

THE PILGRIMS OF PLIMOTH

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by Marcia Sewell

Themes: American History, Pilgrims, Plymouth Rock

Grade Level: 3-6

Running Time: 26:00

SUMMARY

The arrival of the Pilgrims in the new world is chronicled in this dramatic re-enactment of their daily activities during the first trying years in the colony they called Plimoth. Although the journey from England to America and the process of settling in a new country was extremely difficult, the pilgrims were convinced that the peace and freedom they found made it all worthwhile.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the reasons the pilgrims came to America.
- Children will explore the ways the first settlement in America was created.
- Children will appreciate the hardships the pilgrims experienced as they established the first community in America.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the homes they live in, the foods they enjoy, the vehicles that take them from place to place and other facets of their daily lives. Help children understand that the first settlers of America experienced life very differently. Show children pictures from books that illustrate the daily lives of the pilgrims. Then ask:

- How were the pilgrims' lives different from ours?
- How were they similar?
- What would you have liked most about being part of the first settlement in America?
- What would you have liked the least?
- What kinds of things do you think you would have been most frightened of?
- What would you look forward to?

Share the book, *The Pilgrims of Plimoth* with children. As you discuss the book and illustrations, have children pay particular attention to the details of the pilgrims' lives, including ovens and tools used for cooking, methods of punishment, ways of washing clothes, bathing routines, means of curing the sick, etc. Ask:

- How do you think the pilgrims felt about doing chores and living this way?
- What kinds of things did the pilgrims use that we still use today?
- What things are different?
- Do you think our lives are better than the pilgrims' lives? Why? Why not?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the reasons the pilgrims left England for America. Ask:

- How do you think you would feel if you and your family were not free to do as you chose, but were told what to do by a king?
- Do you think the pilgrims should have taken the risk and gone through all they had to deal with in order to go to America? Why? Why not?
- What kinds of problems do you think the pilgrims had when they went to America and there were no rules at all?
- What kinds of rules do you think it would be important for the pilgrims to make?

Talk with children about the different things the settlers did to establish a community in America. Discuss the crops the pilgrims raised, the homes they built, the preparations they made for defending themselves, etc. Then draw simple time lines on the chalkboard. Ask:

- If you were going to live somewhere that no one had ever lived before, what would you need to do first? Second? Third?

Have each child print his/her responses on the time lines in the appropriate order. Later, have children share and compare their time lines with one another, explaining why they

ordered things the way they did.

Supply children with props that can be used to dramatize the pilgrim's journey to and settlement of America. Encourage children to include in their dramatization many of the hardships that the pilgrims faced as they began their settlement. If possible have children perform their dramatizations of the pilgrims' experience for other classes. Provide time during or after the performance for questions from children in the audience. Have children ask questions of the performers such as:

- What do you do for fun at night?
- What are your beds made of?
- What happens when a storm comes along and ruins your crops?

Supply pieces of cardboard, pipe cleaners, aluminum foil, feathers and other art supplies that children can use to create their own imaginative tools that might have been useful to the pilgrims. Have the children describe their creations, and their functions, to others in the group. Display tools where classroom visitors can see and appreciate them.

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