

THE MAN WHO WALKED BETWEEN THE TOWERS

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Ages: 5-10

Themes: Memory, Adventure, Daring, Problem-Solving, September 11

Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

An unusual and memorable part of the history of the World Trade Center is captured in this exhilarating movie about a man who walked on a tightrope between the two towers. The story of Philippe Petit's daring feat is brought to life in scenes with dramatic perspective. Children will be entranced by this young man's creativity, sense of adventure, and grace. The poetic text conveys the drama and majesty of Petit's act and of the towers themselves. This movie serves as a picturesque reminder of the Twin Towers and the indelible mark that they left in the history of our country.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will investigate the history of the World Trade Center.
- Students will use comprehension strategies to identify and discuss the themes of the story.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Elicit background knowledge by brainstorming a class list of what students know about the World Trade Center. Record this list on chart paper. Understand that most young children will only be familiar with the World Trade Center because of September 11. Be prepared to give a brief historical background of September 11 without dominating the conversation with it. Some suggested guiding questions are:

- Where was the World Trade Center?
- What is another name for the World Trade Center? (Twin Towers)
- What was the World Trade Center used for?
- What did the World Trade Center look like?

After creating this list, introduce the movie by telling students that the World Trade Center has had a lot of unusual history and that the movie that they're about to see is one such story.

Show students photographs of the World Trade Center as it was being constructed in the 1970's and after it was completed. Have the students make illustrations that show how they imagine that the world would look from the top of one of the towers. Have them write one sentence (or write one for them depending on level) about how they would feel atop one of the towers.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use comprehension strategies to help students understand the themes of the movie. Have students write or discuss one example of how they can compare the movie to an experience in their own lives (text-to-self), something that has happened in the world (text-to-world), or something that they have seen or read about in another book or movie (text-to-text). Students may come back to the theme of September 11 during this exercise. This is a good time to delve into a further discussion of this event. Allow students to discuss and process feelings about September 11 that may have been elicited by the movie.

Do further research into the unusual historical facts about the World Trade Center. Some guiding questions are:

- What other feats or acts of daring were attempted on the towers?
- How much did the towers sway in the wind?
- How long did it take to construct the towers?

Students can work in small groups to do this research on the internet. Use a children's search engine like "Yahooligans" and guide students through the research process. Students should create a small presentation of what they discovered to share with the class.

Alternatively, have students create a pictorial history of the World Trade Center, from its construction to its fall. They should use the details from their research to show unusual or little known parts of this history.

Compare and contrast Petit's feat with the feats of super heroes. Use a Venn Diagram to do this comparison. Some guiding questions are:

- How did Petit accomplish something that seems almost impossible?
- What are things that super heroes do that ordinary people can't do?
- Have you ever seen anything in the circus or on the street that people were doing that seems very daring or impossible?
- What kind of training do you think you would need to do these types of tricks?

Have the class design and perform a circus. Ideas would include:

- Juggling
- A human pyramid
- A low tightrope
- Acrobatics
- Magic tricks

Invite students from other classes and parents to the performance.

Other videos about adventure, daring and bravery available from Weston Woods are:

ABEL'S ISLAND, by William Steig

BRAVE IRENE, by William Steig

BURT DOW: DEEP WATER MAN,

by Robert McCloskey

CANNONBALL, based on the book **CANNONBALL SIMP** by John Burningham

THE CLOWN OF GOD, by Tomie dePaola

THE COW WHO FELL IN THE CANAL,

by Phyllis Krasilovsky

JOHN HENRY, by Jerry Pinkney, ill. by Julius Lester

MIRETTE ON THE HIGH WIRE,

by Emily Arnold McCully

RIKKI-TIKKI-TAVI, by Rudyard Kipling,

ill. by Jerry Pinkney

SWAMP ANGEL, by Anne Isaacs,

ill. by Paul O. Zelinsky