

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource Pack: **Astral**

First Level Learners | Created by Matthew Pound

Discovery Film Festival | Mon 2 – Wed 18 November 2026

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

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ONE CITY, MANY DISCOVERIES



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dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival

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Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals.

Each resource aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy/moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from:

<https://www.dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival-resources/>

Astral

Dir: Judith Ordonneau

Switzerland, 2025 / 5m

Astral

Synopsis:

Esther is observing the stars through a telescope. Next to her, a friendly fish creature is trying to get her attention but in vain. But what do these stars have that is so interesting? Is she missing the beauty beneath the stars?

Teacher's notes:

Age and stage recommendations, including CfE objectives:

The film is suitable for ages 6 and above. This pack is aimed at First Level learners. This film is recommended for P3/4. The following CfE Experiences and Outcomes are covered in this pack:

Literacy and English: **LIT 1-02a, LIT 1-07a, LIT 1-09a, LIT 1-16a, LIT 1-26a**

Art and Design: **EXA 1-02a, EXA 1-03a**

Sciences: **SCN 1-01b, SCN 1-06a**

Technologies: **TCH 1-03b**

Teacher quote:

This a fabulous short movie that really tries to help you understand the wonder of the ocean and of our own planet. It is very playful and has good scope for deeper conversations around environmentalism. The film uses vibrant colours and clear messaging the younger viewers should pick up on well. I would consider pushing the discussion further and get pupils to consider the story again as if the fish was a person and how the meaning of the story might shift as a result.





Before watching the film:

Activity 1: **Poster Analysis – Literacy**

Using the poster and image attached **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**, ask pupils to figure out what the short film will be about. Use the questions below as a guiding point for discussions:

1. What does the word Astral mean? How does it relate to what you see?
 2. Who do you think is the main character and what do you think they want?
 3. Look at what the fish is holding and doing, how do you think it relates to the title?
 4. Based on the facial expressions of the fish and Esther how do you think they feel about each other in this interaction?
 5. What kind of fish do you think the fish is? Why does he have arms and legs?
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Activity 2: **Film Analysis – Literacy**

Now that you have seen the movie try and see if you can unpick the messages and themes of the movie. Use the questions below as a part of a listening and talking exercise or as more challenging questions requiring a written response.

Questions:

1. Both Esther and the fish show wonder, what artistic choice does the filmmaker use to show this wonder?
2. The fish tries multiple times to impress Esther. What does he do to try and impress her?
3. The filmmaker transitions from a yellow star in the sky to a starfish. What do you think they are trying to imply with this?
4. How do you think Esther and the fish feel after she hits the starfish away? Why do you think this?
5. Why does Esther change her mind about exploring the ocean? Should she have considered changing her mind earlier?
6. Using **Appendix 3** and **Appendix 4** as a reminder what do you think Esther realises about the wonder in the ocean over the sky.
7. Using **Appendix 5** as a hint, what do you think the filmmakers are trying to imply about the fish? Why do you think he has arms and legs unlike all the other fish?



Activity 3: **Sea art – Expressive Arts**

Using **Appendix 6** as a stimulus make your own vibrant ocean scene using oil pastels. Start by creating the main ocean layer. Explain that it is more than just blue and contains:

- Dark blues
- Purples
- Black shadows
- Bright glowing creatures

Next add some detail to the floor of the ocean. Include things like:

- Seaweed
- Coral
- Rocks
- Bubbles

Finally add some sea creatures and Esther herself if you can. Pick some from the list below:

- Fish
- Jellyfish
- Turtle
- Octopus
- Whale
- Shark
- Starfish
- Squid
- Stingray

Make them different sizes and bright colours to add depth to the picture.

A horizontal row of 25 solid orange dots.

- What's it called?
- What does it look like?
- Where does it live? E.g. near the beach, coral reef, deep ocean
- What does it eat?
- How big does it grow?
- How long does it live for?
- What do you call a group of these animals? E.G. a shoal

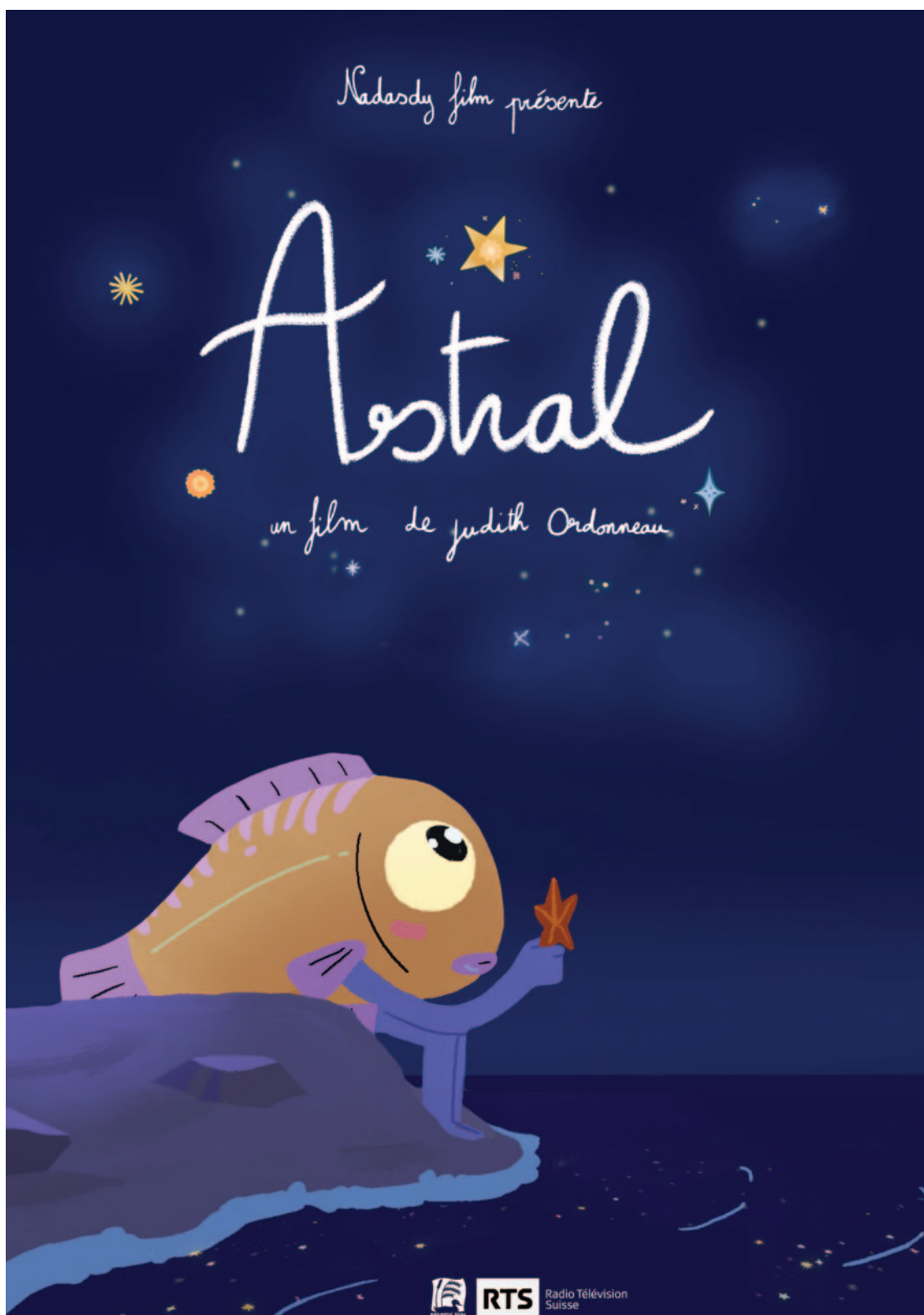
Explain all that you have learned to Esther and persuade her how wonderful the sea creatures are.

While the ocean is wonderful the stars above have splendour too. They have also been very useful as a way of navigating sailors and as a form of storytelling. Groups of stars that make a picture are called constellations. These constellations usually have a story to go with them

Show the class pictures of famous constellations such as Orion's belt and ask them to try and come up with their own.

- Using black card draw a random assortment of stars with white crayon.
- Ask pupils to connect the dots in a way that makes a shape. Turning the paper round can help them spot different shapes.
- Ask pupils to come up with a story that goes with their shape and name their new constellation.

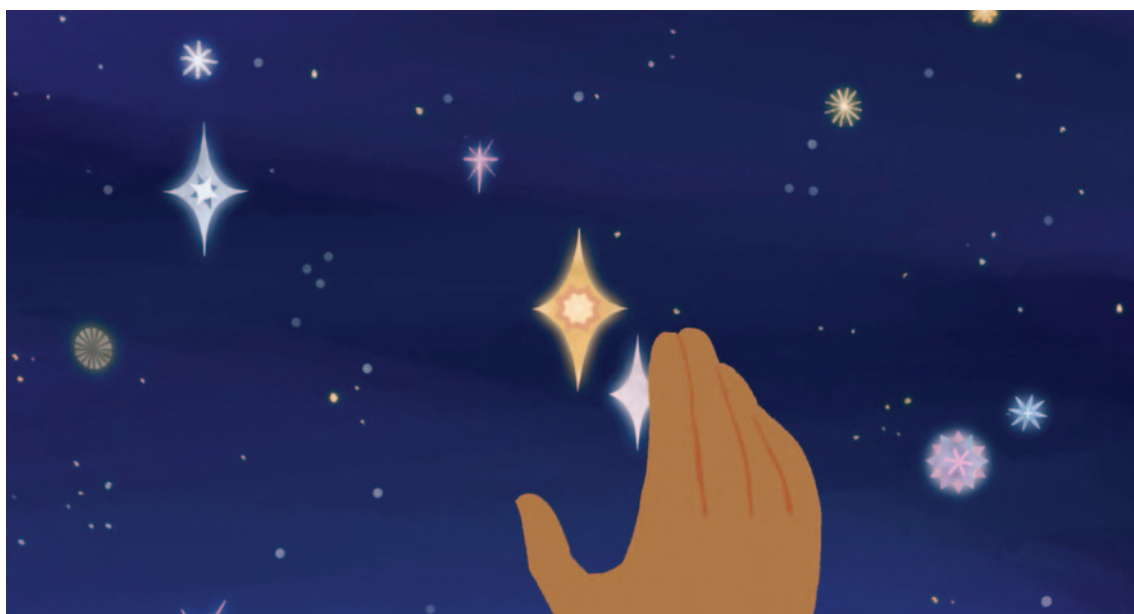
Appendix 1: Poster



Appendix 2:



Appendix 3:





Appendix 4:



Appendix 5:



Appendix 6:





Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate. Please do send us any film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing olivia.knight@dca.org.uk

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included. If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail olivia.knight@dca.org.uk