

THAT BOOK WOMAN

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by Heather Henson

Themes: literacy, family, history

Ages: 5-9; Grades: K-4

Running Time: 12 minutes

SUMMARY

Cal is not the reading type. Not like his sister Lark, who would spend “daybreak to dusky dark” reading, if their Mama would allow it. Cal and his family live up in the Appalachian Mountains, far away from the towns and cities. Nonetheless, one day a woman rides up on a horse, bearing, of all things, books. Lark is delighted, but Cal can’t understand why someone would brave the treacherous mountain paths just to bring new books every two weeks. And for free! As a long, cold winter sets in, Cal begins to get curious about the “chicken scratches” that keep his sister so enthralled. When the book woman comes back in the spring, Cal has a gift for her that is just as valuable as the books she brings.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the importance of reading daily.
- Students will develop a love of literature.
- Students will become familiar with using the library.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Conduct a class survey to find out what the students’ favorite books are. Ask students to say one sentence stating why the book is their favorite. If possible, make a colored copy of the book jacket, write the students’ comments on index cards, and have students glue their book jackets and cards onto butcher paper to make a “Favorite Books” mural for the classroom.

Have “Dessert” time in your class. Use this time to read aloud from a text that is lengthier or more difficult than texts that the students can access on their own, yet still contains content that they can understand. Build up Dessert time as the most sacred time of the day and change the time that it falls each day. Some days, let the students have Dessert first thing in the morning, on other days, leave it for the end of the day. During Dessert time, encourage students to make “mental movies,” in which they visualize the scenes from the book. Model this by imagining the setting, characters, and action out loud. Point out to students that the movies that we make in our heads are often more interesting than what we can see on TV.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Take a class trip to the local library. Alert the librarian that you are coming so that he or she can prepare. Show the students the different areas of the children’s section and how the books are organized. Use examples of titles that you have read in class to show them how to find books on their own. Give students time to peruse the library on their own. As they are exploring, take small groups to the desk to get library cards, if they don’t already have them. Allow each child to choose one book to check out.

Choose one child to be the Book “Woman/Man” each week. It is the Book Woman’s/Man’s job to recommend a favorite book to the class. Give the Book Woman/Man a form to take home with the following information:

- Title
- Author
- 3 sentences about why they recommend the book
- 1 illustration of a scene from the book

The Book Woman’s/Man’s parent or guardian should help him or her fill out the form. When the form is complete, take a Polaroid picture of the Book Woman/Man and hang his or her picture with the recommendation on a display entitled, “Book Woman’s/Man’s Pick of the Week.”

Raise money for a charity by having a Read-A-Thon. Have students get pledges from family and friends for each book or page that they read. Invite the donors to a special night at the school, where students can show off their reading tree and book-centered classroom. Choose a class favorite to read aloud and allow any students, who are able, to read as well. Collect the money for a charity or to buy books for under-resourced schools or children. Alternatively, have a book drive. Ask students to bring in new or gently used books to donate.

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