

DOCTOR DE SOTO

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By William Steig (Farrar, Straus)

Themes: Dentists, Humor, Problem-Solving

Grade Level : K - 4

Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

A hungry fox with a toothache begs a mouse dentist to relieve his pain in this modern-day fable. The dentist and his wife come up with a plan to protect themselves from the sly fox.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the responsibilities of a dentist.
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques.
- Children will appreciate the value of creative thinking.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *DOCTOR DE SOTO* with children. Then ask:

- How does the fox feel at the end of the story?
- How do Doctor De Soto and his wife feel?
- Does the bigger animal do better in this story? Why? Why not?

Talk with children about their own visits to the dentist. Ask:

- Why do you go to the dentist?
- What does the dentist do for you?
- How do you feel when the dentist checks your teeth?
- What do you like most/least about going to the dentist?
- Would you like to do the kind of work a dentist does? Why? Why not?

Discuss with children some of the most interesting problems they have experienced. After describing their problems ask:

- How did this problem make you feel?
- How did you solve your problem?
- Who helped you solve your problem?
- How did you feel when the problem was finally solved?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the way Doctor De Soto and his wife solved their problem with the fox. Then ask:

- What other things could Doctor De Soto have done to solve his problem?

Have children draw pictures to show alternative ways that could have helped Doctor De Soto overcome his fear of the fox.

Remind children of the different kinds of seating Doctor De Soto provided for his animal patients of different sizes. Then ask:

- What kind of seat might Doctor De Soto make for an elephant? a giraffe? a flea? a spider? a rhinoceros?

Encourage children to be as creative as possible with their responses. Later you might want to have children illustrate their responses and display them on a bulletin board under the heading: Dental Care of the Large and Small!

DOCTOR DE SOTO is an example of a fable, a story that illustrates a theme using animals that speak and act like human beings. In this case, the theme is that smaller animals can be just as clever as larger animals. Have children write their own simple fables. One example is: One good turn deserves another.

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