

THE RAINBABIES

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Book by Laura Krauss Melmed, illustrated by Jim LaMarche

Themes: Families/ Fairy Tales/ Magic

Grade Level: K - 2

Running Time: 20:00

SUMMARY

An elderly man and woman who had for a long time yearned for children of their own, receive the gift of a dozen tiny babies in a dozen drops of water. Over time, the new parents love the babies and care for them at great lengths. Later, the babies are claimed by Mother Moonshower, who rewards the parents with a real baby to love and cherish.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about families.
- Children will investigate fairy tales.
- Children will explore magic.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *The Rainbabies* with children. Then ask:

- Why were the man and woman sad at the beginning of the story?
- What happened to make them feel happy?
- What did they do to care for the babies?
- How do you think they felt about giving up the babies?
- What do you think the couple's life was like after their new daughter arrived at the end of the story?

Have children identify their own family members. Ask:

- What do the people in your family do to show they

care for one another?

- If you've ever had to help care for a baby brother or sister, what responsibilities did you have? How did you feel about helping to care for the baby?
- What are your favorite things to do with your family?

Give children an opportunity to draw one of the rainbabies. Remind them that each baby was only as big as a big toe. Encourage them to include as much detail as possible as a way of helping them investigate what one of the babies might actually look like.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the different disasters and hazardous situations the elderly couple experienced that put the babies lives in jeopardy. Give them an opportunity to investigate some problem-solving strategies by asking:

- What was the first dangerous situation the couple found themselves in with the babies? How did they rescue the babies from the water? What else could they have done to save the babies?
- How were the babies saved from the ring of fire? What might have happened to the man when he leapt over the ring to save the babies? What else could the couple have done to save the babies from the fire?
- How did the woman stop the weasel from running away with the baby? What else could she have done to get her baby back?

Encourage the children to think up an original fairy tale like *The Rainbabies*. Have the children dictate their stories. Allow them to accompany their stories with original illustrations. Display the stories and drawings on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Remind children that each evening the old couple sang the babies to sleep while placing them in wooden shoes. Ask:

- What other small places might the babies have fit into? Provide small boxes, pieces of cotton, fabric scraps, and other art materials that children can use to create their own miniature beds for the tiny babies.
- Talk about magic with the children. Explain that Mother Moonshower magically made the tiny babies appear in drops of water. Borrow some books about magic and have some fun performing simple magic tricks.

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