

THE GYM TEACHER FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

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by Mike Thaler, illustrated by Jared Lee

Themes: School, Fears, Humor, Gym

Grade Level: K-2; Ages: 5-7

Running Time: 7 minutes

SUMMARY

In another hilarious story from the Black Lagoon, the school is getting a new gym teacher. Mr. Green is rumored to be big and mean. In fact, most kids have never seen him, but they have heard the tales of his enormous body covered in green hair. Moreover, they are terrified of his monstrous curriculum, which includes: laps around the school and world, DODGE ball against his truck, and tag with super glue. What kid wouldn't be terrified of this gym class? As the students don their tennis shoes and gym shorts, their fear of *The Gym Teacher from the Black Lagoon* looms large.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will identify reasons for physical fitness and ways to stay fit.
- Students will make text-to-self connections between the movie and their own lives.
- Students will discuss rumors and their effects.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss physical fitness with students. Guiding questions:

- How do we keep our bodies healthy?
- What kinds of foods are good for our bodies? What kinds of foods aren't good?
- How do we keep our muscles, heart, and lungs strong?
- What kinds of activities do you like to do?
- What kinds of sports do you play?
- Why is it important to keep our bodies healthy?
- What kinds of things do we do at school to keep our bodies fit?

Record students' answers on chart paper. Revisit their answers after viewing the movie.

Lead a discussion about rumors with the students. First, define a rumor as: a statement that people make about another person, place, or thing that is usually not founded in facts and often untrue. Tell students that one clue that something is a rumor is if it seems unbelievable. Next,

have students think of examples of rumors. Discuss with students why rumors are usually negative and have negative effects.

Guiding questions:

- If you heard a bad rumor about someone, how would it make you treat that person?
- If you heard a bad rumor about a place, would you go there?
- How can rumors hurt people?
- What happens when rumors spread?

After the discussion, brainstorm ways to deal with and stop rumors. Develop a class plan or set of protocols for discouraging rumors if they arise. Tell the students that they are going to watch a movie about rumors that circulate through a school about a new gym teacher. Follow up after the movie with a discussion about how the rumors in the movie made the boy feel about the gym teacher and gym class.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Follow up on the rumors discussion from the Before Viewing Activity. Discuss with students how the rumors circulating about the gym teacher ended up not to be true. Remind students that rumors often sound unbelievable. Generate a list of some of the unbelievable rumors about the gym teacher. Compare and contrast the boy in the movie's idea of a gym teacher before he went to gym class and after. Use a T-chart to organize the students' ideas. Connect this with experiences that students have had in their own lives when they were scared or nervous about something before they went there. Help students think of ideas by giving them cloze sentences to fill in: "Before I went to the (dentist, haunted house, school, school bus...) I felt _____. After I came out, I knew that the _____ was really _____."

Guide students to make text-to-self connections with the movie.

Guiding questions:

- Is there any teacher in your school that you were afraid of before you met him/her?
- Have you ever had a different opinion of a place after visiting than before you went? (Connected with Activity 1)
- Have you ever heard a rumor about someone or something that turned out not to be true? Did you believe the rumor initially?
- What do you think of your gym class?

Revisit the list that students generated about physical fitness. Make a T-chart. Label one side, "Activities that Keep Us Healthy" and the other side, "Food that Keeps Us Healthy". Have the students sort their ideas from the Before Viewing discussion into the T-chart. Then ask students to add ideas to the chart. Make a goal as a class to eat at least 2 of the foods on the list per day and do at least one of the activities.

Arrange for the school gym teacher to visit the class to talk about his or her career. Ask him or her to tell the students what educational and personal path he or she took to be a gym teacher. Have the gym teacher share what is special about his or her job, and what his/her favorite part of the job is. Leave time for students to ask questions.

Have a "Gym/PE All Day" field day. Emphasizing the physical activities that students listed, arrange a day when students can participate in many of the activities in the movie and in their own gym classes at school.

Ideas are:

- Relay races
- Rope climbing
- Dodge ball
- Basketball/Around the World
- Flexibility Stations (touch toes, splits, arm stretches)
- Pull-up/push-up contests
- Balance stations (balance beam, one-legged challenges)

Be sure to provide frequent water breaks and healthy snacks. At the end of the day, have students reflect by drawing a picture of his/her favorite activity from the day. Older students can write 2-3 sentences explaining why they liked the activity.

OTHER STORIES ABOUT SCHOOL AND SPORTS FROM WESTON WOODS:

Crazy Hair Day, by Barney Saltzberg

How Do Dinosaurs Go to School?, by Jane Yolen, ill. by Mark Teague

The Librarian from the Black Lagoon, by Mike Thaler, ill. by Jared Lee

Miss Nelson Has a Field Day, by Harry Allard, ill. by James Marshall

Miss Nelson is Back, by Harry Allard, ill. by James Marshall

Miss Nelson is Missing!, by Harry Allard, ill. by James Marshall

The Teacher from the Black Lagoon, by Mike Thaler, ill. by Jared Lee