

# THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

## THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY

by Ezra Jack Keats

Themes: Religion, Humility

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 7 minutes, iconographic

### SUMMARY

THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY, told as a tale set to music, is the simple story of a boy with a drum who feels he has nothing to offer the baby Jesus. Others come from far and wide to offer gifts, and the boy, standing at the end of the line of visitors, feels unworthy, with nothing to offer.

Finally, the boy suggests that he can play for the baby Jesus on his drum. The boy soon recognizes that this gift is as worthy a gift as the others. The mood of this film, suggested by the music and language, offers children a warm wonderful look at the meaning of giving.

### OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore religious beliefs.
- Children will investigate the meaning of giving.
- Children will learn about the reasons for the Christmas holiday

### BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY, with children. Then ask:

- Who has everyone come to see in the story?
- What kinds of things are they bringing to the baby Jesus?
- Why are they bringing him gifts?
- What kinds of animals appear in the story?

- Who is at the end of the line, waiting to see baby Jesus?
- Why does the boy with the drum feel sad?
- What special gift does the boy give the baby Jesus at the end of the story?
- How does the boy feel about his gift?

Talk with children about the Christmas holiday. Explore the ways children who celebrate this holiday enjoy Christmas with their families. Then tell children the Christian story of the birth of Jesus. Explain that this is the religious belief of some people, and that this Christian story is the basis for the film they are about to see.

### AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the way the story of The Little Drummer Boy was told as a song. Play the recording of The Little Drummer Boy. Encourage children to try and recall the pictures they saw as they listen. Then play another recording for children that is also a story set to music. Have children listen carefully, then draw pictures that tell the story they have just heard.

Supply a drum and other musical instruments that children can use in the classroom. Have children pretend that it is the birthday of one of the children in the class, and that their gift to that person will be a simple recital. Then help children play simple rhythms to accompany a simple nursery rhyme or song they are familiar with. Later, have children exchange instruments so that they have the opportunity to explore playing a variety of these.

Help children understand it is not the size or cost of a gift that is important, but the meaning behind the gift. Talk with children about the gift the drummer boy gave baby Jesus. Ask:

- How was this gift different from the other gifts the baby Jesus received?
- How do you think the baby Jesus and his mother felt about receiving this gift?
- Was this an expensive gift?

Have children consider the ways they can offer “gifts” to parents and friends, even when a particular occasion is not being celebrated. Ask:

- What kinds of things can you do for your parents or friends that will not cost money and that they would appreciate?
- How would you feel about giving these kinds of gifts?
- How do you think your parents and friends would feel about these gifts?

Sing other songs characteristic of the Christmas holiday. Talk about other religious holidays occurring this time of year. Learn some Hanukkah songs. Play a Hanukkah game like dreidel.

Other videos about Christmas available from Weston Woods include:

**The Clown of God** by Tomie dePaola

**Max’s Christmas** by Rosemary Wells

**Morris’s Disappearing Bag** by Rosemary Wells

**The Night Before Christmas** by Clement Clarke Moore, ill. by Ruth Sanderson

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