THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK

A Cautionary Tale
by Margaret Mahy, ill. by Jonathan Allen (Dial)
Themes: Greed, Problem-Solving Techniques, Sharks
Grade Level: K – 5
Running time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY
THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK – A CAUTIONARY TALE is about a boy named Norvin, who would make a fine actor, but, in fact, has a very plain face that looks much like a shark. Norvin spends his days swimming in the crowded cove, moving through the water like a silver arrow, and bumping into other swimmers. One day Norvin decides that he would like to have the cove to himself. He ties a fin onto his back and moves through the water wearing his best shark look to frighten the other swimmers. Eventually, Norvin frightens everyone out of the water and swims to his heart’s content. As the story unfolds, Norvin swims out of sight and eventually the swimmers return to the water. Again, Norvin, who does not like sharing the water, returns with the fin, and scares everyone away. This plan works quite well for Norvin until one day, a female shark appears and threatens to devour Norvin if he refuses to marry her. A frightened Norvin shoots through the water like a silver arrow and onto the beach. At last, Norvin’s prank is revealed to the other swimmers.

The end of the story finds the swimmers returning to the water, with a shark net protecting them from the real shark beyond. Norvin decides to stay on the beach, having come a bit too close to being devoured by a shark in love.

OBJECTIVES
• Children will learn about greed
• Children will investigate problem-solving techniques
• Children will study sharks

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES
Share the book THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK – A CAUTIONARY TALE with children. Then ask:
• How did you feel about Norvin in the story?

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