

MISS NELSON HAS A FIELD DAY

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by Harry Allard, ill. by James Marshall (Houghton Mifflin)

Themes: Humor, School, Sports

Grade Level: K - 2

Running Time: 11 minutes

SUMMARY

Nothing seems to help the hapless football team at the Horace B. Smedley School. Not the depressed Mr. Blandsworth or the ineffective Coach Armstrong. Everyone is down in the dumps until the arrival of the notorious Viola Swamp who takes it upon herself to whip the team into shape for the big Thanksgiving game. Do the Smedley Tornados dare lose again?

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the importance of hard work and team effort
- Children will discover problem-solving techniques
- Children will explore the benefits of perseverance and a positive attitude

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *MISS NELSON HAS A FIELD DAY* with children. Then ask:

- What was making the children at the Horace B. Smedley School so sad?
- What happened to Coach Armstrong?
- What did Miss Nelson overhear when she passed by Lulu's?
- What did Miss Nelson decide to do to try to solve the team's problem?

- Who did the children think was the new coach for the team?
- Who did the coach turn out to be at the end of the story?

Talk with children about their own experience both winning and losing on the sports field. Ask:

- How did it feel to win? lose?
- What makes a good team player?
- How does it feel to work together with others to achieve something?
- How do you feel before a game? After a game?
- What would you tell a friend who was about to play an important game on the sports field?

Remind children of the way Miss Nelson solved the problem in the story. Then present several hypothetical problems to children and help them explore problem-solving strategies. For example, say: You might also present the following situation: "There is going to be a class play. Two children want the lead role. How can the class solve this problem?"

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the way Miss Nelson behaved when she disguised herself as Miss Viola Swamp. Then have children make paper plate masks. Encourage them to draw happy faces on one side of the paper plate and mean faces on the other side. When finished, have children wear the happy face masks and demonstrate some basic body movements and activities that show what they might do when they are feeling happy. Then have children wear the mean mask faces and demonstrate the movements and activities that might accompany this

emotion.

If possible, attend a sporting event with the class. As you watch the event, emphasize the ways the players demonstrate good sportsmanship, how they work as a team, and how discipline and hard work help them to achieve their goals.

Teach children a new skill. This skill may involve a simple movement exercise, a new way of working with pencils or paint to achieve a certain effect, or a way of using materials to create a simple sculpture. As children work, remind them of the different things they are doing to acquire this new skill. They may be practicing something over and over, they may be listening carefully to your instructions, they may be looking at a model to help them create their own version of something. Discuss the ways perseverance, patience, and a positive attitude are helpful to them in achieving this particular skill and other goals they may want to achieve.

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