

THE AMAZING BONE

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By William Steig (Farrar)

Themes: Friendship/Magic/ Nature

Grade Level: K-3

Running Time: 11 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

THE AMAZING BONE is about a female pig named Pearl who dawdles on her way home from school in order to appreciate the beauty of the day. When she stops to sit by a tree in the forest, a bone speaks to her from its place by a rock near the tree. The bone explains that it once belonged to a witch but it was unhappy and didn't want to belong to her any longer. Pearl and the bone become friends, and Pearl decides to take the bone home to meet her parents. As they move along towards home, a mean fox meets them. The fox forces Pearl, along with the bone, to his home, where he plans to devour them both. The end of the story finds the bone reciting a magic chant that turns the fox into a mouse and saves the day for Pearl. Finally, Pearl takes the bone home, where they both spend happy days and nights with Pearl's parents.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore friendships.
- Children will talk about magic and fantasy.
- Children will learn to appreciate the natural environment.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE AMAZING BONE with children. Then say:

It might be fun to meet a talking bone some day-if there was such a thing. Would you stop to talk

to it? Why or why not?

Talk about all of the imaginary situations in this story starting with the talking bone, a talking pig, a clever talking fox, etc. Imagining is a way of expressing oneself in writing, drawing, playing, and music. Give children a choice to imagine something in any media. (Suggestions: a poem about a singing a song about the snow, a picture of an imaginary friend.)

Ask children to describe their special friends. Encourage them to share the reasons why these friends are special to them and the things they enjoy doing together. Discuss with children magicians they may have seen performing. Ask:

- What kinds of tricks did the magician do?
- What would you have liked to see him/her do?
- What kinds of magic tricks can you do?

Talk with children about the spring season. Ask:

- What do you like to do outdoors when the weather is warm and sunny?
- How does it feel to be outdoors in this weather?
- What kinds of things do you notice growing outdoors?
- What are your favorite kinds of flowers?
- Why did Pearl dawdle in the story?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Cut out a bone from white construction paper. Have children imagine that the bone could talk. Ask:

- What would you want the bone to say?
- What kinds of things would you like to discuss with the bone?
- Where would you take the bone?
- How could the bone be helpful to you?

Later, have children write stories called "The day I met a talking bone." Display the stories, along with the construction paper bone, on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Have children invent an imaginary friend and compose a short dialogue about themselves and their friends. Two children can take part in the dramatic enactment.

Take a walk outdoors and help children observe the natural environment. You might want to collect rocks, flowers, plants, etc., to bring back to the classroom for further study. As you walk, help children appreciate their environment by asking questions such as:

- How does the sunlight on the rock make the rock look different?
- How many colors can you see in this flower?
- How do the blades of grass feel against your chin?
- How does it feel to run your hand lightly over a dandelion?

Also ask:

- How did the music affect the mood of the story?

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