

MISS RUMPHIUS

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by Barbara Cooney (Viking Press)

Themes: Biography, Flowers, Nature

Grade Level: K – 5

Running Time: 18 minutes

SUMMARY

Miss Rumphius is the story of a young girl who learns some important life lessons from her grandfather..

As a young girl, Alice worked in the shop of her grandfather, an immigrant who came to America as a young man and found work as a wood carver and artist. As Alice worked along with him in his shop, he constantly reminded her of her mission—to add beauty to the world.

As Alice grew, she traveled near and far, witnessing beauty of all kinds. As an adult, she still had not found that one thing that would be her own contribution to beautifying the world. Finally, as an old woman, Alice’s mission came to her. The end of the story is a delightful surprise for readers of all ages.

OBJECTIVES

- To help children learn about places and cultures around the world.
- To introduce children to the importance of beauty and the natural environment.
- To help children understand the importance of making a contribution for the betterment of all people.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about some of the most beautiful sights they have seen. Ask:

- Where did you see these things?
- How did seeing these sights make you feel?
- What can you do to help maintain these beautiful things?
- What other beautiful things would you like to add to the world?

Explain to children that in the story they are about to hear, they will be introduced to a lady who made an important contribution to the world by adding some very special beauty to the environment.

After hearing the story, have children talk about some of the most beautiful flower gardens, or wild flower settings, they have seen. Encourage them to describe the flowers in detail.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Supply paper, crayons, paint, and markers that children can use to create their own drawings of what they think Miss Rumphius’s lupines might look like close up. As children work, talk about the different parts of a flower, and how all the parts work together to extend the life of the plants.

Take a walk outdoors around your school. Encourage children to look up at the sky and down at the ground as they observe the beauty of nature all around them. When you return to the classroom, help children work together to create a

poem about the beauty they have seen on their walk. Later, let children illustrate the poem and display where other children and parents can enjoy it as well.

Talk with children about the different places Miss Rumphius visited on her travels. Encourage children to describe the places they liked best. Discuss the differences in climate, people, and wildlife in these places. Ask children to consider which place they would most want to visit and why. Then have children draw pictures of places they would like to visit in the future.

Collect flowers, leaves, and weeds from outdoors. Have children work together to create flower arrangements to beautify the classroom. You might want to have a small tea party or informal gathering where children serve milk and cookies to other classes, seating their friends at tables beautified with their natural arrangements.

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