

# HIAWATHA

## HIAWATHA

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ill. by Susan Jeffers

Themes: Native American

Culture/Folktales/Poetry/Grandparents

Grade Level: K – 5

Running time: 11 minutes

## SUMMARY

HIAWATHA is derived from Longfellow's grand epic poem in which a young Native American boy questions his natural surroundings and is answered by his grandmother, Nokomis.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about Native American culture
- Children will investigate the beauty of poetry
- Children will explore the natural environment

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book HIAWATHA with children. Show photographs of various Native American tribes. Discuss the activities and daily routines of members of these tribes at the time our country was settled. Ask children to try to imagine what life in our country might have been like during this time.

Share some poetry with children. You might include other poems by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow along with modern day poets such as Shel Silverstein. Encourage children to listen carefully as you share the poems. Later, talk with children about the mental images they form as

they listen to each poem.

Have children close their eyes and imagine that they lived in a forest. Encourage children to describe the animals they might see and the sounds they might hear. Supply construction paper, pencils, and crayons children can use to draw these forest scenes.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the relationship between Hiawatha and his grandmother, Nokomis. Ask:

- How do you think Hiawatha and Nokomis felt about one another? How can you tell?
- Why was it important for Hiawatha to learn about the things Nokomis taught him?
- If you were Nokomis, what are some of the things you would have liked to teach Hiawatha about?
- If you were Hiawatha, what else would you have liked to ask?
- Who are some of your favorite relatives?
- What kinds of things do you enjoy doing together?

Give children an opportunity to create and illustrate their own poems. You might play some soft music as a backdrop to stimulate children's creative thinking. You might also want to provide pictures, photographs, or simple story starters to set children's poetic minds in motion!

Supply references from your school or local library about various Native American tribes.

Then have children work in groups to dramatize the activities of the tribe of their choice. Have children share the dramatizations with the entire class. Children may want to create simple costumes, tools, backdrops, etc. to enhance their presentations.

Have children create their own legends that explain different natural events. For example, encourage children to think creatively and provide explanations for volcanoes erupting, lightning striking, or rain falling.

## Other videos and films about Native Americans available from Weston Woods include:

GIVING THANKS – A NATIVE AMERICAN GOOD MORNIGN MESSAGE

by Chief Jake Swamp, ill. by Erwin Printup Jr.

Other videos and films about poetry available from Weston Woods include:

ANTARCTIC ANTICS by Judy Sierra, ill. by Jose Aruego & Ariane Dewey

JOHNNY APPLESEED by Reeve Lindbergh, ill. by Kathy Jakobsen

IN THE SMALL, SMALL POND by Denise Fleming

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