

THE CASE OF THE COSMIC COMIC

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by Robert McCloskey

Themes: Heroes/Fantasy vs. Reality

Grade Level: 1-5

Running Time: 20 minutes, live action

SUMMARY

This is the story of three boys, Homer and Freddy, and Freddy's little brother Louis, who actually meet a comic book hero.

The three boys take a horse and buggy to the movie theater to see a movie about the adventures of a comic book hero called the "Super Duper." The "Super Duper" is also making a live appearance at the theater. After seeing the movie and meeting the "Super Duper", Freddy, Homer and Louis head home. The "Super Duper" follows behind in his fancy car. Suddenly, the comic book hero's car goes off the road and into a ditch. The boys use the horse to pull the "Super Duper's" car out and take the hero to Homer's father's service station.

The story ends with the boys discovering that the hero is, in fact, just an ordinary person like everyone else.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the difference between fiction and non-fiction.
- Children will investigate the traits of a true "hero" or "heroine".
- Children will enjoy a live-action adventure.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the story of THE CASE OF THE COSMIC COMIC with children. Then ask:

- What is a hero?
- In what ways were Homer, Freddy and little Louis the real heroes of the story?
Talk about super heroes children are familiar with through television, magazines, comic books and movies. Ask:
 - Who is your favorite super hero?
 - What special things can this person (animal) do?
 - What other things do you admire about this character?

Have children draw pictures of their favorite super heroes. Later, have children list (below the drawings) the most important things someone would need to know about this character. Display the drawings on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Have children consider the kind of super hero they would wish to be. Ask:

- What special powers would you have?
- How would you help people?
- What special tools or devices would you use?
- What kind of clothing would you wear?

Have children design logos to identify themselves as super heroes.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the parts of the story that were fiction and the parts that were non-fiction. Ask:

- Which parts did you enjoy most, the fictitious parts or the true-to-life parts? Why?
- What things did the super hero do that might really happen?
- What things did he do that could never really be done?
- Did Freddy, Homer and Louis seem like real

people? Why? Why not?

- Which fiction stories are among your favorites? Name some non-fiction stories you have enjoyed.

Have children think of someone that they consider to be special, or a hero/heroine of sorts. Then help children construct short stories about these people.

Ask children to be sure to include in their stories the reasons they consider these people to be so special, and the kinds of things these people have said or done that might be special or unique.

Tell children to think of words that might be used to describe a special kind of person. As children think about their choices, encourage them to think about traits that they think are important in others (you might suggest that children consider qualities such as kindness, generosity, gentleness, thoughtfulness, etc., as important character traits.) Print this list of words as children mention them. Then have children create simple poetry. Suggest that children incorporate some of the words from the lists in their poems.

Other videos about heroes/heroines available from Weston Woods include:

Brave Irene by William Steig

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