

MIKE MULLIGAN AND HIS STEAM SHOVEL

Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel

by Virginia Lee Burton

Themes: Friendship

Grade Level: PreK-3

Running Time: 11 minutes, iconographic

Summary

MIKE MULLIGAN AND HIS STEAM SHOVEL is about Mike Mulligan and his steam shovel, Mary Anne, that he has cared for and worked with for many years. Mike is proud of Mary Anne and suspects that she could "dig as much in a day as a hundred men could dig in a week." Mike and Mary Anne have dug holes for highways, canals, and train passages and have always performed better when people would watch.

As time goes by Mary Anne is passed over for jobs by new, powerful gasoline, electric, and diesel motor shovels. Mike Mulligan learns of a new town hall to be dug in a small country town. He decides that he and Mary Anne might have more success in a small town than in the city. Mike is able to get the town hall job for Mary Anne by promising that they can dig the cellar in one day.

Although the work is hard and slow, Mike and Mary Anne work harder and faster as more and more people come to watch their progress. When the hole is ready at the end of the day, even the once skeptical town selectman, Henry B. Swap, is impressed. However, one problem remains--how will Mary Anne get out of the hole she dug. Mike and Mary Anne dug so fast they forgot to leave a way out for themselves!

At the end, a little boy suggests an ingenious way for Mike and Mary Anne to manage their problem.

Objectives

- Children will explore friendships
- Children will investigate the results of diligence and hard work
- Children will examine problem-solving techniques

Before Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the roads and highways they travel

along with their families. Explain that in many cases passages had to be dug through rock or mountains of earth in order to create these roads and highways. Discuss the different kinds of equipment used to create these roads and highways, including bulldozers, excavators, paving trucks, etc.

Explain that the steam shovel is a machine that used to do the same kind of work that excavators and diesel shovels do now. As time went on, the steam shovel was replaced by more modern equipment. Encourage children to pay close attention to the work machinery does that allows us to enjoy traveling, whether by land, air, or water.

Have children think about people they have known, or possessions they have had, for a long time. Ask: How do you feel about these people (possessions)? What kinds of things do you do to show you care for them? How would you feel if you didn't know (have) them? What is the most important thing to you about these people (objects)? Why does knowing people or having something for a long time make them particularly special to you?

Share the book Mike Mulligan And His Steam Shovel with children. Ask: What kind of work did Mike Mulligan and Mary Anne do? Why were they having trouble getting work in the city? How did the little boy help Mike Mulligan and Mary Anne solve their problem? How do you think Mike Mulligan and Mary Anne felt at the end of the story?

After Viewing Activities

Explain to children that the story, Mike Mulligan And His Steam Shovel, was written long ago. After viewing, ask children: How can you tell that this story was written many years ago? How were the vehicles in Popperville different from the kinds of cars, fire engines, milk trucks, etc. that we use today? How did the people in the film dress? What would you like most about living in Popperville? What would you like least? Later, have children dramatize life in Popperville. You might want to have children work together to paint background scenery, including a general store, church, schoolhouse, and town hall to use in their dramatizations. If possible, provide clothing that is representative of the thirties and forties for children to dress up in.

Discuss the little boy's suggestion at the end of the film that is the answer to Mike and Mary Anne's problem of getting out of the hole they dug. Ask: What other solutions to Mike and Mary Anne's problem can you think of? After talking about possible solutions, have children take turns stepping inside a ring of classroom chairs. Tell the first child that he/she cannot break the ring, but must think of a way out. (Children might consider stepping over a chair, having a group of people carry them out of the ring, imagine that a magical balloon flies overhead and carries them out, etc.) Encourage children to use their imaginations as they consider solutions to the problem. As children take turns standing inside the ring of chairs, hand them a variety of objects. For example, you might give one child a ball of string and ask: How could you use this string to help you out of the ring? As children work, help them to see that there are many different ways to solve problems.

Give children an opportunity to invent a machine. Supply an assortment of art materials that children can use to create their own unique machines. (You may want to provide boxes, aluminum foil, construction paper, pipe cleaners, felt scraps, buttons, round cardboard, discs, etc.) After creating their machines, have children describe them and the work they do, to their classmates.

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

Friendship

ANDY AND THE LION by James Daugherty

APT. 3 by Ezra Jack Keats

THE BEAST OF MONSIEUR RACINE by Tomi Ungerer

THE CATERPILLAR AND THE POLLIWOG by Jack Kent

DANNY AND THE DINOSAUR by Syd Hoff

THE HAPPY LION written by Louise Fatio and illustrated by Roger Duvoisin

Machines

HERCULES by Hardie Gramatky

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CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE

CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE

By H.A. Reyby (Houghton Mifflin)

Themes: Curiosity/Responsibility

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 10 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE, the film, is true to the book, CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE, by H.A. Rey. The film concerns the adventures of a curious little monkey named George. George is given a bicycle as a gift from his owner, who is referred to as the man with the yellow hat. George rides the bicycle, and, as he is a curious little monkey, is easily distracted by all that he sees around him. When he passes by a newspaper delivery boy, he agrees to help deliver the papers. However, he spots a river in the distance and, in the wink of an eye, is making boats with the newspapers to float down the river.

At one point in the film, George is so distracted that he does not watch where he is going, falls and bends the wheel of the bicycle. When he rides on the remaining wheel, two men who own an animal show, discover him. The men think this is a wonderful trick indeed and decide to include George in the show. After a series of adventures on the animal show grounds, George becomes the show's star performer.

The end of the film finds George riding happily and safely home in the car with his owner, the man with the yellow hat.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about responsibility.
- Children will explore the ways curiosity can lead to discovery
- Children will investigate the world of imagination.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about special gifts they may have received. Ask:

- What was this special gift?
- Why was it so special to you?
- What kinds of things did you do with your special gift?
- How did you feel when you were given this gift?

Explain that in the story the children are about to hear, a curious little monkey named George receives a special gift from his owner. Encourage children to think about the different ways George enjoys his gift as they watch the film.

Share the book CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE with children. Ask:

- How do you think George feels when he receives the bicycle from the man with the yellow hat?
- Is George acting responsibly when he helps the boy deliver newspapers? Why? Why not?
- Why does George hit the rock with his bicycle?
- What does George do what he shouldn't on the animal show grounds?
- How do you think George feels at the end of the story as he goes home with the man with the yellow hat?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children recall the portion of the video where George is making paper boats to sail down the river. Then supply newspaper that children can use to make their own paper boats. (on page 18 of the book, CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE, there are directions.) When children have finished, have them write or dictate to you, simple stories about where their boat is traveling to and the things that people in the boats see along the way.

Discuss the imaginative way George uses his bag in the video in order to rescue the bear. Ask:

- How does George help the bear?
- How do you think George feels after rescuing the bear?
- How do the bear and the animal show workers feel?

Emphasize that George was very clever in thinking about a way to rescue the bear.

Provide a paper bag and sheet of craft paper for each child in the group. Staple the bag to the upper left-hand corner of the craft paper. Remind children that George used his bag in a very imaginative and clever way. Then have children think about the different ways they might use their bags.

Have children write their suggestions for using the bag on the craft paper, or print children's suggestions as they dictate them to you. (Children may want to decorate their bags or add illustrations to the craft paper when finished.) Later, display these on a classroom bulletin board.

Talk with children about the ways George's curiosity led him to discover many new things. Then take a walk outdoors with children. Collect objects such as pine cones, acorns, flowers, leaves, etc. When you return to the classroom, encourage children to think about things that they might want to know about these objects. Then ask:

- Where do they come from?
- How are they formed?
- Why are they a certain color, shape, size?
- Where else are they found?

Visit your school library or provide reference books, magnifying glasses and other items children might need to investigate the objects and answer the questions. As children work, help them recognize that as they are asking questions and searching for answers, they are learning.

Other videos and films about curiosity & discovery available from Weston Woods include:

CAPS FOR SALE by Esphyr Slobodkina
THE CATERPILLAR & THE PILLIWOOG by Jack Kent
DANNY AND THE DINOSAUR by Syd Hoff
GOLDBLOCKS & THE THREE BEARS by James Marshall
SYLVESTER & THE MAGIC PEBBLE by William Steig

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CAPS FOR SALE

CAPS FOR SALE

By Esphyr Slobodkina (Harper)
Themes: Humor/Animal Behavior

Grade Level: Pre-K-1

Running Time: 5 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

CAPS FOR SALE is about a peddler who walks along the countryside offering caps for sale. What is unusual about the peddler is that he chooses to carry his stock of caps on his head- one piled on top of the other.

One day, the peddler decides to rest by a large tree. While he naps, a group of monkeys snatch the caps from the peddler's head. When the peddler awakes, he orders the monkeys to give him back his caps. The monkeys refuse with a simple "tsz, tsz' tsz." At the end of the story, the peddler becomes so frustrated with the monkeys that he throws the one cap left on his head onto the ground in anger. The monkeys imitate the peddler's behavior, throwing all the caps down from the tree. The happy peddler returns the caps to his head and heads down the road calling, "Caps! Caps for sale! Fifty cents a cap!"

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn to appreciate humor in storytelling.
- Children will investigate animal behavior
- Children will explore the ways goods are sold.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book CAPS FOR SALE with children. Then ask:

- How many of you have seen monkeys in the zoo?

Monkeys love to copy whatever you do, discuss monkey see, monkey do.

Explain that monkeys are very smart and have even gone up in space. They can ride bicycles; they are actors because they can copy people's behavior.

Play a simple game of "Simon Says" with children. Talk about how much fun it can be to imitate, to do exactly the same thing someone else is doing.

Discuss with the children the different ways their families can buy ice cream (large supermarket, small grocery store, ice cream truck, ice cream stands). Emphasize that in addition to ice cream, all kinds of foods and objects are sold in many different ways. Explain that long ago, and today in many countries, objects are sold by people, sometimes known as peddlers, who walk the city streets or country roads carrying things they want to sell. Ask children to describe situations where they may have seen people selling their wares in this fashion.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Supply a variety of hats that children can try on in the classroom. Then give children the opportunity to pile several of the hats on top of their heads at once and walk around the classroom pretending to be peddlers. Ask:

- How does it feel to carry the hats on your head?
- How far do you think you could walk this way?
- How would you feel if you were the peddler in the story and had your caps stolen?

After Children have experienced being peddlers, help them with a dramatization of CAPS FOR SALE. Encourage children pretending to be monkeys to behave in a silly, humorous way as they

steal the peddler's caps and, later, throw down the caps in exactly the same fashion as the "peddler."

Provide play money and objects that can be "bought and sold" in the classroom. Have children take turns pretending to be peddlers and consumers. Help the "consumers" count their money, offering the peddlers the appropriate amounts in exchange for the goods. As children work, encourage the "consumers" to think about how they will use the objects they are purchasing, and the "peddlers" to think about how they will use the money they are collecting.

Give the children an opportunity to think up a different version of CAPS FOR SALE- perhaps SHOES FOR SALE. Ask:

- What could the monkeys do with the shoes that would be funny?

Other videos and films involving humor available from Weston Woods include:

THE BEAR & THE FLY by Paula Winter
THE COW WHO FELL IN THE CANAL written by Phyllis Krasilovshy & ill. by Peter Spier
THE DAY JIMMY'S BOA ATE THE WASH written by Trinka Hakes Noble & ill. by Steven Kellogg
THE DOUGHNUTS by Robert McCloskey
THE GREAT WHITE MAN-EATING SHARK words by Margeret Mahy & ill. by Jonathan Allen
JOEY RUNS AWAY by Jack Kent
THE MOST WONDERFUL EGG IN THE WORLD by Helme Heine
SMILE FOR AUNTIE by Diane Paterson
WINGS: A TALE OF TWO CHICKENS by James Marshall

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