

PETUNIA

Petunia

by Roger Duvoisin (Knopf)

Themes: Reading/Wisdom/Animals & Pets

Grade Level: K-2

Length: 10 minutes, animated

Summary

Petunia is the tale of a duck who discovers a book in the meadow. Petunia recalls hearing someone say that "he who owns books and loves them is wise." Petunia assumes that because she carries the book under her wing she is suddenly wise, and offers advice to her friends who are eager for her help. Unfortunately, Petunia's advice is consistently inappropriate, and each of the animals who receives her help is either made sad or upset.

Eventually, Petunia's ineptitude is discovered along with a box of firecrackers. When Petunia's friends ask her to read the label on the box, she confidently replies that the box says "candy." The box explodes as Petunia's animal friends try to open it to get to the candy. The end of the story finds Petunia discovering that there are words inside the book, and that one can only be wise when one has knowledge of the book's contents.

Objectives

- Children will explore the ways knowledge can

be gained through reading

- Children will investigate the dangers of making assumptions and being falsely confident
- Children will explore the meaning of foolish pride

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *Petunia* with children. Visit your school library with children. Before your visit, work with children to prepare a list of topics they are interested in knowing more about. Help children use the library to search for information about these topics.

Talk with children about their favorite books and the reasons for their choices. Invite children to bring their favorite books to school and share them with their classmates.

After Viewing Activities

Remind children of the assumptions both Petunia and her friends made. Ask: Should Petunia have assumed that she would be wise just by holding the book? What should she have done instead? Should Petunia's friends have assumed that just because she looked wise and held a book that she was really was wise? What should they have thought instead? As children discuss these questions, emphasize the importance of seeking information and asking questions before making assumptions about things.

Talk with children about things they have done in the past that they are proud of. Ask: How did you learn to do these things? What do you do when you want to learn something new? As children talk, emphasize that a true sense of pride comes when people have worked hard or discovered things by searching for answers to questions.

Discuss Petunia's sense of foolish pride. Help children see that Petunia would have been of greater help to her friends if she had told them that although she did not have the answers, she would help them by asking others, by reading appropriate books, by sharing ideas, etc.

Have children make their own books by stapling pieces of construction paper together. Help children invent stories and print them on the construction paper pages. Encourage children to illustrate their stories. Later, display the stories on a classroom tabletop where they can be enjoyed by all.

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