



AESOP'S FANTASTIC FABLES

Learning Extensions

Age: 3 through Pre-K

Domain: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Content Standards: LD1, LD4, LD5

The children will:

- develop skills in listening for a purpose (LD1)
- develop and expand expressive language (speaking skills) (LD4)
- begin to develop age-appropriate strategies that will assist them in reading (LD5)

Activity: The Tortoise and the Hare...Reenacted

Read one of the many versions of The Tortoise and the Hare to the children. Choose an easy and shorter version appropriate for a preschooler's attention span. After reading, discuss the story and the moral being taught. Help the children create simple props or use teacher made props to retell the story, such as felt board pieces, finger puppets, stuffed paper bag puppets or cardstock bunny ears and turtle shells. There are great free patterns available at <http://www.first-school.ws/INDEX.HTM>. The children can then pair up and act out the story again and again. It is ideal if each child can make both characters so that they can retell the story at home or can switch out characters while re-enacting with a friend at school. Retelling a tale helps children develop an appreciation and comprehension of stories read aloud. Visit another class at your school and let the children perform the story, if possible and leaving the needed materials and instructions for props; or invite the parents in for your own show, giving each child a part in the production (ticket takers, ushers, narrators, characters, etc.). Teachers can extend this theme by including word and picture cards in your writing area for the children to copy, reading additional fables, and taking dictation on drawings by the children about what they have learned from listening to this story or other fables with a moral.

Domain: PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

Content Standards: SE1, SE3, SE4

The children will:

- develop confidence and positive self-awareness (SE1)
- increase the capacity for self-control (SE3)
- develop interpersonal and social skills for relating with other members of the learning community (SE4)

Activity: “The Boy Who Cried Wolf”

This fable teaches a great lesson on what could happen if you continually fib. At the preschool level, children are beginning to internalize the reason it is important to tell the truth and may have even experienced the repercussions of being caught in a fib. Choose a simpler version of “The Boy Who Cried Wolf” to read to the children. Even better, just retell the story without a book just the way you learned it as a child. Relate the story to experiences in the classroom, such as talking about what could happen if a child screams again and again for no reason, or tells many fibs and when they finally tell the truth, it is hard for others to believe. Stress that being honest is the best way for people to believe you every time. Let the children respond to the question, “What could happen if you fib?” or “Do you know someone who fibs or plays tricks on people? Would you choose this person to be your friend?” Teachers can just discuss this story, or extend your lesson into a theme unit about positive character traits and discuss the importance of each one. There are dozens of short stories with character building opportunities in Aesop’s Fables. Make sure you offer encouragement, forgiving and understanding to children when they do tell you the truth (or demonstrate other positive character traits). Lessons in personal and social development, when taught to young children, can develop positive skills that can last a lifetime. Aesop makes it easy to make that connection by using characters that children can relate to, such as animals and heros.

Domain: SOCIAL STUDIES

Content Standards: SS1, SS2, SS3

The children will:

- develop an appreciation of his/her role as a member of the family, the classroom and the community (SS1)
- develop a respect for differences in people (SS2)

Activity: “I May Be Small, But I Can Help!”

Aesop’s fables are stories with life lessons, told through the introduction of two very different animals (and sometimes people) with vastly different traits and personalities. They became so popular because children relate to stories about animals and often compare their own strengths and weaknesses to the animals that take on humanistic qualities in the tales. That Puppet Guy uses puppets to retell three of these stories. Before the show, choose a short and easily understood adaptation of “The Lion and the Mouse,”” (found at the library or downloaded from the internet). Many preschoolers have never heard these old classics rich with morals. Begin by making two columns on graph paper, title one “I’m like a lion,” and the other “I’m like a mouse.” Talk about the characteristics of these two animals and have the children choose which animal they think they are most like. Most will choose the lion, because he is bigger and stronger, even louder and braver than a tiny mouse. Read the story and discuss how the smaller, quieter saved the bigger and stronger animal. Ask the children a second time which animal they feel they are most like. Now, most will choose the mouse because he proves himself to be hero and did not hesitate to help out the lion, even though the lion was not so nice to him in the beginning. Talk about the differences in people. Some are bigger,

stronger and louder while others are smaller, quieter and less boastful. Ask the children to come up with ideas of how they can help others even though they themselves are small. Teachers can start them thinking by offering ideas, such as a class food drive for a pantry to help feed the hungry or collecting items to send to soldiers overseas. Look over your ideas and see if your class (and their parents) may want to make an ongoing project by hosting a food drive or developing a plan for another idea of how small people really can make a difference. Community volunteers who are usually willing to come into your classroom to talk about how appreciated their donations are to people who need them and the importance of helping others. There are tons of internet sites that offer activities and free reproducible to retell the story (which is an important indicator in Language and Literacy), but your class can be one of the few that plan and carry out a project that will actually help others, and that makes the moral of the story even more memorable.