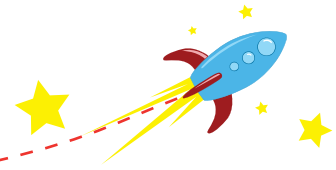




ASH DRESSES HER FRIENDS

Written and illustrated by Fu Wenzheng
Published by New Frontier Publishing



SYNOPSIS

Ash is feeling lonely. She wishes she had someone to play with. Then a sad elephant comes along and Ash has an idea that will cheer him up. Soon she is sharing her idea with lots of animals in the forest. *Ash dresses her friends* is a heartwarming story that teaches children about the importance of sharing your gifts and talents with others.

WRITING AND ILLUSTRATION STYLE

Fu Wenzheng used her knowledge of traditional Chinese art and international expression to illustrate this picture book. She used the technique of Ink Wash Painting (also known as literati painting) using only three colours to create wonderful traditional images. The images are multilayered yet there is a sense of flatness, demonstrating her mix of traditional Chinese and international style. The words are simple and rhythmic, designed to harmoniously integrate with the illustrations to make the reading easy and enjoyable.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

Fu Wenzheng grew up in a temple in China where her grandfather was a monk. The experiences she had as a child greatly influence her writing and style of illustration. Traditional Chinese culture and philosophy are at the focal point of all her work. Fu Wenzheng did her undergraduate studies at Fujian University's College of Fine Art and then went on to study Illustration at Zhejiang Science and Engineering University's School of Art and Design.

Although Fu Wenzheng is new to the UK and Australia she is already well respected and known in China. She has received a number of national and international awards for her work including the excellent illustrator award in The 2nd CCBF (China Shanghai International Children's Book Fair). As well as writing and illustrating picture books, she currently also teaches in the Cultural Products Department at Fujian Normal University's Union College.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Key themes in this book include: sharing and friendship, self-worth and talents. The illustrations provide an insight into Chinese art and painting.

Fu took inspiration for *Ash Dresses her Friends* from the artworks of the Emperor Huizong of Song. The common name for Emperor Huizong was Zhao Ji. Reigning as the eighth emperor of the Song dynasty from 1101 to 1125, Huizong was known for his extravagant lifestyle, which is believed to be part of the reason for the near collapse of the dynasty and his own demise at enemy hands. However, he was also known for his passion for painting, calligraphy, poetry, and prose. His painting and calligraphy are marked by exceptional refinement and observation to detail. His paintings of birds-and-flowers, in particular, are renowned for their realism and beauty. Huizong was the guiding force behind the Painting Academy in the late Northern Song, and his overall influence on early Chinese painting cannot be overestimated.





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DISCUSSION TOPICS

Before and during reading the book:

1. Introduce the book – read the title and ask the children what they think the book might be about. Look at the endpapers and ask the children what animals they can see?
2. Discuss with the children different art forms in different cultures. Tell the children a little about Chinese art and culture. Tell the children about the importance and symbolism of colours in Chinese art and culture.
 - Red: red, corresponding with fire, symbolises good fortune and joy
 - Black: black represents unity and is considered to be 'heaven's colour'
 - White: white, corresponding with metal, represents gold and symbolises brightness, purity, and fulfilment
3. As you begin to read the book see if you can make comparisons between the characters and the meaning of the colours in the book. For example: red symbolises good fortune and the clothes that Ash dresses her friends in are all red. Through sharing, Ash has created her good fortune for herself and her friends.

After reading the book:

1. Ask the children if they know any other traditional ways of painting/art in other cultures?
2. What did you notice happened to Ash and how did she feel at the end of the book after sharing with her friends?
3. Ask the children what they think are their talents. Can they share their talent with someone?
4. Ask if they have shared anything with someone recently?

ACTIVITIES

Mixed Media Art

What you will need:

- Paper
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons
- Paints
- Fabric Scraps
- Glue
- Sequins, buttons, beads, glitter (optional)



1. Place a basket of the fabric scraps in the middle of the table along with all the craft materials you want.
2. Have each child draw an animal or person on a piece of paper.
3. Tell the children to choose a piece of fabric from the basket and create a piece of clothing or bag for the animal/person.
4. Decorate!



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Chinese Paper Plate Dragon Twirler

Reference: <https://www.redtedart.com/paper-plate-dragon-twirler/>

Materials needed:

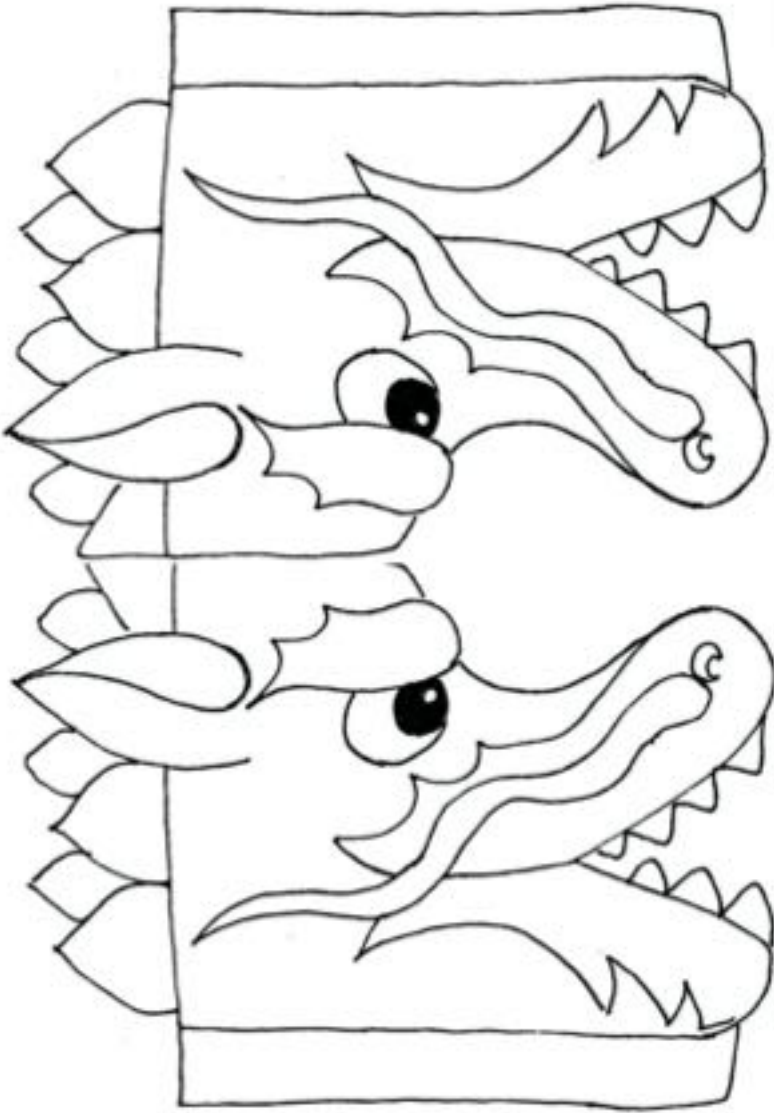
- Paper Plate
- Paint
- Scissors
- Glue
- String
- Crayons/colouring in pencils

Instructions:

1. Paint a paper plate in red. Of course your dragon can be any colour – green, yellow, or maybe a mixture of colours to represent the scales.
2. Let it dry and paint the reverse side.
3. Whilst waiting for the paper plate to dry, you can start colouring your Paper Plate Dragon Twirler template.
4. Cut out your details – do not cut the head or the tail in half. You need them to be joined. If you carefully fold your head and tail in half, you can cut the two halves in one go – saving a little time.
5. Once your paper plate is dry, cut a spiral into your Paper Plate to make the Dragon Whirligig. It should look a bit like a snail. (The thicker your snail twirls the more compact your Dragon will be. The thinner, the more elongated it will be.)
6. Take a piece of string and tie a knot one end. Then staple it into place.
7. Glue the dragon's paper tail to the top of the dragon – make the string stick between the two dragon tail halves.
8. Assemble the head. You will need to glue the bottom of the dragon face together.
9. Add a little glue to the top of the nose and glue that too.
10. Glue the paper dragon's head to the bottom of the whirligig. You can add tissue paper for fire if you wish.
11. Add the legs.



**CHINESE DRAGON HEAD, TAIL AND LEGS
TEMPLATE**





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Chinese Paper Lantern

Reference: https://www.firstpalette.com/Craft_themes/World/chinesepaperlantern/chinesepaperlantern.html

Materials needed:

- Paper or cardstock (preferably red or yellow)
- Scissors
- Stapler or tape
- Glue
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Things to decorate your lantern with: gift wrap paper, ribbons, sequins, stickers, glitter glue, small buttons, etc.

Instructions:

1. Start out with an A4, Letter size, or any rectangular sheet of paper or cardstock. Red and yellow are preferred colours for a Chinese-themed lantern, but you can always choose any colour.
2. Cut a 1-inch wide strip off on one short side. Set this aside for the handle.
3. Fold the paper in half, lengthwise.
4. Draw a horizontal line one inch from the long edge opposite the fold. (This line is just a guide for cutting and may not be necessary for older kids.)
5. Starting from the folded edge, cut a straight line about an inch from one short edge, all the way up to the horizontal line.
6. Continue to cut more straight lines about 1 inch apart until you reach the opposite short edge of the paper. Remember that the horizontal line marks the point where you stop cutting each straight line.
7. Unfold the paper. The paper will have several vertical slits along the middle. Erase any pencil marks or re-fold the crease the opposite way to hide the pencil marks at the back.
8. Decorating the lantern is optional but if you wish to jazz up yours, here are some ideas you can try:
 - Make a border by painting with any water-based paint or coloring with crayons or oil pastels.
 - Create patterns and details with glitter glue, puffy paint, or markers.
 - Glue on a strip of gift wrap paper, patterned paper, fabric, lace, washi tape, or a wide ribbon to make a border.
 - Add texture by gluing on materials like craft foam or felt shapes, small buttons, beads, sequins, ribbon, lace, etc. Do not glue on materials that are too heavy for your paper though.Take note to leave at least a half-inch of undecorated area on one top corner. This space will allow you to connect the two edges of the paper to form a lantern.
9. Form the paper into a tube shape to transform it into a lantern. Overlap the long edges at least a half-inch. Staple or tape the top and bottom corners.
10. Glue on the paper handle from Step 2. Decorate the handle if you like. Once the glue dries, hang the paper lantern as a festive Chinese New Year decoration.
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