

# The Ants and the Grasshopper

## *Don't worry. We fixed it.*

### **The Basic Fable:**

There were some ants who worked really hard.  
There was a grasshopper who only played the fiddle.  
The weather got cold.  
The ants said, "You should go home now."  
The grasshopper said, "I never built a house, I played the fiddle."  
The ants said, "You're going to freeze."

### **The Moral: Work or Freeze!**

I read this to a roomful of children. They were horrified. I asked them why. One child said, "They could have helped him."

I asked, "How?"

Another child said, "They could build him a house."

I asked, "When?"

A child said, "Saturday."

I asked, "Why Saturday?"

They all thought and then a child answered, "That must be ant day off."

I asked, "What would the Grasshopper do?"

Some said, "He'd play the fiddle."

"What would the Ants do?"

"They could dance!"

To make the story fun I thought it needed at least 5 different sounds/gestures.

To start with the Grasshopper plays the fiddle. We had one sound/gesture.

I asked the children what sort of work ants do. We came up with a long list. In the end, we picked three actions: to dig, to pull, and to pile. I asked them what people do when they hear a fiddle and someone responded – they dance! We had five actions: to dig, to pull, to pile, to play the fiddle and to dance.

Offer this list to your class. Go through each action, one at a time; ask for volunteers who can show the class a particular action "from their middles on up." *NOTE: This is key as most young children immediately want to jump to their feet.* Once someone has shared a gesture, have everyone practice it.

For each action or gesture, have the children pick a complimentary sound or word. If you can't come up with a unique sound, use the verb. So, if you are doing digging, the children might make a shovel gesture and say, "Dig," each time they make the gesture.

Have everyone practice the combination of sound and movement. By the time you have completed this step, you will have five sound/actions.

Invite parents. Eat the children on the floor facing the parents. You sit at the side and read this script off of a clip board. No one will look at you. You are just the narrator.

# The Ants and The Grasshopper

## *A Script with Prompts*

**TEACHER:** Once upon a time, there were ants and do ants work hard. First they...

**CHILDREN:** Dig (gesture), Dig (gesture) Dig (Gesture).

**TEACHER:** Then they...

**CHILDREN:** Pull (gesture), Pull (Gesture) Pull (Gesture).

**TEACHER:** Then they...

**CHILDREN:** Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture)

**TEACHER:** But if that is all you ever do, life gets

**CHILDREN:** Boring.

**TEACHER:** One day they heard a strange sound

**CHILDREN:** (Children gesture as if playing a fiddle and hum a tune.)

**NOTE:** It can be any tune. I prefer an Irish ditty.

**TEACHER:** Over the hill came a grasshopper playing a fiddle.

**CHILDREN:** (Children gesture as if playing a fiddle and hum a tune.)

**TEACHER:** The ants listened. (They do.)

**TEACHER:** The grasshopper played some more.

**CHILDREN:** (Children gesture as if playing a fiddle and hum a tune.)

**TEACHER:** Suddenly, for the first time ever, the ants began to dance.

**CHILDREN:** (The ants “dance.” It can be a little thing, arms out, no sound, as they sit.)

**TEACHER:** When the ants went back to work, they had a lot of energy. First, they’d

**CHILDREN:** Dig (gesture), Dig (gesture) Dig (Gesture).

**TEACHER:** Then they’d...

**CHILDREN:** Pull (gesture), Pull (Gesture) Pull (Gesture).

**TEACHER:** Then they’d

**CHILDREN:** Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture)

**TEACHER:** Taking breaks to listen to the music.

**CHILDREN:** (The grasshopper plays.)

**TEACHER:** And they’d dance

**CHILDREN:** (They dance.)

**TEACHER:** Then it got cold. And the fiddle music sounded strange.

**CHILDREN:** (The children do shivering fiddle bits)

**TEACHER:** Well, they couldn’t dance to that. They asked...

**CHILDREN:** What’s wrong?

**TEACHER:** The grasshopper said,

**CHILD:** It’s getting cold.

**TEACHER:** An ant said...

**CHILD:** You should go home.

**TEACHER:** The Grasshopper said...

**CHILD:** I don’t have a house I never built one. I played the fiddle.

**TEACHER:** Some of the ants said...

**HALF OF THE CHILDREN:** Let him freeze.

**TEACHER: The others said...**

**THE OTHER HALF OF THE CHILDREN: But what about the dancing?**

**TEACHER: So, on Saturday morning,**

**CHILDREN: Ant Day Off!**

**TEACHER: They decided to build a house for the grasshopper. First, they'd...**

**CHILDREN: Dig (gesture), Dig (gesture) Dig (Gesture).**

**TEACHER: Then they'd...**

**CHILDREN: Pull (gesture), Pull (Gesture) Pull (Gesture).**

**TEACHER: Then they'd**

**CHILDREN: Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture), Pile (Gesture)**

**TEACHER: When the house was done it had two rooms, one room for the grasshopper and one room for their...**

**ALL: Dancing floor!!!!!!**

**TEACHER: Every night when they were done with their work, the grasshopper went to work. He played the fiddle.**

**CHILDREN: (They play the fiddle and hum the tune.)**

**TEACHER: And the ants would do some...**

**CHILDREN: Ant Dancing! (They do.)**

**TEACHER: And that's a new fable about ...**

**ALL: The Ants and the Grasshopper.**

This technique will work for any fable or folk tale. The rule of five is not a hard and fast rule. In my version of The Lion and the Mouse, I do seven sound/movements and plug each into the story in five places. Pretty cool!