

TIME OF WONDER

Time of Wonder

by Robert McCloskey (Viking)

Themes: Seasons/Nature

Levels: Grades 1-5

Length: 13 minutes, iconographic

Summary

TIME OF WONDER, the film, is true to the book, Time of Wonder, by Robert McCloskey. Less like a story than a series of poetic expressions, Mr. McCloskey captures the change of seasons as viewed from an island in Maine. The film begins in the spring time, with the slow and gentle sprinkling of rains that tickle the island. Summer approaches with its afternoons of swimming fun and evenings of crab hunts under starry skies. As fall approaches, activity quickens, with islanders preparing for a strong, aggressive winter. With winter upon them, the islanders huddle close together, using stories and song to distract them from the hurricane brewing beyond their doors. The ends of the film confronts the end of another summer, when visitors to the island return home for the start of school -- "A little bit sad about the place you are leaving, a little bit glad about the place you are going."

Mr. McCloskey has captured the feeling of each season with his rich and moving story.

Objectives:

- Children's awareness of the changes that accompany the changing seasons will be enhanced
- Children will learn about the conditions and habits of various plants and animals
- Children will learn about the different ways weather affects their lives and their vacations

Before Viewing Activities

Talk with the children about their favorite seasons. Ask: Why do you like this particular season? What sounds do you hear

during this season? What are the special colors of this season? What are the smells of this season? What do you like to do with your friends during this season? How are the days during this season different from the nights? Explain to children that they are about to see a film about seasons. As the children view the film, encourage them to pay close attention to the changing colors and sounds of the seasons (Children will hear birds chirping, changing sounds of wave patterns, trees snapping, gulls calling, etc.).

Share the book Time of Wonder, with children. Ask: How does this book seem different from other stories you have read? How do you feel about the way the author describes things? Did the words and pictures help you to feel what living on the island might be like? How? What was your favorite part of the book? Why? What particular words or pictures that Mr. McCloskey wrote or drew helped you to know how the changing seasons feel? When you think about the different seasons, what are the first things that come to mind when you think about summer, winter, spring, fall?

After Viewing Activities

Give children an opportunity to try their hand at poetry writing. Collect pictures of each season that children can use for inspiration. Have each child choose a season and write a poem about that season. Help children along by having them think about the following: What do you remember most about this time of year? What happens at this time of year that makes the season special? What kind of weather do we have at this time of year? What kinds of things are growing? What kinds of animals do you see? What kinds of things do you do outdoors/indoors during this season?

Give children the option of illustrating their poems and display them on a classroom wall or bulletin board. Talk about different kinds of plant and animal life children saw while viewing the film. Then take a walk outdoors and have children carefully observe the plant and animal life around them during this season. Compare the way the environment looks now, and the kinds of animals that roam about, to the plants

and animals children see at the other times of the year. Discuss what happens to those animals and plants that are with us in the spring and summer months, and that we do not see in the late fall and winter months. (Have reference books handy so that children can do some of this research when you return to the classroom).

Talk with children about the different kinds of weather they saw in the film. Ask: How does a rainy day make you feel? a sunny day? a windy day? a stormy day? What are your favorite things to do on these different kinds of days? Help children understand that they are affected by weather conditions as well as by people they meet, places they visit, school experiences, etc.

Ask the children where they like to go on vacation. How does the weather affect where they go? For example, they might like to go to the seashore in the summer. What happens when it rains? What does their family do together then? Write a story: Once, when my family and I were on vacation, it..... so we.....

Other book based films, videos and filmstrips about seasons are available from Weston Woods. These include:

THE CATERPILLAR AND THE POLLIWOG by Jack Kent
THE HAPPY OWLS by Celestino Piatti
HOT HIPPO written by Mwenye Hadithi and illustrated by Adrienne Kennaway
OWL MOON by Jane Yolen and illustrated by John Schoenherr
SEASONS by Heide Goennel
THE SELFISH GIANT written by Oscar Wilde and illustrated by Gertraud & Walter Reiner
THE SNOWY DAY by Ezra Jack Keats

CALL 1-800-243-5020 TO ORDER THESE AND OTHER WESTON WOODS VIDEOS!

This guide may be photocopied for free distribution without restriction