

# A LETTER TO AMY

## **A Letter To Amy**

by Ezra Jack Keats (Harper)

Themes: Multicultural, Friendship, Love

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 7 minutes, iconographic

A Letter To Amy is the story of a boy named Peter who is about to have a birthday. There is one person he would like to give a special invitation to-- a girl named Amy. Peter tells his mother that instead of asking Amy to his party he is going to write out an invitation and mail it to her.

On Peter's rainy walk to the mailbox, a sudden wind blows the invitation out of Peter's hand and right toward Amy who happens to be coming around the corner. Peter doesn't want Amy to see the invitation. His surprise will be ruined! Peter bumps into Amy and grabs the letter just before it lands in Amy's hand! Amy, not understanding what has happened, runs off crying. Peter mails the invitation and sadly returns home.

On the day of the party, everyone comes except Amy. However, just as cake is being served, Amy arrives with her pet parrot. The end of the story finds Peter responding to Amy's request that he make a wish and blow out the candles on the cake.

## Objectives

- Children will learn about the meaning of friendship
- Children will learn about writing and mailing letters
- Children will explore the city environment

## Before Viewing Activities

Share the book A Letter To Amy with children.

Then ask:

Why do you think Peter sent a special invitation to Amy?

The weather was very rainy when Peter went out to mail the invitation. How do you feel on rainy days? How did Amy feel when Peter bumped into her and grabbed the letter?

How did Peter feel when he returned home? Why?

How do you think Peter felt when Amy finally came to the party?

What do you think Peter wished for at the end of the story?

Talk with children about their own birthday celebration. Ask: What is your favorite way to celebrate your birthday? What special people do you like to have around you on this day?

Have children describe rainy day weather. Ask: What do you wear outdoors on a rainy day? What do you take outdoors with you? What kinds of sounds do you hear? How do your feet feel on rainy days? What do you like about puddles? Have you ever seen a rainbow in the sky after a rain shower? What did it look like?

## After Viewing Activities

Plan a classroom party. You might want to celebrate the end of the week, a special up-coming event, or simply have a party to celebrate sharing and friendship. Have children work together to create invitations to send to another classroom of children. Have children be sure to include the reasons for the party and the date and time of the celebration on their invitations. Also encourage children to create drawings on the invitations that somehow reflect the theme of the celebration.

Later, allow several children to be the "mail carriers" and distribute the invitations to the invited guests.

Help children recall the different parts of the city they saw in the story. Then explore the city environment with children through photographs and illustrations in books and magazines. If you live in a large city, plan several "around the block" field trips with children. Help children learn to observe the sights and sounds of the city, including materials buildings are made of, the sounds vehicles make as they travel along the streets, the types of lettering and colors used to make store windows signs, etc. Later, ask: What would (do) you like most/least about living in a city? Where would you want to take a guest who might be visiting you from the country? Why? What are the most important things you would tell him/her about the city?

Discuss the way weather influenced what happened to Peter. Ask: How do you think the story might have been different if Peter mailed the letter on a sunny day? a snowy day? Have children choose new weather conditions as a backdrop for the story. Then help children create new versions of the story, A Letter To Amy.

Other book based films and videos about friendship/love are available from Weston Woods. These include:

CORDUROY by Don Freeman

GRANPA by John

THE OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT by Edward Lear and illustrated by Barbara Cooney

THE PIGS' WEDDING by Helme Heine

THE SELKIE GIRL written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton

THE SWINEHERD written by Hans Christian Andersen and illustrated by Bjorn Wiinblad

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# Apt. 3

## Apt. 3

By Ezra Jack Keats (MacMillan)

Themes: City Living, Friendship

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 8 minutes, iconographic

### Summary

APT. 3 focuses on the journey a boy named Sam and his younger brother take through the corridors of their city apartment building. Sam and his brother are searching for the source of the harmonica music played by one of the apartment dwellers.

As the story unfolds, the reader is introduced to the sights, sounds, and smells of apartment living. Sam meets apartment dwellers in corridors, sniffs the air outside various apartment doors, and listens intently in order to identify where the beautiful harmonica music is coming from.

Eventually, Sam and his brother discover that the harmonica is being played by the blind man who lives in apartment three. Sam and his brother are frightened at first, as meeting a blind man is a new experience for them. Slowly they come to see that the man's experience is as rich and satisfying as their own. The story closes with the blind man responding to Sam's offer to take a walk the next day.

### Objectives

- Children will explore city life
- Children will examine the importance of overcoming fears
- Children will learn about the joys of new friendships

### Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Apt. 3 with children. Talk with children about city versus country living. Ask: In what ways do you think city living is different from country living? Where would you prefer to live? Why? What would you like most about living in an apartment building with lots of other people? What would you like least?

Play a variety of instrumentals in your classroom. See if children can identify the different musical instruments playing the music they hear. After each piece, encourage children to talk about the ways the music makes them feel and what the music makes them think about.

### After Viewing Activities

Help children explore what it might be like to live without sight. Have them close their eyes and discuss what they can hear, smell, touch or taste. Stress to children how much information can be obtained by using our senses other than our sense of sight.

Record a variety of sounds, including pot covers banging, a dog barking or cat meowing, a door

slamming, water running from a faucet, a vacuum cleaner vacuuming, a person clapping. Have children listen carefully to the sounds and try to identify each one.

Talk with children about the fear Sam felt before he knew the blind man. Ask: Have you ever been afraid of someone you did not know? What made you feel afraid? How did you feel when you got to know the person? What did the person do to make you feel better about himself/herself? What can you do to help people feel comfortable when they first meet you?

Paint a large apartment building on a piece of kraft paper. Include a large number of windows on the building. Then give children crayons that they can use to draw people in the windows. Have children invent a history for their apartment dwellers and share them with their classmates. Later, give children an opportunity to construct a story about the people who live in this apartment building.

Other book based films and videos about city living are available from Weston Woods. These include:

GOGGLES! by Ezra Jack Keats

NOT SO FAST, SONGOLOLO by Niki Daly

PET SHOW by Ezra Jack Keats

THE TRIP by Ezra Jack Keats

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# PETER'S CHAIR

## Peter's Chair

by Ezra Jack Keats (Harper)

Themes: Families/Sibling Rivalry

Grade Level: PreK-3

Running Time: 6 minutes, iconographic

## Summary

Peter's Chair is the story of a boy named Peter whose parents have just had a new baby. Peter walks around the house and notices that his parents are fussing with the new baby and painting his baby furniture pink! Peter's jealousy caused him to make a serious decision. He packs some things, including his little chair which he is determined his parents will not paint pink, and decides to run away.

Peter sits in his chair just outside the house to think a bit. Just then Peter's mother calls to him and invites him back in for a special lunch. Peter suddenly realizes that he is too big for the chair, anyway. He goes inside and tells his father that he'd like to paint the chair pink for his new baby sister.

The story ends with Peter and his father painting the chair, with a warm feeling of giving and understanding surrounding Peter and his family.

## Objectives

- Children will explore their feelings regarding siblings
- Children will investigate family relationships
- Children will learn about the importance of sharing and giving

## Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Peter's Chair with children.

Then ask:

How do you think Peter felt in the beginning of the story?

How would you feel about having a new baby in the house?

Which of your things would you enjoy sharing with a new baby?

Which of your things would be hard to share?

Why do you think Peter decided to share his chair with the new baby?

How do you think Peter felt at the end of the story?

Talk with children about their siblings. Ask: How many siblings do you have? What is the most fun about having brothers/sisters? What do you and your brothers/sisters enjoy doing together? What is the hardest part about having brothers/sisters? How do you solve your problems with your brothers/sisters?

## After Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the gift Peter and his father were making ready at the end of the story for Peter's sister. Then have children think about special things they might want to do for one of their siblings or family members. Stress to children that this "special something" might be a note letting the family member know how special he/she is, a special favor they might do for this family member, or a simple verbal message to let the family member know how much he/she is appreciated. If children choose to write notes, help them to do this in class. Later, have chil-

dren talk about how giving this "special something" to a family member made them feel.

Have children draw pictures of their families and label each family member. Then have children describe their families as they share drawings. Later, allow children to create a story about an adventure they would like to have with their family members. (Print younger children's stories as they dictate them.) Display the stories, along with the family portraits, on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Help children dramatize a situation involving a family that has just welcomed a new baby. Remind children of the way Peter felt about his new baby sister. Encourage children to include feelings of jealousy on the part of the older children for the new sibling in their dramatization. As children perform, encourage them to think of ways to work through the jealous feelings the older siblings have for the new arrival.

Other book based films and videos about sibling rivalry are available from Weston Woods. These include:

JOHN BROWN, ROSE, AND THE MIDNIGHT CAT written by Jenny Wagner and illustrated by Ron Brooks

MAX'S CHOCOLATE CHICKEN by Rosemary Wells

MAX'S CHRISTMAS by Rosemary Wells

NOISY NORA by Rosemary Wells

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# THE TRIP

## THE TRIP

By Ezra Jack Keats (Greenwillow)

Themes: Moving/ Friendship/ Imagination/ Halloween

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 6 minutes, iconographic w/ limited animation

## SUMMARY

THE TRIP Begins with a young boy, named Louie, who feels sad because he has just moved to a new neighborhood. Louie tries to manage the change by creating his own version of his old neighborhood with construction paper and pasting it into a shoebox. When Louie finishes, he lets his imagination take over and pretends to be flying over his old neighborhood in the paper plane he attaches to the roof of his shoebox. Once there, he discovers his old friends out for a night of trick-or-treating in his new neighborhood. The story ends with Louie leaving his home dressed as an ice cream cone and meeting a new group of trick-or-treating friends.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the effects of change.
- Children will investigate one particular kind of change, moving to a new home.
- Children will talk about Halloween.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE TRIP with children.

Talk with children about the significant changes they may have experienced in their lives, including moving, gaining a sibling, parents divorcing, going to a new school, etc. Ask:

- How did these changes make you feel?
- What, if anything, did you worry most about?
- What helped you feel better about the changes?
- What, if anything, did you enjoy most about the

changes?

- What would you tell a friend who was going through the same kind of changes?

Supply old clothes or costumes, or have children bring old costumes from home that they can use for a Halloween celebration in the classroom. (It need not even be fall, you can have fun with a pre- or post- Halloween celebration.) Have a Halloween parade indoors and enjoy Halloween treats at snack time that the children have participated in making. Throughout the day, encourage children to describe the things they do, and the ways they feel, during Halloween.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Supply shoeboxes, cellophane, construction paper, string or yarn, scissors, and paste that children can use to create their own shoebox environments.

Have Children describe their environments to one another. Later, have children dictate stories about events that take place in these environments. Print children's stories on separate pieces of paper and attach them to the shoeboxes. Display children's shoebox creations and stories on a classroom table.

Plan an "upside down day" in the classroom. Before children arrive at school, rearrange their desks, move your own desk to a new area, switch name tags on shelves and cubbies, rearrange classroom displays, etc. Pay close attention to children's individual reactions as they enter the classroom. Ask:

- How do these changes make you feel?
- How do you think you're going to feel about working in this classroom today?

At the end of the day, discuss children's feelings about the changes and the effect the changes had

on them. See if children can recall how they felt at the beginning of the day to see if their experience was what they imagined it would be.

Have children make paper airplanes that they can use outdoors during recess. Before taking them outdoors, have children imagine that the airplanes could take them anywhere they wanted to go.

Ask:

- Where would you go in your airplane? Why?
- What would you enjoy most about being there?
- What is the first thing you would do when you arrived?
- What would you miss about home?
- What is the first thing you would do when you returned home?

Supply manila construction paper and crayons that children can use to draw pictures of these far off destinations.

Other videos and films about imagination available from Weston Woods include:

**ALEXANDER AND THE CAR WITH A MISSING HEADLIGHT** by Peter Fleishmann & Morton Schindel

**THE AMAZING BONE** by William Steig

**GRANPA** by John Burningham

**HAROLD & THE PURPLE CRAYON** by

Crockett Johnson

**LEOPOLD THE SEE-THROUGH**

**CRUMBICKER** by James Flora

**MORRIS'S DISAPPEARING BAG** by

Rosemary Wells

**WHAT'S UNDER MY BED?** By James Stevenson

**WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE** by

Maurice Sendak

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