

Being Brave

Today we have some scenarios to share with you. We'll be doing lots of thinking in question time, and we'll be hearing from other children, too.

Are you comfortable? Let's get started with a scenario about a girl called Nari.

Nari loves swimming, and the part she likes best is diving into the pool. Nari has been taking diving lessons, and now she can dive from the high diving board. None of the other kids can do that. They don't even want to try – because they know that, if you don't know how to do it properly, it can really hurt.



Right now, Nari is climbing up the ladder to the diving board, and, as she climbs, she can feel her heart beating faster. She thinks about how she will bounce a couple of times on the edge of the board and then, on the third bounce, hold her arms out in front, put her head down, and leave the board behind. She thinks about how good it will feel to fly through the air, and then to slip quietly under the water. She tries not to think about the times her dives have gone wrong and she has hit the water on her tummy - and how much it hurt.

Then she is at the top of the ladder. She is bouncing on the board and, in no time at all, she has disappeared under the water.



*Did Nari know just what to do when she dived off the board?
What makes you say that?*



Ajay: Yes, because the story said that she was thinking about it on the way up. Like -holding her arms out and putting her head down.

Max: And she knew what to do because she'd had lessons



So, she knew what to do... but do you think she was feeling scared?



Olive: Yes. It said that her heart was beating faster. That's what happens when you're scared.

Ajay: Yeah, and she was scared because she was thinking about the times that her dives have gone wrong – and it hurt her tummy.



Do you think it was brave of Nari to dive off the board? What makes you think that?



Max: Not really brave – because she has had lessons, so she knows what to do.

Ajay: But even though she'd had lessons, she knows that it can go wrong. And she still does it anyway... So, I do think it was brave.

Nari has a little brother. He is only two years old. When he comes along to the pool to watch Nari dive, he tries to get away from his mum so that he can climb up the ladder and dive like Nari.



Is he being brave?



Max: Yes, he was brave too – even braver than Nari because he probably hadn't had lessons to learn how to do it properly.

Olive: But he didn't know that it was dangerous... So he wasn't brave – it's only brave when you are doing something that you are scared of.

Let's think about another scenario. This one is about Zach.

When Zach was little, he had swimming lessons. The first thing the teacher asked him to do was to take a deep breath and put his head under the water. But Zach wouldn't do it – he was terrified at the thought of having his face under water. It didn't matter what the teacher said - he just wouldn't do it.

He had more swimming lessons, at school. But it was still the same. Zach refused to put his face in the water. So now Zach can't swim very well - nowhere near as well as the other kids. And it's all because he is too scared to put his face in the water.

He hates the school swimming carnival. Every year he pretends to be sick so that he doesn't have to swim. And he doesn't like going to the beach either. That's because all his friends muck around in the water, doing handstands and trying to catch the waves - but Zach can't do that because he still won't put his head under water.



Zach is too scared to put his face in the water. Does that matter?



Max: No not really...he could do other things at the beach, like play in the sand or around the rocks.

Olive: Yes it does matter, because Zach is missing out on playing with his friends.

Ajay: Yeh... and I think Zach would feel pretty bad about himself that he couldn't do what the other kids do.

Olive: If he doesn't try that, he probably won't try other stuff either.



Would it have been better for Zach if he had been able to make himself put his face in the water? Why or why not?



Max: Yes it would be better. Then he could learn to swim.

Olive: Yeh, like I said before...if he can force himself to do this, he will probably be brave enough to try other stuff that's hard for him too.

Okay... what if Zach decides he will do it – he will put his face under the water? And the very next time he goes to the pool, Zach does just that...he goes to the shallow end of the pool and, holding onto to the steps, he puts his face into the water. Then, he puts his whole head into the water...and then drops completely

below the water and sits on the bottom ... and then pops back up like a cork ... and there's a big smile on his face.



Do you think Zach was scared?



Max: Nah - cos it's not really scary. I always do that. It's easy.

Ajay: But Zach would probably be very scared. He's never been able to make himself do it before.



So it would be scary for Zach, but he made himself do it. Do you think it was brave of Zach to do it?



Max: No - it's only being brave if you do something that really is dangerous – not if you do something that is not even scary and everyone already does it.

Ajay: I disagree. It is being brave if you do something that is scary for you. Like my little cousin was really scared of our dog, and I kept saying 'Come on. Be brave. It's all right, she won't hurt you.' And so he got a bit closer, and a bit closer, and then one day ... he patted her. He was really scared and he still did it. I think that was being brave.

Okay, let's think about one final scenario. This one is about Olivia.

Olivia lives on a farm. She loves watching all the animals – not just the farm animals, but other animals too – the kangaroos, birds, and lizards.

Today Olivia is looking for lizards. As she peeks under some leaves, she hears a rustling sound and turns her head, expecting to see the lizards. Instead, she finds herself staring at a big brown snake.

She opens her mouth to scream. But then she remembers what her mum always tells her. 'Snakes will only bite you if you scare them'. So she clamps her mouth shut, and stays perfectly still. Then the snake slithers away, underneath the fence. And Olivia runs as fast as she can, up to the house.



How do you think Olivia felt when she saw the snake? What makes you think that?



Max: Scared – because she knows snakes are dangerous.



*Have you ever been really scared by something? What did you do? How did you react?
When Olivia saw the snake, what do you think she felt like doing?*



Max: Hiding

Olive: Running away

Ajay: Screaming



Why didn't she do that?



Ajay: Her mum told her that snakes will only bite you if you scare them

Olive: And if she suddenly jumped up and ran away, it would scare the snake and then he might bite her.



Do you think Olivia was brave? Can you say why?



Olive: Yes, because she was scared but she didn't run away ... because she knew the snake would bite her if she moved.

Today we were thinking about what counts as being brave.

Nari was diving off the high board, even though she knew it could be dangerous and she was nervous. Her little brother wanted to have a go too, but was he too little to understand that he could get hurt?

Zach put his head under the water. He was very scared, even though it wasn't really dangerous.

Olivia came across a snake and didn't run away even though she was scared.



What do you think counts as being brave?

And do you think it is important to be brave sometimes?

We heard some really interesting ideas today! Thank you for joining us. You might like to keep thinking about what counts as being brave, and whether it is sometimes better to make yourself do the thing you are scared of, as long as you are not putting yourself or others in danger. Have a talk to your family and friends about what they think, too.

Photo credit: [Matt Clancy](#)

Thank you to our wonderful actors Max, Olive and Ajay who helped us to hear different points of view. While sometimes these points of view might have reflected their own opinions, at other times they were asked to express an opposing view in order to help us think more deeply about the topic.