

# OWL MOON

## OWL MOON

By Jane Yolen, ill. by John Schoenherr (Philomel)

Themes: Families, Nature

Grade Level: K - 3

Running Time: 8 minutes, iconographic

## SUMMARY

This is a story of a little girl and her father, who go owling together on a moon-lit winter night. As the father and daughter walk through the woods on their search for the great horned owl, the daughter discovers many things about how a winter night feels, how much is said in silence, how much can be learned from listening and watching. At the end of the story, the father and daughter meet up with the owl they were in search of. The owl stares at the father and daughter. The father and daughter stare back at the owl. Then, the owl flies away and the father and the daughter head for home. The magic of winter, of the love between a parent and child, and the growth of a little girl who sees the world as a magical, wondrous place is explored in this simple yet telling story.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore relationships
- Children will investigate the many things they can learn through the use of each of their five senses.
- Children will learn about nocturnal animals

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, *OWL MOON* with children. Ask: What kinds of things did the artists do to make you feel that the weather was very cold? How would you have felt walking through the woods at night if you were the girl in the story? How do you think the girl would have felt if she and her father did not see an owl? What might have been her favorite part of the night walk? Why do you think the girl decided not to say anything after she saw the owl? What

do you think the girl did when she arrived home? How do you think the girl might feel on her second owling trip? Would she feel differently, or the same way she did on the first trip?

Talk with children about special things they may have done with a close friend or family member. Ask: What do you like most about spending time alone with this person? What kinds of things do you talk about? What other kinds of things do you like to do with this person? Explain to children that the film, *OWL MOON*, is about something special that a father and his daughter do together. Tell children to pay special attention to how the girl feels about spending time with her father. Later, have children compare the girl's feelings to the feelings they have when spending time alone with a close friend or family member.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children recall the way sounds the girl in the film heard with her ears, the things she saw with her eyes, the way her mouth felt when covered by the scarf. Then take children outdoors. Have them close their eyes and describe what they "see" by using their ears. (You might want to bring along some musical instruments or other objects that create sound and see if children can identify them.) Throughout the year, when outdoors with children, talk with them about the ways the weather makes their faces, hands, toes feel. Use every opportunity to help the children in your group develop sensory awareness.

Ask children if they have ever seen or heard an owl. Emphasize that owls are nocturnal animals. Explain that they have the ability to see very well at night. Describe other nocturnal animals that are busy hunting for food or building their homes while children sleep. (These animals include cats, rabbit, some birds, and tree frogs.) Later, supply a large

sheet of craft paper and black paint children can use to paint a night scene. Then supply white chalk that children can use to draw nocturnal animals on the night scene.

Encourage children to look outdoors on a clear moonlit night. The next day, talk in the class about the way the moon changed the look of the night time. Ask: What did the moon look like? What did the ground look like? How did you feel when you looked out at the moonlit night? (You might also play some different kinds of music in the classroom and ask children to describe which recording felt most like a moonlit night.)

Offer children a story starter such as the following: One night a boy and his mother went searching for a..... Let each child in the group contribute to the story, printing each child's contribution as they speak. When the story has been completed, give each child art supplies that they can use to illustrate their story. Later, encourage children to explore their own story further by asking questions similar to those you may have asked about *OWL MOON*. For example: How do you think the mother and son felt about one another in the story? What might have happened to the mother and son after the story ended? How does this mother and son remind you of you and your parents? How are they different?

Other book based films and videos about nature available from Weston Woods include:  
*IN THE SMALL, SMALL POND* by Denise Fleming  
*JOHNNY APPLESEED* by Reeve Lindbergh, ill. by Kathy Jakobsen  
*GOOSE* by Molly Bang  
*MISS RUMPHIUS* by Barbara Cooney  
*TIME OF WONDER* by Robert McCloskey  
*THE UGLY DUCKLING* by Hans Christian Andersen, ill. by Jerry Pinkney

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# MIRETTE ON THE HIGH WIRE

## **MIRETTE ON THE HIGH WIRE**

by Emily Arnold McCully (G.P. Putnam's)

Themes: Art, Feelings, Friendship, Sports

Grade Level: K--5

Running Time 12 minutes

## **SUMMARY**

Set 100 years ago in Paris, this story features Mirette, whose mother runs the best boarding house in the city for acrobats, jugglers, actors, mimes and other show people. Mirette especially admires one boarder, a retired acrobat, Bellini, who can walk on the clothesline. After he refuses to teach her, Mirette practices in secret, impressing him so much that he agrees to give her lessons. Eventually Mirette learns his secret: he used to be world-famous as The Great Bellini but is now unable to perform because of fear. To restore Mirette's faith in him and herself, Bellini agrees to a comeback. He freezes with fear on the wire, until Mirette joins him and they finish the act together.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Children will watch and hear a story about people in Paris, France, 100 years ago.
- Children will describe ways in which friends can help each other overcome fears.
- Children will identify and describe visual details about Paris around the year 1900.

## **BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES**

Ask children to guess from the name Mirette and from the cover art where and when this story might take place. Invite them to share what they know

about Paris, France, and explain that 100 years ago Paris was the center of the art world, and that many famous artists painted Paris street and rooftop scenes such as the ones they are about to see.

Locate Paris on a globe. Ask students to imagine that they live in a boarding house in Paris and know a lot of actors, artists and show people. The time is 100 years ago.

## **AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES**

Ask students to recall details of Mirette's friendship with Bellini: how they met, how she convinced him to teach her, what he had accomplished in the past, why he decided to perform again, how she helped him perform and what happened after their performance. Use this opportunity to discuss the fear of falling and other common fears and how people help each other overcome them.

Use the pictures in the program to introduce the Impressionists and other 19th-century artists. Replay the program, pausing so children can notice details in the pictures. Compare specific details in the pictures to details in paintings by Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Manet and other painters. Encourage students to notice the colors as well as the light and dark parts of both the program visuals and the paintings.

For more connections to art, encourage students to practice with watercolor and pastel techniques. As in the art for this program, use the watercolors for most of the artwork and use pastels or crayons to add texture and highlights. Show children how

shadows are rendered in grays and deeper tones, not black. Encourage them to draw pictures of themselves performing like Mirette.

Connect the story to sports by arranging a gymnastics exhibition, teaching children cartwheels and other simple tumbling moves. Children can also practice "low-wire" walking. In the schoolyard or gym, stretch a thick rope or cable taut along the ground and challenge children to walk on it without falling off.

To connect the story to history and encourage library and Internet research, challenge students to identify real-life daredevils and their feats. Suggest that they draw posters, compile timelines and arrange other materials they collect into a big scrapbook, for sharing with other classrooms.

Other videos and films about friendship and overcoming fear available from Weston Woods include:

**YO! YES!** by Chris Raschka

**HERE COMES THE CAT!** by Vladimir Vagin, ill. by Frank Asch

Other videos and films set in Paris from Weston Woods include:

**THE BEAST OF MONSEIUR RACINE** by Tomi Ungerer

**I, CROCODILE** by Fred Marcellino

**THE HAPPY LION** by Louise Fatio, ill. by Roger Duvoisin

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# DRUMMER HOFF

## DRUMMER HOFF

By Edward R. Emberley & Barbara Emberley (Simon & Schuster)

Themes: War/Peace

Grade Level: Pre-K-3

Running Time: 6 minutes, animated

## SUMMARY

DRUMMER HOFF is introduced with the peaceful chirping of birds and fluttering of butterflies. Drummer Hoff enters the scene beating his drum. The next person to appear is Private Parriage, pushing the carriage of a cannon. The narrator says, "Private Parriage pushed the carriage, but Drummer Hoff fired it off."

Soon after, different military men enter carrying additional pieces of the cannon. Each time the phrase is repeated "...but Drummer Hoff Fired it off." Finally, after many different people have added their parts of the cannon, Drummer Hoff does his job. The story literally ends with a bang, the firing of the cannon. The final scene shows a variety of birds and insects making their homes in and around the fired cannon. This simple yet powerful film tells the dramatic story of war in a way that is manageable for young children: Peace is still best.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the concepts of war and peace.
- Children will investigate the idea of division of labor.
- Children will learn to follow sequences of events.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book DRUMMER HOFF with children. Then say: Drummer Hoff was part of a team that fired off a cannon.

- Which character's job would you like to have? Why?
- Which job do you think is the most important? Why?

Explain that without each character doing his job, Drummer Hoff could not have fired off his cannon.

Cite other examples:

- Baking an apple pie: without any one of the ingredients for the dough or for the filling, there would be no delicious apple pie at the end.

Play a team sport so children will get the idea of teamwork.

Give children a sequence of three directions to follow. For example, say "First, walk to the chalkboard, then go back to your desk (table) and take out a pencil." Draw a picture of a person. Encourage children to listen carefully in order to follow your directions in the order that they have been given.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children recall the names of the military characters. Then try this activity to help children gain skill in rhyming. Assemble a group of the following objects and place them on a table top: comb, brush, pear, shoe, hat. Then give five children in the group the following names: Captain Bear, Admiral Bat, Colonel Mush, Sergeant Foam, and Drummer Blue. Have these children select the objects from the table top that rhyme with their assigned names. Continue the activity by arranging new objects on the table top and assigning to

children names that rhyme with the objects.

Ask children to describe what they feel to be the differences between war and peace times.

- When and how did you learn about war?
- How do you think people feel during war time?
- What do you think is the most frightening thing about war?
- What other things can people do to resolve their problems besides going to war?

Offer children the following hypothetical situations to dramatize as a way of helping them build skill in problem solving and to emphasize that there are options to fighting and quarreling. Have children work in pairs. The remaining children in the group will offer suggestions to the performers to resolve the problems.

"Two brothers are arguing about who is going to have the last ice cream from the box in the freezer."

"Two friends are quarreling about who is going to decide the rules for a board game."

"Two sisters are arguing about who is going to sit in the front seat of the car when mom drives them to the store."

**Other videos and films about the concepts of war and peace available from Weston Woods include:**

THE BEAR & THE FLY by Paula Winter  
HERE COMES THE CAT! Written by Frank Asch & illustrated by Vladimir Vagin  
ISLAND OF THE SKOG by Steven Kellogg

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