

# 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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# PANAMA

Panama

By Janosch (Little Brown)

Themes: Home Sweet Home, Friendship

Grade Level: K-2

Length: 11 minutes, animated

## Summary

Panama is the story of two friends, a bear and a tiger, who lived happily together in a cozy little house in the country. The bear spends his days fishing while the tiger spends his days in the woods.

One day, the bear finds a box of bananas on the river. The box is labeled "Panama." The bananas smell so good that the bear thinks the whole country must smell that way. Bear decides that Panama is the land of his dreams and that he and his friend Tiger must go there.

As Bear and Tiger begin their journey to Panama, it occurs to them that they do not know which direction to take. They meet various friends who tell them to go right or left, this way or that. After several tiring days of travel they meet a crow, who tells them that he can show them the land of their dreams if they follow him to the highest branch of a tall tree.

Once at the top, Bear and Tiger look out upon the land that surrounds their own home. Bear and Tiger have never seen the land from this perspective before. They are so taken with the beauty of this sight that they decide they must be in Panama.

The story ends with Bear and Tiger returning to their home, making repairs to damage that occurred during their absence, and realizing that there is no place like home

## Objectives

- Children will attempt to evaluate the quality of their own lives
- Children will learn about the importance of questioning and investigating new ideas
- Children will explore various aspects of friendship

## Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *The Trip To Panama* with children. Talk with children about trips they may have taken with their families. Ask: Where did you go? How long were you gone? How did you feel about leaving home? How did you feel when you returned home?

Have children describe the things they enjoy most about their homes and families. Encourage them to list the things they would miss if they were to move somewhere else or spend time with a family other than their own. Ask children to write a story called "home".

## After Viewing Activities

Have children describe what their ideal home would be like. Ask: What country would you live in? What would your house be like? Who would be your neighbors? What kinds of things would fill your home? Have children draw pictures of their ideal homes. Then help children print their descriptions of these homes and display them, along with the drawings, on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Talk with children about friendship. Ask: How did you know that Bear and Tiger were good friends?

What did they do to care for one another? What kinds of things do you do to show you care for your friends?

Show children a photograph or illustration of scenes including homes and people. Have children imagine what it might be like to live in this scene. Help children consider what it might be like to be involved in this situation by asking: Who might your neighbors be? What kinds of things would you do outdoors? Which would be your best friend's house? What would your bedroom be like? Post the photo/illustration where children can see the scene clearly. Then have children create stories involving the places and people in this setting. Later, display children's stories around the photo/illustration.

Other book based films and videos with a "home sweet home" theme are available from Weston Woods. These include:

*THE COW WHO FELL IN THE CANAL* written by Phyllis Krasilovsky and illustrated by Peter Spier  
*HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MOON* by Frank Asch  
*HOMESICK, MY OWN STORY* by Jean Fritz  
*JOEY RUNS AWAY* by Jack Kent  
*MADELINE AND THE GYPSIES* by Ludwig Bemelmans  
*MOON MAN* by Tomi Ungerer  
*THE SELKIE GIRL* written by Susan Cooper and illustrated by Warwick Hutton  
*THE STORY ABOUT PING* written by Marjorie Flack and illustrated by Kurt Wiese

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