Introduction

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is perhaps the most well-known of C. S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia and certainly offers a range of exciting themes for exploration. This scheme is aimed at KS3, most suited to Year 7 and Year 8, and uses both on and off text work based on the novel as the stimulus for some exciting exploration into character, improvisation, devising and ensemble work. Although it’s not necessary for students to have read the book, a summary of the story and main characters would be helpful (see Resources at the end of this scheme).

Timings
Each session is based on a one hour lesson.

Session 1: Evacuation

Learning objectives
- To devise a scene exploring how parents and children react to the idea of evacuation
- To use physical theatre and monologue to recreate the children’s journey to the countryside.

Warm-up: One sentence stories
First, sitting in a circle, give each person a number. You begin the story and set the genre for the class to follow. At the end of the sentence (or a certain length of time) you call out a new number and the next student takes over. After the story has developed sufficiently, you call out a final number and ask that person to bring the story to a close. Try a few different genres. To link this game to the novel you can ask students to include specific things such as a lion, a witch, a wardrobe, a snowy wood, etc.

Main activity 1: ‘We’re sending you away’
Discussion: For most parents during World War II, sending their children away was a heart-breaking decision. What might people talk about when making this sort of decision? What would be parents’ main concerns? Would they have any choice? How do you think children reacted to the idea of being evacuated? What might make a difference to children’s feelings?

In pairs improvise a short scene between a mother and father in which they discuss sending their children away to the country.
Perform some of the scenes.
Next join pairs to form groups of four, and improvise a scene in which parents tell the children that they are going to be evacuated.
Perform.

Discussion: From your improvisations, what feelings have been expressed by the parents and the children? How did students use specific drama skills to show these feelings? Think about facial expressions, movement, proxemics and vocal skills.

Main activity 2: The train journey
It was quite common for children to be put onto a train by their parents and collected at their destination. In groups of four, ask students to take on the roles of Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy and recreate the train journey, explaining to the audience through the use of monologue how they feel.
They might include:
- Feelings about leaving London
- Feelings about their parents
- What it’s like on the train
What the scenery is like
How they feel about being with their siblings
How they feel about the professor that they are going to stay with
What they know about where they are going
What they hope for.

Things to consider:
How might students work as an ensemble to use physical theatre to create the movement of the train, rather than setting it in a more traditional form?
Asking them to try performing short sections of monologue and moving between performers rather than performing a whole monologue in one go.

Performance and feedback
After each performance, ask students for positive comments on the work they have seen. Encourage students to think in drama terms about what they like or has worked, e.g. ‘Peter’s facial expression was effective; I could see that he was enjoying the game because he was smiling widely with wide eyes and raised eyebrows’ rather than ‘It was good’. Equally, with points of constructive criticism try to encourage students to offer practical suggestions of how to improve work, e.g. ‘Edmund could have shown his annoyance by scowling and narrowing his eyes’.

Session 2: Exploring the worst-case scenario

Learning objectives
To devise a scene showing the worst-case scenario of children’s arrival
To explore the use of internal monologue to show a character’s feelings to the audience.

Warm-up: Ranting game
In this game, students have the opportunity to rant about something that makes them angry or that they hate, e.g. homework, flies, cheese, whistling, etc. Ask for volunteers and time them having a good rant. You could make it more difficult by asking for volunteers to rant about things based on the text, e.g. the Witch, fauns, the eternal winter, etc. The winner is the person who can rant for the longest time without running out of steam.

Main activity 1: Internal monologue
Discussion: What is internal monologue? Discuss some ideas that demonstrate how what we say and what we think might be very different.
Asks for two volunteers to demonstrate the following example:
Student A, who is having a hard time, arrives wearing a horrible combination of colours. B thinks it’s a dreadful combination, but knows that A will be upset if they mention it.
A: Hi, how are you? It’s been ages since I’ve seen you.
B: Fine thanks. How are you?
A freezes.
B: (to audience) Oh my goodness! What is he wearing? He looks like he got dressed in the dark. I really hope he doesn’t ask me what I think of that disaster.
A: I’m much better now. A bit of retail therapy helped. What do you think of my new outfit? Took me ages to find something I loved - and don’t get me started on the cost!
A freezes.
B: (to audience) Dreadful! It’s awful, horrible, hideous! And the colour. They are the worst colours you could have chosen.
A unfreezes.
B: I love it. So stylish, and the colour really suits you.
In pairs, ask students to devise their own internal monologue scene either based on these characters or characters and a scene of their own choice.
Rehearse, perform and feedback.

Main activity 2: Worst-case scenario
Discussion: The Pevensie children are fortunate in that they are evacuated to the house of the kind Professor Kirke, but of course many children during the war were not so lucky. Ask students: if you were to be evacuated what would be the worst place to end up and the worst people to end up with? What would day-to-day life be like in this nightmare scenario? Consider other children as well as adults.
In groups of six, ask students to devise a scene showing the worst place to be evacuated to. They should carefully consider how to create their characters through their use of movement, facial expression and vocal skills. At different points in the scene they should freeze the action and use internal monologue to let different characters reveal their true feelings to the audience.

**Rehearse, perform and feedback.**

### Session 3: Entering Narnia

**Learning objectives**
- To use a range of drama skills to show your chosen character entering Narnia for the first time
- To use a split stage to improvise meeting Mr Tumnus the faun.

**Warm-up: Bing, Bong, Name (10 mins)**
Ask the group to stand in a circle. You begin by saying 'Bing', the person to your left says 'Bong' and the next person says their name. It continues Bing, Bong, Name, Bing, Bong, Name, etc., all the way round the circle until someone makes a mistake - says someone else's name, pauses too long, etc. If this happens they sit down and the person to their left begins with 'Bing' and it carries on once more. The last person left standing is the winner. To extend the game you could experiment with 'Bing, Bong, Bing, Name' or even 'Bing, Bong, Bing, Bang, Name'.

**Main activity 1: Going through the wardrobe**
This activity leads the whole class through the wardrobe into Narnia. Although the class will all be working at the same time, encourage students to concentrate wholly on their own work. For this activity you will call out the following instructions and students will perform in their own space. As an alternative idea, you could have half the class as an audience while the other half performs, or even perform in smaller groups.

- Standing in a space in a neutral position.
- Decide on which character you are – Peter, Susan, Edmund or Lucy. Think about what you know about your character. How will you stand, hold your arms, use your facial expressions, to show this character? How will your character move? How will you use your vocal skills to create this character?
- On 'Go' move around the space as if you are in the middle of a game of hide and seek and the seeker is just about to finish counting and you are trying to find a place to hide.
- You enter the wardrobe room and see the wardrobe. Reach for the handle. Open the door. Step inside.
- You're inside the wardrobe now. You're trying to be quiet. You move the coats and move towards the back of the wardrobe. It's huge. You keep moving pushing the coats out of the way.
- You feel branches. You feel the cold.
- You step out of the wardrobe into Narnia. It's snowing. How do you feel? How will you show this with your facial expression? What might you say?

**Main activity 4: Meeting Mr Tumnus improvisation**
In pairs, using a split stage, improvise the scene where Lucy (or whichever character students choose) meets Mr Tumnus. Students should work stage left and stage right separately to show the character entering the wardrobe and walking through into Narnia, and stage right to show Mr Tumnus on his way home through the woods before meeting centre stage and creating a short scene.

**Rehearse, perform and feedback.**
Session 4: Entering Narnia (cont)

Learning objectives
- To sculpt your partner into a shape that represents Mr Tumnus
- To consider how you will use your movement and vocal skills to create the character of Mr Tumnus
- To devise and rehearse the scene where a character meets Mr Tumnus.

Warm-up: Concentration counting
This game requires concentration and patience from students. If you have a large group, you may want to split them into two for this game.

Students are seated in a circle and have to count from one to however many people are in the group. The rules are:
- They must not simply count around the circle in order
- They cannot discuss who is going to have which number or go next
- No one is permitted to say more than one number
- If a number is repeated they must start again
- If more than one person speaks at a time they must start again.

Your class may or may not get to the top number. If they do, they can simply play again or reverse the numbers, count in twos, etc., and if they do not then it can be a challenge for next lesson.

Main activity 1: Shape sculpting
Read the description of Mr Tumnus from the end of Chapter 1 that begins 'He was only a little taller …' and ends ‘… exclaimed the Faun’.

In pairs ask students to label themselves A and B. As should stand in a line facing the front and their partners should stand in front of them. A is going to be a lump of clay and B is going to be a sculptor. B must now mould A into an image that they feel best shows Mr Tumnus. They should concentrate on posture, body language and facial expression. Student A must do exactly as B asks; if necessary B should demonstrate to A how they would like them to position themselves or hold their facial expression.

When the Bs have completed their sculpture they should swap, and A should sculpt B. When both students have completed their sculpture, ask all the Bs to sit down and ask the As to stand in a line in front of them. When you say 'Freeze' the As should recreate their sculpted shape.

Ask the As to consider for a moment, how it feels to be positioned in this way. You could ask individuals to describe how certain elements of their image make them feel, e.g. what the position of their hands suggests to them or how they think they should move considering their posture.

Next, ask them to consider how they think they would portray their character vocally. They should think about pitch, pace, volume, tone, accent and emphasis. Moving from left to right along the line of Fauns, ask them to say a line of dialogue. You can offer them some choices or allow them to make up their own line. Suggestions may include:
- ‘Goodness, gracious me!’
- ‘Am I right in thinking that you are a daughter of Eve?’
- ‘Forgive me – you are what they call a girl?’
- ‘It is winter in Narnia, and has been for ever so long.’
- ‘Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Tumnus.’

Ask all the Bs to go and stand behind their partner in the performance space, As remain frozen. Now ask the As to consider how Mr Tumnus would walk. After a count of three the As should go and sit down but should move to their seats in character.

Repeat with the Bs.

Main activity 2: Tea with Mr Tumnus
In pairs, using the decisions they have made about how to create their child character and Mr Tumnus, ask students to recreate the scene where the child goes for tea with Mr Tumnus. Although in the book, it’s Lucy who goes to tea, students can choose any of the children.

Rehearse, perform and feedback.
Session 5: The Witch

Learning objectives

- To sculpt your partner into a shape that represents The Witch or her Dwarf
- To consider how you will use your movement, vocal skills and especially facial expressions to create your character
- To use physical theatre and sound to create the Witch’s arrival
- To hot seat Edmund about the choices he makes.

Warm-up: Chinese whispers

This is an old game but it is always fun with some amusing results. Give the person who is going to begin a short line which they whisper to the person next to them. That person whispers what they hear to the next person and so on around the circle until you get to the last person who says aloud what has been whispered to them. The person with the lines reads it out again and you compare how close the final line is to the original. You can use any phrases at all, but using lines from the text will keep the game in context.

Main activity 1: Creating the Witch and her Dwarf

Read or summarise Chapters 3 and 4 where Edmund enters the wardrobe and meets the Witch. Ask students to pair up and label themselves as the Witch or the Dwarf. Repeat the shape sculpting activity from Session 4 to allow students to think in detail about how they would create these characters. Facial expressions are even more important here.

Main activity 2: Creating the Witch’s arrival soundscape

For this activity you could use a sound effect of the sleigh bells, but it would be much more effective if each group had access to some real bells to use in live performance.

Discussion: What sounds would you hear as the Witch’s sleigh speeds through the woods? How would you recreate these sounds using your vocal skills? How can you create the idea of the movement of the sleigh without actually moving from centre stage? Ask them to consider how their group could move their bodies to suggest that the sleigh is moving in different directions.

In groups of five, taking on the roles of the Witch, the Dwarf, two reindeer and Edmund, ask students to use physical theatre to create the sleigh moving through the woods. If this takes place centre stage, the person taking on the role of Edmund should use the previous work of moving through the wardrobe and arriving in Narnia to create their arrival in front of the sleigh. Ask students to add vocal or instrumental sound effects to their work.

Rehearse, perform and feedback.

Main activity 3: Hot seating Edmund

In the same groups, ask students to create a list of questions for Edmund regarding his behaviour when he meets the Witch; what he promises to do; why he does not tell the others that Lucy is right and Narnia does exist. Students should collaborate with the questions and the answers before rehearsing with one person taking on the role of Edmund, paying close attention to how they will use movement, facial expressions and vocal skills to create their character.

Rehearse and perform.

Discuss: What were the most common questions that Edmund was asked? Do you feel that there was a clear answer as to why Edmund behaved the way he did? What drama skills did performers use that were especially relevant to Edmund’s character?

Extension idea

Recreate the whole scene where the Witch meets Edmund and gives him the Turkish Delight. Experiment with the use of internal monologue as Edmund questions the decisions he is making.
Session 6: The Battle

Learning objectives
- To use Drama skills to create the range of creatures from the novel
- To work as an ensemble using tableaux, sound and lighting to recreate the battle.

Warm-up: Giants, Gnomes and Wizards
Split the class in half and send each half to opposite ends of the room. Each half must then quietly discuss and decide whether they are going to be Giants, Gnomes or Wizards. When they have agreed, they stand in a straight line facing the other group. When both groups are ready they step forward in time until they meet near the middle (if they start about three large paces from the middle it makes this a bit easier). When they meet they must pause and wait for you to count to three, after you have said three they perform the action for their character.
- **Giants:** Punch their arms in the air and shout 'Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum!'
- **Wizards:** Throw both arms forward and shout 'Kapow!'
- **Gnomes:** Go down on their knees, put their hands on their heads, wiggle their fingers and say 'Wibbly, wibbly, wibbly!'

Giants beat wizards because they stamp on them, wizards beat gnomes because they make them disappear and gnomes beat giants because they curl up into a ball and trip them over. This rule is how teams 'win'; they do not have to 'perform' these actions!

The winning team gets a point. The team with most points after a certain number of challenges wins the game.

Main activity: Recreating the battle
This activity involves the whole class working together as an ensemble. First, ask for six students to take on the roles of Peter, Susan, Edmund, Lucy, Aslan and Jadis the Witch. Next divide the class in half, one good, fighting on the side of Aslan and the children and one bad, fighting on the side of the Witch.

Once the class has been divided into good or bad ask each student to decide on a character. Good characters include fauns, centaurs, beavers, dryads and naiads. Creatures on the bad side include wolves, hags, ogres and wraiths.

Ask students to move into groups of three or four to discuss and explore how they might portray their characters. They should pay close attention to facial expressions, movement, posture, gesture and vocal skills.

Ask students to find a space in the room and stand as their character. Give them a moment to consider their character's name, and on your count they should say, 'I am a centaur/faun/hag and my name is …….'. The students playing the children, Aslan and the Witch should also consider the same skills.

Next, ask students to move around the space in character, feeling how their character moves. When they meet another character they introduce themselves considering how they will react to characters who are on the same side or against them.

Ask students to choose three different images that show them in battle. As a whole class, students are asked to hold image one, freeze, move to image two, freeze, move to image three, freeze, return to image one, freeze and so on repeating the sequence.

Finally, set the good creatures and the children on one side of the performance space headed by Aslan, and the bad creatures on the other headed by Jadis. Ask students to perform image one, freeze, step forward, perform image two, freeze, step forward and so on until the two sides are almost touching. Rehearse this process and add music and lighting to create an epic ensemble battle sequence. Ask each person to decide on a final image to finish the piece.

Filming the performance would offer a great opportunity for feedback on students' work.

Extension idea
Ask a small group of students to narrate the scene as it takes place. They could use extracts from the text or write their own script. They could experiment with working as a Greek chorus to make the narration exciting and inventive.
RESOURCES

Appendix: *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* summary

Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie are evacuated from London to the countryside during the war. Relocated to the house of a kindly professor they discover a wardrobe that is a portal to the magical world of Narnia where they discover talking animals under the rule of the evil White Witch, Jadis. During her reign the Witch has kept Narnia in a perpetual winter in which Christmas never comes. The residents of Narnia are all eagerly awaiting the return of Aslan the lion, who they hope will defeat the Witch and revive the frozen land.

Lucy, the youngest, is the first to discover Narnia and she meets a friendly faun, Mr Tumnus. He reveals that he was meant to betray Lucy and take her to the Witch to prevent fulfillment of the prophecy that when four humans sit on the thrones at Cair Paravel, Narnia will be free from evil. The faun cannot bring himself to hand the girl over and Tumnus is later arrested and imprisoned for his disobedience.

Edmund is second to enter Narnia. He soon encounters Jadis and is easily bewitched by her promises of power and tricked into betraying his brother and sisters. Meanwhile, the others make friends with Mr and Mrs Beaver and set off to meet Aslan. The Witch discovers that the children have met Aslan and in order to destroy the prophecy decides to kill Edmund. However, Edmund is saved and Aslan forgives him.

The Witch refers to Narnia’s Deep Magic and insists on the death of Edmund, but Aslan offers himself in Edmund’s place and the Witch accepts. However, Aslan has tricked the Witch as the spilling of his innocent blood in the place of a traitor’s is deeper magic still and he is resurrected. After freeing all the creatures turned to stone by the Witch in her castle, Aslan returns to the battle that has been raging between the animals and the Witch’s forces and kills the Witch. Seeing the Witch destroyed, her troops retreat and Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy take their thrones at Cair Paravel.

The children grow and as they do they rule the land peacefully. Many years later they find themselves back at the wardrobe. They have no recollection of it and no memories of their past. They explore the wardrobe and return to the professor’s house as the children they were with no time having passed at all. The professor tells them that they cannot return to Narnia through the wardrobe but they will be able to return one day, another way.