

PICNIC

Picnic

by Emily Arnold McCully (HarperCollins)

Themes: Feelings/Families

Grade Level: PreK-3

Running Time: 13 minutes, animated

Summary

Picnic is a wordless story about a family of mice out for a picnicking day in the country. During the ride to the picnic area, the smallest mouse falls off the back of the truck, unbeknownst to the rest of the family. The sad little mouse finds flower blossoms to eat and fills himself up with them in an unfamiliar surrounding. Meanwhile, the mouse family is having a wonderful time at the picnic. When it is discovered that the small mouse is missing, the family rushes back to the truck and searches for her. The end of the story finds the little mouse happily reunited with her family, but hardly ready to enjoy a picnic lunch!

Objectives

- Children will explore family outings
- Children will investigate the ways family members care for and feel about one another
- Children will enjoy an emotion-filled story told without words

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Picnic with children.

Then ask:

If you went along with the mouse family on their outing, what would you enjoy most about the day?

Talk with the children about outings they may have enjoyed with their families. Emphasize to children that if they have not visited other places with their families, a day or evening at home can be a wonderful "outing" as well. Ask: What did you and your family members do on this special day? What other kinds of things made the day seem special to you? How did you feel about your family members during your "outing?" How did you feel at the end of the day?

Have a picnic on your classroom floor, or outside on a nice day. Spread out a large blanket and supply a basket filled with napkins, paper plates, plastic utensils, etc. Children can work together in the classroom to prepare special lunch or snack treats for their classroom picnic. Here are some recipes you might want to try:

Peanut Butter Roll-Ups

Spread peanut butter, honey, and raisins on slices of bread and enjoy.

Grapenut Salad

Combine grapenut cereal, cottage cheese, raisins, cinnamon, and honey. Mix and eat.

Muffin Pizzas

Spread English muffins with tomato sauce. Top with slices of mozzarella cheese and bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes.

After Viewing Activities

Have children imagine what a picnic among a family

of elephants might be like. Encourage children to think about the kinds of games the elephants might play, the kinds of picnic food they would enjoy, the kinds of water play they might engage in. Then have children create stories about "The Elephants' Picnic." Give children the opportunity to accompany their stories with illustrations. Display children's creations on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Talk with children about the background music. Replay a portion and turn off the sound. Ask: Does the story seem different without the music? If you think that it does seem different, in what way? What kinds of music did you hear that told you that the little mouse was sad? What kind of music did you hear when the mouse family was excited? happy? Later, play a variety of musical pieces for children. As children listen, encourage them to describe the ways each selection makes them feel.

Give children practice in following a sequence of events and telling a story in pictures. Supply children with crayons and five sheets of manila construction paper taped together horizontally to form one long sheet. Ask children to draw a series of pictures that will tell a story. Later, have children share their wordless stories with one another.

Other book based films and videos about family outings are available from Weston Woods. They include:

BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL by Robert McCloskey
NOT SO FAST, SONGOLOLO by Niki Daly
OWL MOON by Jane Yolen and illustrated by John Schoenherr

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