

Lesson Objectives ~

The Anglo-Saxons believed in different gods.
How to connect different actions to build a motif.

Success Criteria ~

The different gods being clearly communicated.
Moving between the different actions smoothly and with ease.

Warm up

Ask the pupils to find a space and give each child a bean-bag. Ask them to balance it on their shoulder and travel around the room.
Add some music and encourage them to travel in meandering pathways and to try using different speeds and to vary the level and the method of travel.
After approximately 2 minutes ask pupils to change the bean-bag to the other shoulder.

Remind or inform pupils that the Anglo-Saxons believed in many different gods - the chief one being Woden, who was often shown as having a raven on his shoulder.

Ask pupils to take one more minute travelling around the room with the bean bag on their shoulder representing Woden's raven.
Add the music and continue to prompt pupils to vary their speed, level, direction and method of travel. Then put the bean-bags aside.

Travelling and Balance

Introduction and Exploration

Introduce or remind pupils of some of the other commonly known Anglo-Saxon gods:

- * Eostre - Spring
- * Thunor - Storms
- * Frige - Harvest

Explain that Eostre is often shown as the change from Winter (frozen) into Spring. Ask pupils to make a shape as if frozen...then slowly come to life. Start with small actions of just one body part...gradually increasing the size and fluidity of the actions until the whole body is able to move freely.
Repeat 3 or 4 times encouraging pupils to start 'coming to life' using a different part of the body each time.
Encourage them to make angular, spiky shapes to start with as this suggests 'a sharp frost' and gives greatest contrast to the melting and softening actions that follow.

Isolated body parts

Exploration and Composition

Explain that Thunor is often depicted as having a hammer which he strikes to make the sound of thunder and the flashes of lightning.
Ask pupils to show a sharp, quick action to suggest a lightning flash...then another...and another.
You may wish to encourage them to rapidly draw zig-zag shapes in the air to suggest the forked shapes commonly associated with lightning.
Ask pupils to perform a large swinging action coming to an abrupt stop to suggest the hammer clanging down on an anvil.
Repeat this 4 or 5 times encouraging the children to initiate the movement using their backs (not just their arms).
Ask pupils to alternate between their lightning flashes and a swing of the hammer.
Add the music and allow 2 minutes or so.
Describe what you see the children doing - eg 'Hattie, that was a huge jump - what a big lightning flash that was!' Or, 'Jacques is using both hands to swing his hammer - that really shows me how heavy the hammer is.'

Control and Dynamics and Combining actions

**Step-by-Step
Dance 7 - 11
The Anglo-Saxons
What were Anglo-Saxon beliefs?**

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Exploration and Composition

Remind pupils of the two gods explored so far and what they represented.
*Ask them to take the next 2 minutes to combine the actions of the two gods in any order.
Add the music and describe what you see - eg 'Colin is holding his shape very still. I can just see his toes starting to wriggle'. Or, 'Beverley is really arching her back as she swings the hammer!'*

Ask pupils to make sure they are in a space.
Ask them to find a way of tilting from one side to the other.
If standing, encourage them to shift their weight onto one foot then onto the other to improve balance and to engage core muscles.

Ask pupils to repeat the tilting action moving forwards and back.
Then allow them 1 minute or so to tilt and sway in any direction, but remain on the spot.
Make the connection between the swaying actions and how cereals like oats and barley appear to move in the breeze in a field.

Ask pupils to take the next 2 minutes to combine melting from a frozen shape, lightning flashes and hammer swings, gentle swaying actions in any combination they like.
Add the music and allow 2 minutes or so.
Take the opportunity to observe. Prompt the children of the different options if they appear to be focusing on just one or two.

**Control and Dynamics and
Combining actions**

Performance

Ask pupils to find a partner and label themselves A and B.
Ask Person A to sit in a space: they are the observer.
Ask Person B to find a space: they are the dancer.

Ask Person A to perform the actions in any order they decide.
Ask Person B to identify which of the Anglo-Saxon gods they are representing.
Allow 1 minute or so before changing roles.
Encourage the observers to identify which god they are representing by analysing the actions - eg 'I think Sam is representing Frige because of the swaying actions looking like wheat in a field.'

Analysis

Cool down

Ask pupils to find a space again and sway like they did to represent Frige. Encourage them to twist, bend, ripple, etc.
Explain that during harvest the wheat, oats and barley are collected.
As you name each child, ask them to imagine that they are being gathered in and to return to their socks and shoes.
Pupils should continue to tilt and sway while waiting for their name.

**Swaying and
Balancing**

Suggested music

'The Moon' / 'Pitch at North Pole' / 'Alone in the World' (from 'Rise of the Guardians')
Composer: Andre Desplat
(Available to listen / watch at YouTube)