

AMAZING GRACE

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By Mary Hoffman, illustrated by Caroline Binch (Dial)

Themes: African-Americans, Self-Esteem, Fantasy

Grade Level : K - 3

Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

Even though her classmates discourage Grace from trying out for Peter Pan in the school play because she is black and a girl, Grace wins the part and proves that she can be anything she wants to be.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the world of stories and fairy tales.
- Children will learn about the importance of hard work and self-esteem.
- Children will explore aspects of African-American culture.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, *AMAZING GRACE*, with children. Then ask:

- What kinds of props (hats, boxes, chairs) did Grace use when she played make-believe?
- What things could Grace have used if she wanted to pretend that she was a ghost? a witch? a sea captain?
- How did Grace's mother and grandmother help her?
- What made Grace decide that she could be Peter Pan?

Talk with children about their favorite stories and fairy tales. Have children choose one story/fairy tale to dramatize. Encourage children to devise their own props from classroom materials or objects gathered from their home. You might want to invite other classrooms or parents to the "performance." Try this activity to help children explore prejudice and stereotyping. Have children identify different kinds of careers and discuss the responsibilities of the people involved in those kinds of work. Emphasize that most jobs can be performed by both men and women. Throughout this discussion, help children see that gender or race is not what determines people's capabilities.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the kinds of things they feel they are particularly good at —sports, art, reading, etc. Then give each child an opportunity to share his or her special abilities, whether through a demonstration or a verbal presentation, with the other classmates. Later, emphasize to children that each one of them is unique and capable of many things that are special and meaningful. Have children consider what they might have said to the students in Grace's class who told her she could not be Peter. Ask:

- How do you think Grace felt when her friends said that she could not be Peter Pan?
- How would you have felt?
- What might Grace have said to her friends instead of feeling sad?

Remind children of the theater Grace visited with her grandmother. Also help children recall the poster of the new Juliet outside of the theater. Ask children to think about what a poster advertising Peter Pan might look like. Have children draw their own Peter Pan posters on large sheets of paper and share them with the group.

Other programs about African-American culture available from Weston Woods:

- DUKE ELLINGTON: THE PIANO PRINCE AND HIS ORCHESTRA by Andrea Davis Pinkney, ill. by Brian Pinkney
- ELLA FITZGERALD: THE TALE OF A VOCAL VIRTUOSA by Andrea Davis Pinkney, ill. by Brian Pinkney
- Flossie and the Fox by Patricia McKissack, ill. by Rachel Isadora
- John Henry by Julius Lester, ill. by Jerry Pinkney
- SEVEN CANDLES FOR KWANZAA by Andrea Davis Pinkney, ill. by Brian Pinkney

Other programs about self-esteem available from Weston Woods:

- THE CATERPILLAR AND THE POLLIWOG by Jack Kent
- CHRYSANTHEMUM by Kevin Henkes
- THE DOT by Peter H. Reynolds
- ISH by Peter H. Reynolds
- LEO THE LATE BLOOMER by Robert Kraus, ill. by Jose Aruego
- THE MOST WONDERFUL EGG IN THE WORLD by Helme Heine
- THE UGLY DUCKLING adapted and ill. by Jerry Pinkney
- THE WIZARD by Jack Kent

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