Up (5-7 minutes): Teacher leads dancers through a warm-up that begins seated and builds to standing, warming up the body, moving through various body parts and building to peak energy. Warm-up should end with a balance and several collective breaths.

- Music: If you are able to work with a musician, this is ideal. High energy instrumental.
- Why a circle?: Though you may usually do a warm-up in spread out spots, the circle is a physicalized reminder of community. Without saying this to the dancers, this idea is embraced in the warm-up.
- Why begin right away?: Many children have been inside without power for days in the aftermath of the storm. Movement will immediately uplift their spirits and open them up to communication, both physical and linguistic.

Story (10 minutes): Relocate to a corner of the room, so that most of the space can then be utilized for movement when you begin exploring. Teacher reads or shares the story of the two Bobbies. (*See Teacher Resources)

- Remind students to save questions and comments for after the story. At this time, children will have lots of thoughts on their minds, as they relate to the experiences.

Questions and Comments/Movement Exploration (20-30 minutes): Each response should have a separate page or section of a page/board so that the answers are easily readable by children who can read. The area that they are sitting in for the story, becomes the “Story Zone”. The rest of the room (or designated area) is the stage.

- Music: Instrumental, calm or percussive music.
- Explanation of Write vs. Move:
 - Write** - Teacher writes responses on a board or poster.
 - Write + Move** - Teacher writes responses then prompts movement exploration.
 - Move + Write** - Teacher prompts movement exploration, then has children regroup and discuss.
 - Write/Move** - A small group moves while the others suggests ideas.

1. “Did you like the story? Raise your hand and tell me why.” (Write + Move.)
 - 5-7 yr Movement Exploration: “When the music plays move as Bob Cat or Bobbi the Dog. When the music stops, come back to sit in the ‘Story Zone.’”
 - 7-10 yr: When the music plays, dance your favorite part of the story. When the music stops, come back to sit in the “Story Zone.”
2. “How do you think Bobbi and Bob Cat felt when the storm first began?” (Write + Move.)
 - “Make a shape that shows one of these feelings. When the music plays, bring that feeling to life. (Music plays). Dancers, can you put that feeling in slow

motion? Can you make that feeling super fast? How about if you had to do that feeling backwards? When the music stops, freeze where you are.”

3. “How do you think the people who had to leave their homes and, maybe their pets, felt?” (Move + Write.)

- Repeat the exploration above, making a shape and then movements that express a feeling. “When the music stops, come back to the ‘Story Zone.’ What are some of the feelings that you just danced?” (Write them.)

4. “How did Bobbi and Bob Cat work together to break free from the chain?” (Write/Move.)

- Group gives suggestions and teacher chooses two volunteers at a time. One is Bob Cat and the other is Bobbi. They work together to break the chain in the way that the group suggests. Try 3-4 ideas.

5. “When Bobbi and Bob Cat broke free and began wandering the streets, what did they see? What did they hear? What did they smell?” (Write.)

6. “Everything around them seemed so different and they couldn’t do the things they normally did. How did they feel? What helped them to be okay? What did YOU do, when things were different and YOU couldn’t do what you normally do?” (Move/Write.)

- Dancers take turns standing, one at a time and moving what they did when they couldn’t do what they normally do. The group guesses and responses are written. Choose 3-4 children.

7. “How did the friendship that the Bobbies shared help them in a rough time?” (Write + Move.)

- “Find a partner. Make a high/low/medium shape connected to your partner. When the music plays, try to move with your partner and stay connected throughout. You can change which body parts are connecting, but STAY CONNECTED! When the music stops, come back to ‘Story Zone.’”

8. “What did the Bobbies learn through surviving the storm?” (Write.)

9. “The Bobbies were safe in a rescue shelter and then found a new loving home. How do you think they felt then? What would you have told the Bobbies when they were scared, now that you know that they’d be safe in the end?” (Write + Move.)

- “Make a shape that shows the word safe. You can work alone or with a friend. Make safe move.”

Goodbye Dances (5 minutes):

- To summarize this lesson, point out that we, like the Bobbies, have survived a frightening storm.
- Goodbye Dances summarize the lessons learned that day. They can be done traveling across the floor or in a circle, the way class began. Be sure to validate each dancer’s exploration and contributions throughout class and at the end. Have each student a favorite movement that they’ve created and dance it in the center or across the floor.

Teacher Resources

Summary of the story of the two Bobbies: Bobbi and Bob Cat are the best of friends, even though one is a dog and one is a cat. When their hometown of New Orleans is struck by Hurricane Katrina, many lose everything. But not Bobbi and Bob Cat—they still have each other. Only by staying together could they survive. This is the story of their remarkable friendship. In the wake of hurricane Katrina, "pets Bobbi and Bob Cat wander dangerous, debris-strewn streets seeking food and water. Eventually taken to a rescue shelter, the Bobbies show distress when separated but remain calm when together. Workers then discover that Bob Cat is blind and that Bobbi seems to serve as his seeing-eye dog. A national news appearance ultimately results in the animals' shared adoption in a happy new home. This moving story about the importance of friendship and home highlights the plight of the hurricane's lost and left-behind animals, as well as the value of animal shelters."

<http://www.twobobbies.com/>

Buy the Book!

[Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival](#)

Resources:

Everyone responds to traumatic experiences differently. It is important that teachers are sensitive to this and allow for the space for each student to feel free to react and express how they are truly feeling. Some students may not want to participate in this lesson as it may bring feelings of guilt to feel like they are being playful, while they or their family members feel sad or fearful. Some students may want avoid talking or thinking about the traumatic experience until they are ready. For these students, the teacher should kindly encourage as much participation as is comfortable. It common for children to experience clinginess after trauma. The circle activities promote a feeling of community and safety. If a child seems particularly upset allow them to sit close to you.

We chose the story of the Bobbies as it allows the students to have empathy for and relate to Bob Cat and Bobbi's feelings and explore these feelings in a safe, accessible way. Story-telling and sharing can act as a form of debriefing after trauma; it is also a useful time to observe and help those not coping to get the special attention and resources that they may need.

Here is a useful link to for Tips for Talking to Children and Youth After Traumatic Events. Check in with your school counselor for more advice and resources in your community.

http://www.samhsa.gov/MentalHealth/Tips_Talking_to_Children_After_Disaster.pdf

Bios:

Jenn Eisenberg is a Dance Educator in NYC and teaches over 600 children, Nursery through 5th grade each week. She loves helping children express their thoughts and feelings through the joy of movement. www.jenneisenberg.com

Tau Braun is a South African registered Clinical Psychologist and Doctoral Candidate in Education. He is a Violence Prevention Specialist and is passionate about Individual and Organizational Development.