

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

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by Jerry Pinkney

Ages: 3-5; Grades: PreK-1

Running time: 10 minutes

Themes: Animals, Feelings, Nature, Kindness, Compassion, Courage, Friendship, Fable

SUMMARY

This wordless rendition of a favorite Aesop's fable powerfully tells the story of the courage of two animals to overcome their instincts and their fears for the good of the other. When a mother mouse mistakenly awakens a sleeping lion, it takes all of the lion's strength to go against his nature and let her go. The mouse hurries back to her babies, grateful for surviving the terrifying encounter. Later, the lion gets snared in a hunter's trap. The mouse, remembering his kindness, works through the night to chew through the rope and free the lion. From this simple tale, students will learn that no act of kindness is ever wasted and friendship can arise in the most unlikely ways.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will develop oral language skills.
- Students will make predictions.
- Students will illustrate a wordless picture book.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Prepare students for watching a movie that has no words. Tell them to watch carefully for a story, even though there are no words to the story. Explain that as they see the images, they can think of words in their minds that tell the story. Give them a brief introduction to the story: *In this story, two very different animals become friends when they help each other.* Pause the movie periodically to give students the chance to verbalize the story. Guiding questions:

- Who are the characters?
- What has happened so far?
- Why do you think the character did that?
- How do you think the character is feeling? Why?

Give students a more detailed introduction to the movie: In this movie, a lion helps a mouse. *Later, the mouse gets a chance to help the lion. We will need to watch carefully to figure out how these two very different animals help each other.* Guide students to make predictions before watching the movie. Ask:

- How do you think a lion could help a mouse?
- How do you think a mouse could help a lion?

Scribe all of the students' answers on chart paper. Revisit these predictions during the movie.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *The Lion and the Mouse* with the students. As you turn the pages, encourage students to narrate the events. First, do the activity as a whole class. Then, have students sit with talk partners and show the movie or book again. Have one partner tell the first part of the story, then switch and have the second partner finish the story. When students are finished, give them time to compliment each other. Provide a structure and model for the compliments, such as: *I really liked how you described... or My favorite part was when you said...* End the activity by giving the class time to share. Ask:

- How was your story different from the story we told together as a class?
- What was your favorite part of the story and why?
- Did your partner say anything really interesting that you'd like to share?

Follow up the previous activity by having students create a wordless picture book of their own. Tell students to think of a story that is either true or made up. Have them illustrate 5-7 pages that will show the events of the story. When the pages are complete, tell students to give their book a title, and then bind it together like a book. Allow students to practice "reading" their wordless picture books to their friends. Organize a "book release party" and invite parents, the principal, and other classes in the school to attend. Keep the books in the classroom library for other students to check out.

Discuss kindness and caring with students. Guiding questions:

- What choices did the Lion have when the Mouse woke him up? What choice did he make? How did his choice help him later?
- What are some ways that you show kindness to people around you?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you made a choice like the Lion? What happened?
- Have you ever repaid a kindness like the Mouse?
- What can you do in the future to show kindness to others?

After students have shared with partners and the whole group, culminate the discussion by creating a "Kindness Tree". Make a bulletin board display of a bare tree, with cut-out leaves that students can draw on, or have a teacher write on, ways that they will show kindness to others. Alternatively, students can make leaves that recognize others that have been kind to them. Set a goal to get the tree full of leaves.

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