

HERE COMES THE CAT!

Here Comes the Cat!

by Frank Asch and Vladimir Vagin (Scholastic)
Themes: Friendship/Prejudice/Conflict Resolution
Grade Level: PreK-4
Length: 10 minutes, animated

Summary

HERE COMES THE CAT!, the video is mostly true to the book, Here Comes The Cat! by Valdimir Vagin and Frank Asch. This story is unusual for many reasons, among them is the fact that this was the first collaborative picture book effort between a Russian and an American artist.

In this film, a mouse observes the large, overbearing shadow of a cat approaching the mouse community. The mouse travels the countryside, warning the mice "Here comes the cat!". With each warning, mice scurry away, fleeing from what they fear will be a monstrous cat.

The end of the film finds the cat all the mice feared, approaching the community and pulling a wagon behind him. But on the wagon is loaded a large piece of cheese. The delighted mice enjoy the cheese, and care for the cat who delivered it to them. The cat leaves pulling the wagon behind him, and the happy, full-tummied mice wave goodbye. On the wagon is a big can of milk, a gift to the cat from the grateful mice.

Objectives

- Children will learn about prejudice and how it affects behavior.
- Children will have a greater understanding of the meaning of friendship
- Children will learn about the different ways friends care for one another

Before Viewing Activities

Have children talk about the things that frighten them. Ask:

What do you do when you feel frightened? What helps you to feel less scared? How do other people help you when you feel frightened?

Explain to children that in the video they are about to see, HERE COMES THE CAT!, a mouse is very frightened, in fact, that he travels around the countryside warning the other mice about approaching danger. As children view the video, have them pay close attention to the different things the mice in the community do when they think they are in danger.

Share the book, Here Comes The Cat! with children. Ask: How did the mouse know that the cat was coming in the beginning of the story? What was the first mouse warned about the cat doing? What happened to the hot air balloon when the mouse warned the other mice at the amusement park? Who did the mouse meet under the sea? What did the mouse do with the fish? What happened when the mouse arrived in the city? How did the mouse feel when they first saw the shadow of the cat approaching? How did they feel when they discovered that the cat was bringing cheese for them? What did the mice do to care for the cat? What did you notice about the words in the book?

After Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the fear the mouse felt when it first saw the shadow of the cat. Ask: Why do you think the mouse was afraid? What do you think might have happened if the mouse hadn't warned the other mice about the cat? What do you think the mouse will do the next time it sees the cat's shadow?

Encourage children to try and recall things they may have once feared but are no longer afraid of. Ask: Why are you no longer afraid of these things? What would you tell your friends to do if they feel afraid of something? Do you think the mouse in the film should have warned his friends right away when he saw the shadow, or should the mouse have waited? Why?

Discuss the different ways the cat and mice took care of one another at the end of the story. Ask children: If you were the cat, what other things could you do for your mouse friends? If you were the mice, what other things could you do to take care for your cat friend?

Have children write, or dictate stories to you, about the ways they care for their friends. Give children the opportunity to share their stories with others in the group. Later, have a "caring day" at school. Encourage children to think throughout the day about ways they can show their caring for their classmates.

Divide children into small groups and have each group participate in a brief dramatization. Give each group a situation to dramatize, such as the following: "You are friends sleeping outdoors in a tent. You see a scary shadow on the tent wall. You discover that the shadow is only that of a little puppy." As children in the remaining groups watch the dramatizations, have them compare the ways the children behave when they are frightened and when they are comfortable. As children perform the dramatizations, help them discover the importance of thinking before acting, of basing their behaviors on what is at hand rather than on preconceived notions of what something must be.

Other book based videos and films about prejudice are available from Weston Woods. These include:

CROW BOY by Taro Yashima
FOURTEEN RATS AND A RAT-CATCHER by James Cressy and illustrated by Tamasin Cole
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MOON MAN by Tomi Ungerer

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