

SCAREDY SQUIRREL

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Ages: 4-8; Grades: PreK-3

Themes: Risk Taking, Confidence, Humor

Running Time: 7 minutes

SUMMARY

Scaredy Squirrel stays in his tree. It is safe there. No tarantulas, no poison ivy, no green Martians, no killer bees. In his tree, there are plenty of nuts and a nice view. Unfortunately, it's not very exciting in his tree, but Scaredy Squirrel doesn't mind too much. He even has a well-stocked first aid kit *in case* of an emergency. But one day, something does go wrong, and Scaredy Squirrel is forced to flee his tree – and learns something important about himself in the process.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will analyze the pros and cons of taking risks.
- Students will make text-to-self connections.
- Students will analyze the changes in Scaredy Squirrel from the beginning of the movie to the end of the movie.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss taking risks with students. Define what it means to take a risk and ask students about risks that they've taken in their lives. Brainstorm with students about different times and reasons that people take risks. Then, discuss the pros and cons of taking risks. Scribe students' ideas on a T-chart.

Guiding questions:

- What are risky activities that people do?
- Why do you think that people take risks?
- How can taking risks be helpful? How can it be dangerous?

Tell students that they are going to watch a movie about a squirrel who is terrified of taking risks. Encourage students to watch and listen for ways that his life is positive because he doesn't take risks and ways that his life is negative.

Review text-to-self connections with students. Ask them to share with each other things that they're scared of. Create a class list of "Things That Scare Us". Ask:

- Why are you scared of _____?
- Do you have any experience with thing(s) you're scared of?
- How do your fears affect your life or the choices you make?

Encourage students to make connections with Scaredy Squirrel's fears. Push them to make their connections deeper by thinking about whether all of Scaredy Squirrel's fears are reasonable, and if any of their own fears are unfounded.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use a T-chart to compare contrast how Scaredy Squirrel changed from the beginning of the book to the end of the book. Label one side of the T-chart "Scaredy Squirrel in the Beginning" and the other side "Scaredy Squirrel at the End".

Guiding questions:

- How can you describe Scaredy Squirrel at the beginning of the story? What are some adjectives that you would use?
- Do Scaredy Squirrel's fears change from the beginning to the end of the story? Why or why not?
- How does Scaredy Squirrel's life change?
- What are some adjectives you can use to describe Scaredy Squirrel at the end?

Have students continue the adventures of Scaredy Squirrel, in a comic strip form. First, students can illustrate the stages of the next adventure that Scaredy Squirrel goes on. Provide them with paper that is broken into boxes, as a comic strip. Number the boxes to aid the students in sequencing. After students have drawn the illustrations, have them tell the story orally to a partner. Then, students can add character dialogue or thoughts, or, they can write a one sentence caption for each picture. Students should color their comic strips. These can be displayed on a classroom bulletin board, or in a special library of student work.

Read a nonfiction book about flying squirrels to students. Record some basic facts on a poster or chart paper, with input from the students. Then, have students use the computers or other nonfiction texts to find more information about flying squirrels. Have students illustrate pictures and create a flying squirrel bulletin board.

OTHER RELATED TITLES FROM WESTON WOODS:

Amazing Grace, by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Caroline Binch

Crazy Hair Day, by Barney Saltzberg

Giraffes Can't Dance, by Giles Andreae, ill. by

Guy Parker-Rees

The Gym Teacher from the Black Lagoon, by Mike Thaler, ill. by Jared Lee

Leo the Late Bloomer, by Robert Kraus, ill. by Jose Aruego

The Librarian from the Black Lagoon, by Mike Thaler, ill. by Jared Lee

The North Star, by Peter H. Reynolds

Owen, by Kevin Henkes

Shrinking Violet, by Cari Best, ill. by Giselle Potter

The Teacher from the Black Lagoon, by Mike Thaler, ill. by Jared Lee