

JOHN BROWN, ROSE AND THE MIDNIGHT CAT

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by Jenny Wagner, ill. by Ron Brooks
Themes: Friendship, Pets, Sibling Rivalry
Grade Level: Pre-K-2
Running Time: 7 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

JOHN BROWN, ROSE AND THE MIDNIGHT CAT is the tale of an elderly widow named Rose whose friend and companion is a dog named John Brown. John Brown is a loyal friend and caretaker for Rose, looking out for her as best he can. One night, Rose thinks she hears a cat out in the garden. John Brown assures her that it is not a cat. When Rose goes to bed, he goes outside and confronts the noisemaker, who really is a cat. John Brown, jealous at the thought of someone else receiving Rose's attention, tells the cat to stay away.

When Rose realizes that there is a cat outdoors, she cares for it by leaving a bowl of milk outside the front door. Each night jealous John Brown tips the milk bowl over. One morning, Rose does not get out of bed. She feels ill and tells John Brown that she will not be getting up. John Brown worries about Rose all day. Finally he enters her room and asks if the cat would make her feel better. When Rose replies, "Oh, yes!" John Brown brings the cat in. The end of the story finds a contented Rose, John Brown and the newcomer cat relaxing and enjoying the quiet—and one another!

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the meaning of friendship.
- Children will learn about ways of caring for pets.

- Children will investigate the importance pets have to their owners.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, JOHN BROWN, ROSE AND THE MIDNIGHT CAT, with children.

Then ask children in the class to describe their feelings about their siblings.

- Do they get jealous when Mom or Dad pays attention to another sibling?
- Don't they still love their brothers/sisters after all?
- What do we know about John Brown?

Do a simple character study using specific references from the book.

Talk with children about their pets. (If children do not have pets, encourage them to describe the kind of pet they would enjoy having.) Ask:

- How do you (would you) care for your pet?
- How do you (would you) feel about your pet?

Discuss children's relationships with their friends. Ask:

- Do you have a special friend?
- What kinds of things do you like to do together?
- What do you like most about your friend?
- How would you feel if your special friend became friends with someone else?
- Would it be difficult to share your friend?
- If so, what could you do to feel better about this?

Visit a pet shop with children. Before the trip, work with children to draw up a list of questions about pets they would like answers to. After investigating the many different kinds of pets available, encourage children to ask the shop staff questions from their list and any additional questions they might have about the animals.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children investigate the feeling between pet owners and their pets by being cub reporters. Help children tape record interviews with various school staff members who have pets. Have children ask questions of the pet owners such as:

- What kind of pet do you have?
- What is its name?
- How long have you had your pet?
- Why is your pet special to you?
- How do you care for your pet?

Later, play the interviews back for children. As children listen, discuss the conclusions they draw about the relationship between the pet owners and their pets. You might want to help older children print their findings and display them on a bulletin board under the heading "Friends Forever!"

Have children draw pictures of their own pets or pets they would like to have. Attach writing paper to the bottom of each drawing. Have younger children dictate their feelings about their pets and print the dictations. Older children can work independently to print information about their pets. Later, display the drawings and stories on a classroom wall to share with visitors.

Other videos about friendship available from Weston Woods include:

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