

THE TEACHER FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

THE TEACHER FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

by Mike Thaler, illustrated by Jared Lee
(Scholastic)

Themes: Feelings, Friendship, Growth and Change, School

Grade Level: K--3 (Ages 5-8)

Running Time: 8 minutes

SUMMARY

This program uses exaggeration and humor to help children confront their fears about the first day at school. The narrator is a boy who has heard terrible stories about teachers. He learns to his horror that his teacher will be Mrs. Green, the worst of them all. Sure enough, Mrs. Green turns out to be a green monster with a tail, whose breath burns children to ashes and who teaches fractions by biting a student in half. When he wakes up from this nightmare, the boy is so glad to meet the real Mrs. Green that he forgets to be afraid of school.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and hear a funny story about overcoming fear of school.
- Children will recognize that many common fears are based on exaggeration and rumor.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Start by discussing the title of the program and

defining the word lagoon. Ask children what kind of movies or TV programs the title reminds them of. Very young children might have to be told that a famous scary movie is called "The Creature from the Black Lagoon." Ask children to guess from the title what the story will be about and whether it will be a real or imaginary tale.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review the story by asking children to recall what they thought were the funniest moments. Have them identify the clues that show the monster teacher was imaginary. Discuss the differences between the imaginary teacher and the real Mrs. Green. Ask children to share why the boy might have imagined such a horrible teacher. Lead children to recognize that many of the things we fear most are nowhere near as bad as we imagine them to be.

Connect this story to writing by asking children to remember and write about their first day of school. Encourage children to write poems and songs as well as stories.

This tale makes a hilarious class play that children will enjoy acting out. To involve as many children as possible (and to avoid fighting over the juicy roles), encourage children to invent other monster teachers for the beginning of the story, when the boy is still wondering about who his teacher will be.

Connect this story to math by writing story problems on a "Monster Math" theme. Encourage children to contribute their own story problems. You might divide children into teams and have teams challenge each other in Monster Math Matches.

Follow up on the theme of conquering fears with a bulletin board display about monster movies. Have children help you gather the titles by interviewing parents and other family members about movies they remember and by drawing pictures of the strange monsters they've learned about. Encourage children to explore how monster movies are made. Then discuss how costumes, lighting, and sound effects create scary characters and scenes. Ask children to share why they think scary monster movies are popular, discussing how confronting imaginary monsters helps us confront our real fears. This activity would be especially effective around Halloween. It can also be effectively combined with reading or viewing related videos, such as the titles listed below.

Other related videos and audios available from Weston Woods include:
IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN, by Maurice Sendak
MISS NELSON IS MISSING, by Harry Allard, illustrated by James Marshall
THE ISLAND OF THE SKOG, by Steven Kellogg
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