

NORMAN THE DOORMAN

Norman the Doorman
by Don Freeman (Viking)
Themes: Humor/Ingenuity

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 15 minutes, iconographic

Summary

Norman The Doorman is the tale of a mouse who works as a doorman in the basement of an art museum. Norman provides tours of the artwork stored in the museum's basement for visiting mice.

In addition to being a doorman and tour guide, Norman also has a hobby. He loves to create artwork and spends his evenings working on paintings and sculptures. Norman also collects mouse traps and uses them for various art projects.

One day, Norman hears about a sculpture contest to be held in the museum. Norman has a wonderful idea! He decides to enter a sculpture he has created out of a mouse trap and wire--- a mouse on a flying trapeze!

Much to his amazement, Norman wins the contest and is brought to meet the judges on the main floor of the museum by a museum guard. When the judges ask Norman what he would like as a prize, Norman asks for a tour of the museum, without fear of being caught, something he has always dreamed of. The story ends with Norman, a very satisfied mouse, returning to his job and his museum basement home.

Objectives

- Children will learn about art museums
- Children will explore creativity and ingenuity
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book Norman The Doorman with children.

Talk with children about visits they have made to art museums. Ask: What kinds of things did you see there? What did you like most? Why? How did you feel inside the museum? What did you think about the people who created the artwork?

Tour the school's basement with children. As children look at the materials used to make the basement and objects stored there, and listen to the sounds they hear, talk about the differences between this space and the upper floors of the school. Also, have children describe the basements of their own homes, and the things their families store there.

After Viewing Activities

Tour an art museum with children. Encourage children to look closely at the art objects displayed and to pay particular attention to: the details of paintings and sculptures, the various mediums used to create the artwork, the ways the pieces of artwork are displayed, the ways the art pieces make them feel. When you return to the classroom, have children discuss their favorite pieces of artwork.

Supply art materials such as pieces of styrofoam, plastic coated wire, cardboard, fabric scraps, piep cleaners, plastic tubing, cardboard boxes, glue, etc. that children can use to create their own sculptures in the classroom. When children have completed their artwork, label the pieces with children's names and display them in the classroom.

Give children an opportunity to develop skill in problem-solving techniques. Ask: How did Norman decide to make use of the mousetraps he found? What did he choose to use as a place to sleep and work?

Then present children with the following hypothetical situations. Encourage children to think creatively as they tackle each problem:

Imagine that you are a turtle who has found its way into the art museum. Where would you make your home? Why?

Imagine that you must enter an art contest but you have no art supplies. What could you do?

Imagine that you are creating a painting and you have run out of red paint. The stores are all out of red paint and you need this color to finish your painting. What could you do?

Other book based films and videos about art are available from Weston Woods. These include:

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