

THE HAPPY OWLS

The Happy Owls

by Celestino Piatti (Atheneum)

Themes: Friendship/Seasons

Level: Grades K - 2

Length: 7 minutes, animated

Summary

Central to this story are two owls who live together in peace and harmony. Nearby, a farm with barnyard fowl is filled with the sounds of quarreling and fighting. They do nothing but eat, drink, and argue, day in and day out.

One day, the fowl send a peacock to ask the owls how it is that they live together in such peace and harmony. The owls explain that with each new season, they are taken with the simple pleasures nature offers. When the peacock returns and explains this to the fowl, they find it to be nonsense. The fowl continue living just as they had before, as do the owls in perfect bliss.

This story offers children a glimpse into the unlimited obvious and not so obvious pleasures that nature offers us with the coming of each season, and how wonderful it is to be satisfied with your life.

Objectives

- Children will learn about seasons and seasonal changes
- Children will learn about cooperation and friendship
- Children will learn about the importance of using all their senses in order to learn about the world

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *The Happy Owls* with children. Talk with children about different signs of summer, winter, spring, and fall. Ask: What do you see outdoors in summer? winter? spring? fall? What is the weather like during each season? What kinds of clothing do you wear during each season?

Discuss with children different kinds of birds they are familiar with. Emphasize that chickens, peacocks, ducks, roosters are birds, as well as those birds they may have seen flying above their own backyards. Talk about the physical characteristics all of the birds have in common, their habitats, behaviors, homes, etc.

After Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the reasons the barnyard fowl did not get along. Ask: Why do you think the birds quarreled all day? What could they do to help themselves get along better? What would you do if you were one of the birds on the farm? Then talk with children about their own friendships and the things they do when a problem arises between themselves and their friends. Remind children of the reasons the two owls got along so well. Ask: Would taking a walk on a beautiful day with your friend, and noticing all the wonderful things around you help you and your friend enjoy one another? Why?

Bring to the classroom items representative of each season. You might bring in a flower to represent

spring, a plastic snowman for winter, a large, yellow construction paper sun for summer, and a leaf for fall. Ask children: What is your favorite season? What do you do during this time of year? Have children create stories entitled "My Favorite Season." Display the objects you brought to the classroom along the top of a bulletin board. Arrange children's stories on the bulletin board under the appropriate objects.

Take a walk outdoors with children. Have children attend to the details of the natural environment as you look up, down, and all around. Help children appreciate whatever season you happen to be experiencing. When you return to the classroom, encourage children to use classroom reference books, or titles from your school library, to further explore those things they saw on your outdoor walk.

Other book based films and videos about the seasons are available from Weston Woods. These include: *THE CATERPILLAR AND THE POLLIWOG* by Jack Kent
HOT HIPPO written by Mwenye Hadithi and illustrated by Adrienne Kennaway
OWL MOON written by Jane Yolen and illustrated by John Schoenherr
THE SELFISH GIANT written by Oscar Wilde and illustrated by Gertraud and Walter Reiner
THE SNOWY DAY by Ezra Jack Keats
TIME OF WONDER by Robert McCloskey

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