

Whole Class Assembly/Presentation

Topic

The 7 life processes. Ideal for performance at harvest time.

For class size

20 to 40. In classes with fewer children some will need to take more than one of the smaller speaking parts.

Summary

To begin with the seven life processes (movement, reproduction, sensitivity, nutrition, excretion, respiration and growth) are looked at in detail, and we consider what it is to be alive. The processes of nutrition and growth are then featured in more detail and there follows a short drama presentation about Persephone and Demeter, which tells how the ancient Greeks explained the seasons and the growth and harvest of crops. An optional prayer and then a song, 'What Makes A Living Thing', close the assembly.

Duration

20 – 25 minutes

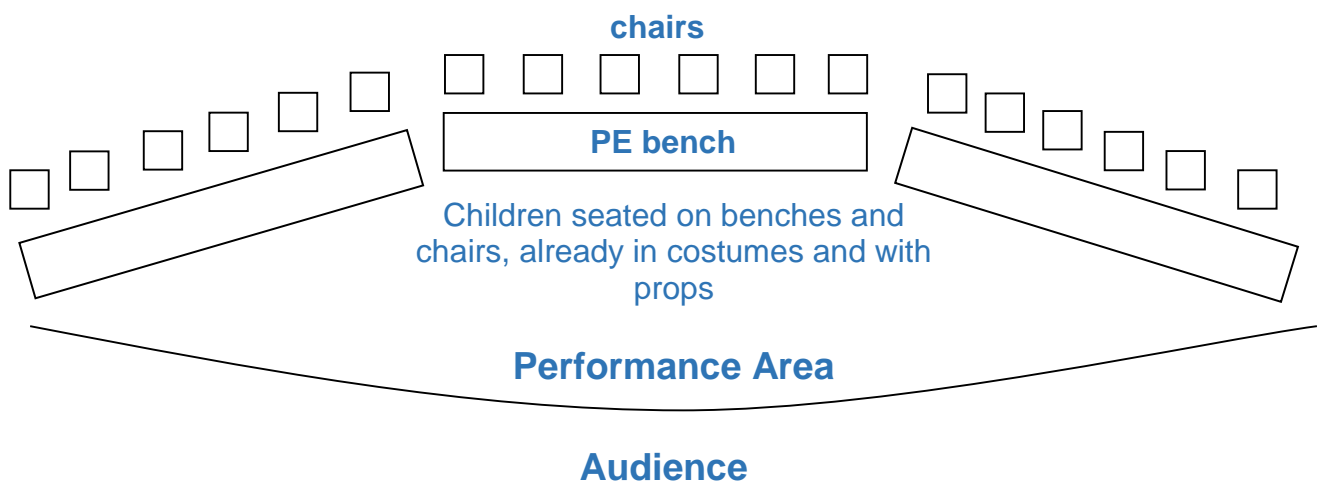
Props/costumes to make or collect

For the opening section you will need a stand-up sign reading 'Alive & Kicking – Private Party' and 4 party hats. Two bouncers should wear white shirts and black bow ties. You will also need a pot plant, a bicycle, a picked flower, a football, a deodorant spray, a baby doll, a carrier bag and if possible a real hamster/gerbil/mouse etc in a cage (if not a toy one). White lab coats could be worn by the 4 scientists. The ancient tale characters could wear bed sheet togas, or white t-shirts (belted at the waist) and shorts. Hades should wear a black cloak. You will also require a pomegranate or similar looking fruit. All children should have the same A3 picture of a blossoming tree, with a picture of a bare, fruitless tree on the reverse.

Music required

A current chart hit, played quietly.

Seating



(Child 1 stands centre stage.)

Child 1 *(taking a deep breath in, then breathing out and stretching)* Aaaaah! It's good to be alive. Good morning everybody, and welcome to our assembly where we will attempt to discover exactly how you qualify for membership of the 'I'm Alive!' gang. What do you have to do get past the bouncers into the 'Alive and Kicking' party? Let's see.

(As quiet pop music plays two bouncers stand menacingly centre stage. Child 1 moves to one side, next to a sign reading 'Alive and Kicking – Private Party'. A selection of 'characters', to be named, stand expectantly to the other side. In turn, each approaches the bouncers and is either rejected and sits back down, or is let past to join child 1. Accepted guests receive a party hat from child 1 and enjoy a dance.)

Bouncer 1 Who are you?

Boy/girl Just your average 10 year old human being

Bouncer 2 *(looking down list on clipboard)* You're fine. Go on in. *(S/he goes past)*
And who are you?

(A child pushes a bicycle up to the bouncers)

Child 2 This is my bicycle. It's been locked in the shed for six months so I just thought it could do with a night out.

Bouncer 1 *(looking down list on clipboard)* Sorry. It's not on the list so it can't come in. Next. And who are you.

(A child holds a plant in a pot.)

Child 3 My pot plant needs a change of scene. It's been on the kitchen window sill for ages.

Bouncer 2 *(looking down list on clipboard)* It's fine. Bring it in. *(S/he goes past)*
Next. And who are you?

(A child holds a picked flower.)

Child 4 This flower looked bored in the garden, so I picked it and brought it along for a dance.

Bouncer 1 *(looking down list on clipboard)* Sorry. It's not on the list so it can't come in. Next. And who are you?

(A child holds a pet hamster/gerbil in its cage.)

Child 5 My hamster told me he's been feeling a bit down lately, so I thought a good party would cheer him up.

Bouncer 2 *(looking down list on clipboard)* He's fine. Bring him in. *(S/he goes past)*
Next. And who are you?

(A child holds a football.)

Child 6 Seeing as it's the 'Alive and Kicking' party I've brought my football.

Bouncer 1 *(looking down list on clipboard)* Sorry. It's not on the list so it can't come in. Good well that's everybody. Come on, let's get inside. I reckon that hamster's had too much to drink already. He could be trouble.

(The bouncers stand near the 3 party goers - the human 10 yr-old, the pot plant and the hamster. Child 1 moves centre stage.)

Child 1 So, why do you think this lot were allowed in, but the others weren't? What makes these individuals alive? Let's get scientific.

(Child 1 and the bouncers sit down and 4 scientists in lab coats enter and stand centre stage. The 3 party goers join the scientists in a line at the front.)

Scientist 1 What do the guests at the 'Alive and Kicking' party all have in common? They're alive, yes, but it's the things they do which make them alive. In particular, seven specific things make them different from those turned away at the door.

(As the human 10 yr-old's 'abilities' are mentioned s/he acts them out. S/he has a carrier bag containing items to help. The pot plant and hamster must be held up as they are mentioned, with the scientists 'gesturing' the abilities they have.)

Scientist 2 All living things move. Humans can move from place to place, like this..... as can hamsters and most other animals. A few animals, however, and most plants don't move from place to place. Instead they move body parts whilst rooted to the spot. Sea anemones wave their tentacles, and plants turn on their stems to face the light.

Scientist 3 All living things reproduce. *(Human takes doll from bag).* Humans and animals, as we know, have babies. How that happens is something we'll save for another day. Plants reproduce by producing seeds, which, when pollinated, become young plants.

Scientist 4 All living things are sensitive to their surroundings. Humans and animals use their senses to get information about the world around them, and then use this information to decide what to do. *(The Human sniffs an armpit, pulls an 'eurgh' face, takes a deodorant from bag and sprays.)* As we've just mentioned, plants will turn towards the light. This is because they are sensitive to where it is coming from.

Scientist 1 All living things must have nutrition. *(Human takes a sandwich/fruit etc from bag, and bites).* Humans and animals *(the hamster may be eating)* will hunt, farm or gather their food. In other words they eat things to give them energy. Plants make their own food inside themselves using sunlight.

Scientist 2 Here's one to make you giggle! All living things must excrete. (*Human clutches him/herself, rushes out through a door and returns a moment later looking relieved.*) For humans and animals this basically means going to the toilet, or getting rid of waste, and doesn't need explaining in great detail! Plants get rid of their waste through their leaves. Fortunately for us this waste is oxygen, and is a lot nicer to breathe in than human waste!

Scientist 3 All living things respire. (*Human huffs and puffs*). It's a little more complicated than just breathing, though. Animals breathe in oxygen and this turns the food they eat into energy, producing a waste gas, Carbon dioxide. This is breathed out and taken in by plants, which as we've heard produce oxygen as their waste.

Scientist 4 Finally, all living things grow. Humans and animals grow from babies to adults, and plants grow from seedlings into larger plants. Looking at the weeds in my garden, some grow into enormous plants!

Scientist 1 But of course, there is one more thing that all living things do at some point, and that is they *stop* living. They die. It can be very sad but it's all part of the cycle of life.

All Aaaah!

(The scientists sit down and the three 'guests' who were refused entry to the party come forward with their objects.)

Child 2 Surely my bicycle is alive. The oil it leaves on my socks could be thought of as excretion! It can move too.

All ONLY WHEN YOU'RE ON IT!

Child 2 Oh!

Child 4 Well my flower does all those things that pot plant does!

All NOT NOW YOU'VE PICKED IT! IT'S DEAD!

Child 4 Oh!

Child 6 Well my football is made from leather, and leather comes from cows, and cows are alive.

All IS YOUR FOOTBALL MOOING?

Child 6 Err, no.

All EXACTLY!

(The 3 sit down and 5 more children step forward with a large cut-out/picture of a flowering plant with clearly recognisable leaves, roots and stem, and 4 large word cards reading; Light, Oxygen, Water and CO2.)

Child 7 Let's have a closer look at 2 of these 7 life processes, growth and nutrition, and how they occur in a flowering plant. As we've heard, plants do not move around to hunt or gather food. They stay in the same place and make it inside themselves. This is called photosynthesis. Photosynthesis literally means 'made using light'.

(As each stage of photosynthesis is described the word cards are held next to the relevant part of the flower.)

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