

FIVE LIONNI CLASSICS

Five Lionni Classics

By Leo Lionni

Themes: Animal Tales, Families, Feelings

Grade Level: PreK - 3

Running Time: 27 minutes

SUMMARY

This program contains five short fables that feature animal characters. Like the classic tales of Aesop, the fables actually comment on human behavior.

In the first tale, *FREDERICK*, a field mouse doesn't join the others in their work of gathering food for the winter. Instead, he gathers colors, words, and sounds. When the hunger of winter comes, the mouse artist tells his stories and keeps others' hopes alive.

The second fable, *CORNELIUS*, features a crocodile who learns to walk upright, swing by his tail, and do other tricks. The other crocodiles make fun of him, but try to copy him when he's not looking.

The story *IT'S MINE!* tells of the near-disaster that occurs when three frogs quarrel over the resources of one small island.

In *FISH IS FISH* two childhood friends, a minnow and a tadpole, grow up with different experiences of the world. When the fish tries to be a frog, he learns that his own world is best for him. In the last tale,

SWIMMY, a tiny black fish teaches a school of tiny red fish how to defend themselves against the huge fish in the ocean. They swim together, forming a red fish bigger than all the rest.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to modern fables featuring animals.
- Children will identify the seasons and recognize other patterns in nature.
- Children will recognize the importance of getting along with others and valuing their contributions.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask students to remember any stories they know in which animals talk and act like people. Explain that this program contains five such stories. Suggest that students compare the behavior of the animals in the stories to the behavior of people that they know.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review the stories one by one, to make sure that students got the point of each story. If students have difficulty ask, "What does this story teach us?" or "Why would a parent or other adult tell this story to a child?" For each story, compare the point of view of the title character to the feelings and points of view of the other characters. Discuss how each title character feels about the others, and how they feel about him.

Connect the stories to literature by having students read and report on Aesop's Fables and other animal stories. In each case, have students explain what the story was trying to teach. Collect and share animal proverbs and poems as well.

Connect the stories to art by having students use the cut-paper and collage techniques that illustrate these and other animal stories. Solid shapes and heavy colors can be achieved with construction paper. Tissue paper overlays create opaque effects. Watercolors can be used

for backgrounds, and crayons or pastels can be used for highlights.

Connect the stories to both art and science by having students make murals of one of the story settings: a stone wall next to a field, a tropical riverbank, a pond, or a coral reef. Use paper cutouts of the animals and a camera to produce animated versions of the art.

Connect the stories to music and dance by having students write and perform musical versions of the stories. For older students, radio plays (recorded on cassette tape) are great fun, since they allow students to create animal sound effects and funny voices.

Other videos in the **Critics' Choice Collection** available from Weston Woods include:

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The Marzipan Pig by *Russell Hoban*

Whitewash by *Michael Sporn*

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Ralph S. Mouse by *Beverly Cleary*

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