

THE WIZARD

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By Jack Kent (Weston Woods Press)

Themes: Self-Esteem/Magic

Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Running Time: 8 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

This is the seemingly simple, yet powerful tale of a mouse who approaches a wizard for a magic spell. The mouse hopes the spell will change him into something other than a mouse. He feels that being a mouse is not a particularly wonderful thing to be and longs to be something different.

The wizard gives the mouse an unlabeled magic spell. He is uncertain as to what the mouse will become, only that he will be changed. The mouse brings the magic spell home and takes some time to consider some of the things he might be turned into. As the mouse thinks about these possibilities, it becomes clearer and clearer to him that being a mouse may not have every advantage, but it is better than many other things that he could be.

The end of the story finds the mouse returning the unused magic spell to the wizard. They both agree that the potion has worked its magic on both of them. The mouse is changed from an unhappy to a happy mouse and the wizard is no longer a grouch, but happy because one of his spells finally worked!

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the importance of self-esteem.
- Children will explore the world of magic.
- Children will investigate the advantages of thinking before acting.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE WIZARD with children.

Have children think about who they would like to be if they could be some one else. Ask:

- Why would you want to be this person?
- What can this person do that you can't?
- What would you miss most about being yourself?

Have children perform for the group some simple magic tricks they may be familiar with. (You might also want to introduce children to a few magic tricks or supply a magic trick kit for children to experiment with.) Ask:

- How does it feel to do magic for your friends?
- How would you feel about being a wizard who is able to cast magic spells on people?
- If you were a wizard, what would you turn your classmates into? Why?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the advantages and disadvantages of being changed into those things the mouse in the story considered (butterfly, turtle, bee, etc.) Then have children create short stories based on the story starter, "If I were an elephant..." Encourage children to consider all the things they would be able to do if they were large, lumbering, elephants. Children may want to accompany their stories with drawings. Display the stories and drawings on a classroom wall. Later, ask children:

- What can people do that elephants cannot?
- What would you miss about being a person?

Provide children with paper plates and art supplies that they can use to create artistic versions of their own faces. When finished, have children talk about those things that they like about themselves.

Attach a large heart shape cut from construction paper to each child's paper plate face to represent the body of the figure. Have children list the things they like about themselves on the heart shapes. Display these "I Like Me!" people in the classroom for all to see and enjoy.

Talk with children about the way the mouse in the story thinks about the possible effects of the magic spell before taking it. Ask:

- How is it helpful to the mouse to think about what might happen to him before drinking the magic potion?

Emphasize to children how important it is for the mouse, and how important it is for them to think before acting in order to make good decision. Then give children a series of several tasks and encourage them, to think and discuss among themselves how to perform the tasks before starting. Here are several to try:

- Have children move a box containing books and other relatively heavy objects across the room.
 - Give children two responsibilities that must be completed before the day's end.
 - Have children play a simple game of "Simon Says," deciding among themselves: who will be Simon, where the game will be played, and how many rounds they will play.
- Later, ask:
- How was it helpful to think about each of these things?

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