

THE UGLY DUCKLING

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by Hans Christian Andersen, adapted and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney (HarperCollins)

Themes: Folktales, Growth and Change, Nature

Grade Level: K--5

Running Time: 20 minutes

SUMMARY

This adaptation revives the classic European folktale in a rural American pioneer landscape, with ponds, woods, fields and farms rendered in lovely watercolor paintings that are both realistically detailed and full of emotion. The art draws children into the world of an odd egg that hatches into a duckling so ugly it is taunted by all the others. The outcast runs away and faces hunger, danger, cold, and worst of all, loneliness. But when warmth and spring return, the duckling turns into a beautiful swan and finds the other swans with which it belongs.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to a classic folktale.
- Children will describe how animals change as they are born and grow up.
- Children will notice visual and verbal details about nature at various seasons of the year.
- Children will identify and express their feelings about growth and change in their own lives.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Start by asking the many students who already know the story not to give away the ending to those who don't know it. If the story is unfamiliar to most of the class, start by discussing the title. Ask how the

word "ugly" makes them feel. Ask students to name other bad feelings, such as being lonely or cold. Promise them that in this story bad feelings turn good.

If the story is familiar to all or most of the class, explain that there are many different ways to tell the same story, and that this program has art that makes it especially worth watching. Encourage students to notice details as they watch and listen. What words and pictures are clues about people? Who are the people in the story? What do their houses look like? What plants and animals are in the story?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

To encourage children to express the feelings evoked by the program, ask them to look back at the story from different points of view. For example, have them imagine they're the other ducklings in the brood or the children who want to play. Remind them that none of these characters really understood the duckling—in fact, the duckling did not understand itself. Discuss how the duckling's feelings changed after it realized it was a swan.

Connect the story to a nature or science lesson by reviewing the pictures in detail. Recall the details that showed the changes of the seasons. Challenge younger students to list all the animals they see. Challenge older students to identify both plants and animals by species, with the help of nature guides.

Connect the story to both science and art by asking students to draw pictures of baby animals and their parents. Display the pictures on bulletin boards or assemble them in large scrapbooks that can be

shared with other classrooms.

Connect the story to American history by recalling visual details that were clues to the place and date of the story. For example, remind them that there were no electrical wires in the pictures, and that the people wore old-fashioned clothes. Other details to notice include the wooden fences, carts and farm tools.

Encourage students to collect other versions of the same story and compare them. Use the comparisons to reinforce the idea that the same story can be told in many different ways. Encourage children to retell this and other familiar stories, using pictures, sounds and music as well as words.

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