

# MULTICULTURAL LESSON PLAN

## LEGENDS

### THE CHILDREN OF LIR

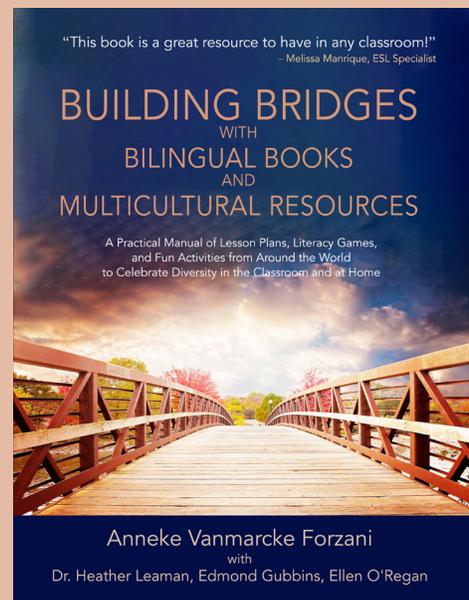
The following lesson plan is from  
***Building Bridges with Bilingual Books and Multicultural Resources:***  
*A Practical Manual of Lesson Plans, Literacy Games, and  
Fun Activities from Around the World to Celebrate Diversity in the  
Classroom and at Home*

*Building Bridges* helps educators and homeschoolers incorporate cultural diversity in their teaching. It provides the tools to:

- ✿ Build culturally responsive classrooms
- ✿ Create positive connections with dual language students & families
- ✿ Teach children about other languages & cultures
- ✿ Support literacy development among English language learners
- ✿ Foster a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

***Building Bridges*** includes numerous multicultural lesson plans that use bilingual books and diversity activities to support literacy development and build culturally inclusive classrooms. The lessons meet Common Core State Standards and include detailed procedures, assessments, cross-curricular extension activities, and vocabulary-building flashcards. Each lesson incorporates optional ESL activities, accommodations for language learners, and suggestions for involving dual language families.

Also included in the book are games, foods, and crafts from around the world; diverse language profiles; handouts to build community in the classroom; unique multicultural holidays and events to celebrate diversity; and useful links and resources.

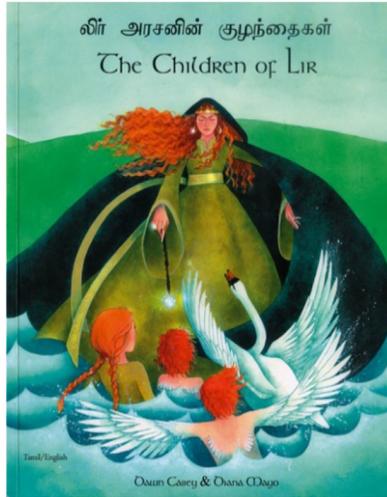


***Building Bridges with Bilingual Books and Multicultural Resources*** is available now at [www.LanguageLizard.com/Bridges](http://www.LanguageLizard.com/Bridges), bookstores, and ebook distributors worldwide.

# Theme 2: Folktales, Fables, Myths, and Legends

## Topic B: Legends – *The Children of Lir*

**Goal:** Expose students to a range of traditional literature from different cultures and countries, thereby enabling them to appreciate the multitude of stories told to students around the world.



**Language Lizard Book Used:** *The Children of Lir*

Retold By Dawn Casey. Illustrated by Diana Mayo.

Available in English with: Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Czech, Farsi, French, German, Irish, Italian, Panjabi, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, and Vietnamese.

### **Snapshot of Lesson:**

- Children make **predictions** about the story based on observations.
- Children **“travel thousands of years back in time to Ireland”** to observe the story of *The Children of Lir*.
- Children prepare for their journey by emptying an ancient bowl of **key vocabulary words**.
- Children listen to a **reading of the story** of *The Children of Lir*.
- Children **respond to the text** by answering literal, inferential, and evaluative questions.
- In pairs or small groups, children **retell the story** of *The Children of Lir*.
- Children **listen and respond** to *The Children of Lir Overture* composed by the Irish folk group “Loudest Whisper”.
- Children **respond to the text** by asking one of the children-swans questions about their experience (Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating).

## **Background Information for Facilitator**

### **Irish Folklore:**

There is a strong tradition of storytelling in Ireland. Stories belong to four main categories: The Fenian Cycle, the Ulster Cycle, the Cycle of Kings, and the Mythological Cycle. *The Children of Lir* is part of the Irish Mythological Cycle. Information on the origins of Irish folklore as well as the preservation of Irish folklore can be found on [www.askaboutireland.ie](http://www.askaboutireland.ie) (See links below). Some key information related to *The Children of Lir* includes:

1. The *Children of Lir* is an Irish story based on a legend that came to Ireland at the end of the Middle Ages from Britain or France.
2. Lir was a descendant of the Tuatha Dé Danaan (people of the Goddess Danú) tribe who were a supernatural group of people.
3. The lake where Aoife turned the four children into swans is Lake Derravarragh in County Westmeath (East of Ireland, Northeast of Dublin).

4. Inish Glora (the island where the swan-children stayed) is in Erris, Co. Mayo (West coast of Ireland).
5. The Christian Missionary the swan-children met on Inish Glora is believed to be St. Mochaomhóg (St. Moling).

### **Sources Cited:**

- Ask about Ireland. (2008). *The Children of Lir*. Retrieved from <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/folklore-of-ireland/carlow-folklore/the-story-of-mad-sweeney/the-children-of-lir/>

### **More Information about Irish Folklore and *The Children of Lir*:**

- Lysaght, P. (2012). *The Irish mythological cycle*. Retrieved from <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/folklore-of-ireland/folklore-in-ireland/traditional-storytelling/the-mythological-cycle/the-irish-mythological-cy/>
- McGuire, P. (2012). *Feature: Folklore of Ireland*. Retrieved from <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/folklore-of-ireland/folklore-in-ireland/Introduction/>
- *The Children of Lir*. (2008). Retrieved from <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/looking-at-places/westmeath/the-children-of-lir/>

## **Lesson Plan: *The Children of Lir***

**Grade Level:** 1-4 (Note: The activities in this lesson plan can be tailored to suit the needs of the specific group that is being taught, at the discretion of the facilitator)

**Time Frame:** 2 x (45 minute - 1 hour) sessions

### **Objectives:**

#### **Knowledge:**

- Identify the origins of the story *The Children of Lir*.
- Learn new vocabulary based on the topic of *The Children of Lir*.

#### **Skills:**

- Make predictions based on observations of illustrations.
- Use language to explain and describe.

- Use language to answer and formulate questions.
- Listen and respond to *The Children of Lir Overture*.

**Attitudes:**

- Understand and appreciate that everyone does not have the same cultural tales and traditional stories around the world by using *The Children of Lir* as an example of a traditional tale from another country.
- Value and respect diversity and lifestyles of others.
- Enjoy listening to the story being read in English and in the other language in the dual language book if possible. The story could be read in a second language with the help of a bilingual parent, child, or teacher, or using the PENpal Audio Recorder Pen.
- Appreciate different languages and scripts around the world.

**Essential Questions:**

- What is the main message of the story of *The Children of Lir*?

**Materials and Resources:**

- *The Children of Lir* retold by Dawn Casey.
- Flashcards of key vocabulary words.
- Bowl (for vocabulary words activity – optional).
- *The Children of Lir Overture* (Composed by Irish folk group Loudest Whisper): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5bbZLKoY74>
- Piece of clothing (e.g., hat or scarf) for Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating activity.
- PENpal Audio Recorder Pen (optional).

**Linkage and Integration across subject areas:**

**Language Arts:** Vocabulary development, reading, using language to explain and describe, and using language to formulate and answer questions.

**Music:** Listen to *The Children of Lir Overture*.

**Drama:** Role Play (traveling to Ireland), Facilitator in Role/Character Hot Seating activity.

**Vocabulary to be Developed in this Lesson:**

Key Vocabulary		Story Specific Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children</li> <li>• magic</li> <li>• king</li> <li>• queen</li> <li>• wife</li> <li>• stepmother</li> <li>• sons</li> <li>• daughters</li> <li>• sleepy</li> <li>• lake</li> <li>• lonely</li> <li>• bell</li> <li>• wings</li> <li>• music</li> <li>• palace</li> <li>• wedding gift</li> <li>• twins</li> <li>• heartbroken</li> <li>• jealous</li> <li>• dark magic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yawning</li> <li>• bathe</li> <li>• shrieking</li> <li>• wand</li> <li>• floated</li> <li>• terrified</li> <li>• frantically</li> <li>• cruel</li> <li>• transformed</li> <li>• fierce</li> <li>• feathers</li> <li>• safety</li> <li>• nettles</li> <li>• tale</li> <li>• myth</li> <li>• legend</li> <li>• holy</li> <li>• chapel</li> <li>• radiant</li> <li>• ancient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lir</li> <li>• Tuatha Dé Danaan (Two-ha Day Dan-aan)</li> <li>• Ireland</li> <li>• druid</li> <li>• hypnotic incantation</li> <li>• swan</li> <li>• curse</li> <li>• Irish Sea</li> <li>• Atlantic Ocean</li> <li>• Sorceress</li> <li>• anguish</li> <li>• exile</li> <li>• Scotland</li> <li>• Arctic winds</li> <li>• buffeted</li> <li>• seal</li> <li>• desolate</li> <li>• fort</li> <li>• lament</li> <li>• Inish Glora (In-ish Glore-ah)</li> <li>• hermit</li> <li>• Sidhe (Irish term for descendants of Tuatha Dé Danaan)</li> <li>• seized</li> </ul>

**Expressions**

Her heart grew heavy with hate.  
 Her voice was as sweet and as thick as honey.  
 The girl waded in the water.  
 On a stormy night you can still hear her howls.  
 He rushed to embrace his children.

**Names and Pronunciations of Characters in ‘The Children of Lir’**

Lir (king), Fionnuala (Fin-OO-la), Aed (Ay), Fiakra (Fee-ak-ra), Conn, Aoife (Ee-fa) the High King’s daughter, Bodh the Red (Bov the Red - mighty king of Tuatha Dé Danaan), Evric (farmer), the hermit.

## **Procedure:**

### **Introduction:**

1. Begin the lesson by presenting the cover of the book to the children. Ask the children what they notice about the picture? What is happening in the picture? Encourage the children to explain their responses.
2. Ask the children to use their observations to predict what they think the story will be about.
3. Inform the children that this is a very old story from Ireland.
4. The facilitator may wish to pretend that the group is going to travel back thousands of years to visit Ireland. Ask the children to sit on the floor and to “grab the magic carpet,” exclaiming to hold on tight because the group is traveling to Ireland to listen to the story of *The Children of Lir* which took place thousands of years ago.

### **Vocabulary development:**

5. Inform the group that you have an ancient bowl filled with the important words that they will need to learn on their journey to Ireland.
6. Using the list of words tabulated above or any additional words, ask about known vocabulary (key vocabulary /story specific vocabulary) from the story of *The Children of Lir*. This activity can be supported by the use of flashcards and/or pictures.
7. Present new vocabulary (key vocabulary /story specific vocabulary) to the children. Using flashcards and/or pictures, invite the children to say/read each word. Ask the children if they know the meanings of the words and encourage them to provide explanations of the words if possible. The facilitator may need to elaborate or provide additional explanations of some words and say the words in sentences so the students can hear the words in context. The facilitator may ask the children to create their own sentences containing the words, encouraging the children to make personal connections with the words. If there are bilingual children in the group, it may be possible to ask them to say the words in their language(s).

### **Reading:**

8. Read the book *The Children of Lir* with the children. The facilitator may choose to read the book aloud to the children, engage in choral reading (facilitator and children read the story together in unison), or see-saw reading (facilitator reads one sentence,

children read the following sentence and continue alternating reading after each sentence). It is important to read with appropriate tone, pace, inflection, and expression to engage the children as much as possible. If there are children who speak the language of the dual language book, here would be a nice opportunity to ask them to read/translate a section of the story if they would like. Moreover, if the facilitator has a PENpal Audio Recorder device, the children could listen to a reading of the story in English or the other language of the dual language book.

9. Throughout the story, explicitly draw children's attention to the illustrations to promote comprehension of the text.
10. During reading, encourage children to make connections (orally, using mime, in writing). Connections may be *text-to-self* (what does the child notice from the book in relation to his/her own lived experiences), *text-to-text* (what does the child notice from one book/story to another book/story), or *text-to-wider-world* (what does the child notice from the book in relation to real world historical or current contexts).

**Discussion to Encourage Reflection and Response:**

11. Facilitate discussion with the group of children using literal, inferential, and evaluative questions. The facilitator may wish to select questions from the following list:

***Literal Questions:***

(Readers use information directly from the text to answer this type of question.)

- i. *How many children did the king, Lir, have?*
- ii. *What animal did Aoife (the children's stepmother) turn the children into?*
- iii. *In what three locations did the swan-children have to live according to the curse?*

***Inferential Questions:***

(Reader must use the information in the text to deduce the answer.)

- i. *Why did Lir return day after day to listen to four swans singing?*
- ii. *Why did the swans sing a lament when they flew over the land of their childhood?*

***Evaluative Questions:***

(Reader uses his/her own knowledge to explore answers to this type of question.)

- i. *Do you think it was fair for Aoife to turn the children into swans? Why or why not?*

- ii. *How to do you think Fionnuala, Aed, Fiacra, and Conn felt when they transformed from swans into old, withered people?*

**Word Identification/Fluency Development:**

12. **Revisit the story and identify key vocabulary words:** Display key vocabulary words from the story. Reread a section from the story and ask the children to raise their hands when they hear or see one of the key vocabulary words.
13. **Retell the story (in pairs or small groups):** Present key words from the story listed in order as they appear in the story. Using the words, children retell the story in small groups or pairs. The facilitator may ask the children to retell the story orally or in writing. The facilitator may present sentences with key words for this activity to provide the children with additional support. The children could also retell the story using illustrations, mime, or still images.

**Independent Work/Group Work Activity:**

14. **Listen to *The Children of Lir Overture* (by Irish folk group *Loudest Whisper*):**
  - Before playing *The Children of Lir Overture* to the children, inform the group that you will play a piece of music to them and that you would like them to listen carefully. Tell the children that you would like them to try to identify the instruments they hear playing (flute, drums, string instruments, pipes, guitar, voice). Ask the children what they notice about the tempo of the music? Is the tempo fast or slow? Does the tempo stay the same?
  - Inform the children that *The Children of Lir Overture* will be played another time. Ask the children to consider which parts of the story *The Children of Lir* are being told at different points during the piece of music. Displaying pictures or key words from the story *The Children of Lir* would support children carrying out this activity. Additionally, the children could use the pictures to make a storyboard to illustrate *The Children of Lir Overture*.
15. **Facilitator in Role & Hot Seating Drama Activity:**
  - A piece of clothing (e.g., hat or scarf) will be needed for this activity in order to signify that the facilitator will assume the role of Fionnuala, Aed, Fiacra, or Conn from the story.
  - Preparation for Facilitator in Role: Ask the children to consider what they would ask the children of Lir about their lives if they could meet the characters from the story. A “Think-Pair-Share” activity may be useful to help the children formulate questions to ask the characters.
  - Facilitator in Role: After the children have shared their questions with the whole group, inform the children that when the facilitator is wearing the piece of clothing (i.e., hat or scarf), they will assume the role of Fionnuala, Aed, Fiacra, or Conn.

- **Character Hot Seating:** Wearing the piece of clothing, thank the children for coming to Ireland to speak to them. Next, invite the children to ask questions they devised about the story *The Children of Lir*. At the end of this activity, the facilitator will remove the piece of clothing used to signify that he/she has returned from the role of Fionnuala, Aed, Fiacra, or Conn.

### **Conclusion:**

Facilitate a discussion with the group. Ask the children to explain what they learned about the story of *The Children of Lir*. At this point, the facilitator may want to revisit essential question to determine whether the children have understood the main idea of the lesson:

- *What is a main message of the story of The Children of Lir?*

As a concluding activity, invite the children to discuss these questions with the whole group, in smaller groups, in pairs, as a written reflection. An activity such as “Two Stars and a Wish” may be a nice conclusion to the lesson. In pairs, children say two things they have learned and one thing they would like to learn about *The Children of Lir*.

### **Assessment:**

**Facilitator Observation:** Children’s engagement and interaction with the lesson, engagement in discussions, and engagement with facilitator designed tasks.

**Facilitator Questioning:** Higher and lower order questioning (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative questions).

**Facilitator Designed Tasks:** Making predictions, vocabulary games, reading fluency activities, listening and responding to music, and drama activity (character hot-seating).

**Self-Assessment:** “Two Stars and a Wish”

### **Accommodations/Differentiation:**

#### **Differential modes of Representation:**

Photos, pictures, flashcards, *The Children of Lir Overture* (music), drama.

#### **Differential Questioning:**

Use of higher and lower order questioning (i.e., literal, inferential, and evaluative questions).

### **Differential Product/Response:**

Written responses, oral responses, music responses to *The Children of Lir Overture*, drama responses.

In a classroom setting, it may be helpful for the English language learners (ELLs) to take the dual language book home either before or after the lesson. The ELL student may read the book at home in the language spoken by his/her family. This will increase the child's confidence when talking about the book in school. If possible, ask the child's parent/guardian to read and record the book in the language that he/she speaks at home. The recording could then be played in the classroom, enabling children to hear other languages spoken by their peers at home.

### **Extension Activities:**

#### **Still Images/Freeze Frame (Drama Exercise):**

The facilitator may wish to extend children's engagement with *The Children of Lir* through still imagery activities. In groups, the children can act as characters such as the swan-children from the story and create a still image (freeze frame) depicting a scene or key moment from the story. If there is a large group of children carrying out this exercise, each group may present its still image to the whole the group. The facilitator may wish to tap one of the students creating the still image on the shoulder and ask the children in the large group questions such as:

- i. *What do you think this character is looking at?*
- ii. *What do you think this character is doing?*
- iii. *How do you think this character is reacting?*
- iv. *Does any tension exist between the characters?*
- v. *What do you think will happen next?*

#### **Character Sketch (English Writing):**

Through questioning and discussion, ask the children what they know about the main characters in the story (e.g., Fionnuala, King Lir, the stepmother Queen Aoife, the hermit). Discuss attributes such as appearance, role in the story, and dealing with other characters. Inform the children that they will create a character profile of one of the characters in the story. To help children generate ideas for this activity, the facilitator may ask the children to close their eyes and visualize the character they have chosen. Next, ask children to draw a sketch of their chosen character. Finally, encourage the children to write adjectives or vocabulary words to describe the character.

### **Drawing ‘photographs’ taken on journey to Ireland (Visual Arts):**

Engage in a discussion with the children, asking them to describe what they saw on their “visit” to Ireland. Ask the children to identify key moments from the story (e.g., King Lir marrying Queen Aoife, the children swimming in the lake, Queen Aoife casting a spell on the children, the children turning into swans, King Lir striking Queen Aoife with his Druid’s wand, King Lir listening to the swans singing, the swans flying to the Irish Sea, the swans flying to the Atlantic Sea, the swans meeting the hermit, the swans turning into old people after the bell rings). Inform the children that they will be creating a photograph to illustrate a key moment they observed from their “visit.” Ask the children to engage in a Think/Pair/Share activity to discuss possible ideas to draw in their photograph.

Provide the children with coloring materials to carry out the activity. The facilitator may wish to provide children with a simple template (e.g., a rectangular outline bordering page to indicate that the drawing is a photograph). While the children draw the photographs, the facilitator may circulate around the room, offering assistance, providing descriptive feedback, and making suggestions to the children. When the children have finished creating their photographs, ask the children to present their completed artworks to the group. Encourage the children to explain what key moment they chose to draw and why they chose to draw that particular moment from the story.

### **Project Work on Ireland (Geography):**

Develop the children’s map reading skills by locating Ireland on a map. Using a large poster/chart, a digital map, or an atlas, ask the children questions to encourage them to examine the physical features of the country. For example, what continent is Ireland in? What countries (if any) border Ireland? Is Ireland an island country? What sea borders Ireland? What seas were mentioned in the story (e.g., Irish Sea, Atlantic Sea)? Ask the children to name and locate main cities, rivers, and mountains in Ireland.

Additionally, children could conduct independent research on Ireland. Areas of focus for this project work may include:

- **General Information:** Population, capital city, government, language(s), predominant religion, currency, national symbol.
- **Map of Ireland:** Indicate physical features such as capital city, bordering seas, islands, mountain ranges, rivers, and lakes. Note interesting facts about the country’s geography (e.g., longest river, highest mountain, largest island).
- **Flag of Ireland:** Picture/sketch of the flag and information about the flag.
- **Language & Culture:** Identify the language(s) spoken in the country with examples of every day phrases. Identify some of the country’s art and culture, customs and traditions, traditional dances, and sports.

- **Traditional Food:** Identify examples of traditional dishes, briefly explaining the ingredients.
- **Attractions:** Identify interesting places to visit, tourist attractions, briefly describe the places.
- **Interesting Facts:** Create a “Did you know?” page with some interesting facts learned about the country (e.g., identify a famous person who was born in Ireland).
- **Craft:** Make a craft/item to represent something from the country’s culture. For example, make a traditional dish or construct a famous landmark.
- **Similarities and Differences:** Children identify similarities and differences between Ireland and where they live or their countries of birth.

**Vocabulary Flashcards for *The Children of Lir*:**

Lir	Ireland	druid
swan	curse	palace
exile	fort	lament
hermit	twins	heartbroken
jealous	dark magic	yawning
bathe	shrieking	terrified

frantically	cruel	transformed
fierce	feathers	safety
nettles	tale	myth
legend	holy	chapel
radiant	ancient	king
queen	stepmother	bell

