



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

For gifted Year 1 and 2 children with a
love of learning and thinking

'Olga's Magical Journey

To the Land Of Nod'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organization offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* will run over four sessions. Olga the philosopher loves travelling, reading picture storybooks and philosophising. Would you like to join Olga on an imaginative trip to the Land of Nod where dreams come true and superheroes, dragons, princesses and animals live?

What is a superhero? Can dragons really be friends with princesses? What does it mean to be friends? Can you really fly with Olga? Join us on this exciting journey where each week you will read a different picture storybook, participate in a community of inquiry and discuss these and many more questions with your fellow travellers and Olga the philosopher.

Using picture books and oral storytelling as our thinking treasure, students will be involved in an active process combining visualization, philosophical dialogue, critical thinking, role play and both creative and reflective writing activities.

Session 1 What A Superhero!

Would you like to be a superhero? Can anyone be a superhero? Can a worm or a dragon be a superhero? Let's join Olga as she takes us to the Land of Nod where characters from storybooks come alive. Together we'll explore different ways of creative thinking as we try to answer these challenging questions and support our ideas with reasons. On our journey we will read *'Willy the Dreamer'* by Anthony Browne and wonder about the difference between a dream and a daydream or a dream and a made up story. You will meet a different type of superhero in *'Superworm'* by Julia Donaldson and compare Willie and Superworm's qualities. Are superheroes real? Could you ever be a superhero? During this session you will start your journal where you will reflect and record your insights about the qualities of a superhero.

Session 2 Difference is Delightful

Everyone has a body, so what is it that makes us different from other people? In *'Elvira'* by Margaret Shannon, Elvira the dragon battles with the idea that she is different from the other dragons in her family. She loves princesses, dressing up and wearing flowers in her 'hair'. Her siblings eat princesses and loathe dressing up. Elvira thinks that she is beautiful but the other dragons disagree. What is beauty? As part of our community of inquiry you will be amazed at other people's point of views. You can agree with them or disagree with them and, if you are brave, you can even change your mind about your original point of view. Does Elvira qualify as a superhero? If so, why; if not, why not? Olga, the philosopher will show us the difference between open and closed questions before we create our own questions about *'Elvira'*.

In this session you will start to develop your own superhero. What qualities will he/she have? Through illustration, musical and creative writing activities you will demonstrate the qualities of your superhero and your impression of what the Land of Nod looks like. To round off the session you will complete a self-evaluation checklist, reflecting on the thinking activities that you have participated in.

Session 3 Promising Developments

Was Mother bat a superhero when she tried to rescue her baby Stellaluna from the clutches of a powerful bird? In *'Stellaluna'* by Janell Cannon, the baby bat finds herself living in a bird's nest with baby birds. She soon teaches the baby birds to hang upside down like a bat. Mother bird is furious with her and makes her promise never to sleep upside down AGAIN. Have you ever made a promise? Who do you make promises to? Are some promises more important to keep than others? How do you feel when a promise is broken? Should a person always act on a promise to someone even if they are not around? Join Stellaluna as she battles with the concept of 'promises' and we debate whether keeping a promise is a quality that a superhero needs.

We will gain new insights into superheroes as we use a mind map to compare the characters that we have met on our journey to the Land of Nod, write some poetry to reflect their characteristics and describe the magical land that they live in.

Session 4 Friends and Neighbours

What is friendship? Is friendship a quality that a superhero needs? Join Olga as she introduces us to *"Here Comes the Cat"* by Hannah Esrick and find out how two animals, a cat and a mouse, who are usually enemies can be friends. After reading the story you will create your own questions and participate in a small group discussion about friendship. You will gain new insights as you are involved in a concept game and hypothesise about 'How do you help your friends?' 'How do your friends help you?' and 'Is it better to help someone or be helped by someone?'

To sum up the journey to the Land of Nod, you will illustrate your superhero, create a rhyming verse and participate in a role-play. We will conclude our journey to the Land of Nod by visualising ourselves travelling back to earth with Olga.

Homework Requirements & Reporting

Children will be evaluated on their participation in the community of inquiry, providing reasons for their arguments and reflecting on their thinking. They will also be evaluated on their written activities, creative responses and listening skills. Work between classes will be optional and may involve participating in a community of inquiry with the family and completing a task started in class.

Requirements:

* An exercise book; 2 favourite picture storybooks; a pencil case with coloured pencils, glue, scissors, pencils, an eraser; a recent photo; and a snack each week (no nuts please); Bring an item or prop to depict your superhero in Session 4. Also bring a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for your report to Session 1.

About the presenter.

Sharon Leibowitz is an experienced teacher and philosopher working in the field of Gifted Education. She loves participating in discussions around ideas and using thinking treasure such as art, science and children's literature. She particularly enjoys designing engaging philosophical discussions for students, and always marvels at the quality of discussion that even students as early as five years old can engage in.