

THE THREE-LEGGED CAT

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By Margaret Mahy, illustrated by Jonathan Allen (Viking)

Themes: Pet Relationships/ Cats

Grade Level: K-3

Running Time: 7 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

THE THREE-LEGGED CAT is the story of a cat named Tom who has only three legs, but dreams of roaming the wide world. Tom's owner, Mrs. Gimble, does not want Tom to be a prowler. She prefers him to be a more sedate cat who gives her no trouble.

Mrs. Gimble's brother Cyril, a "rascally, roving swagman" comes to visit wearing a "revolting, moulting Russian Hat" to keep his head warm

Tom gets his lifelong dream when Cyril mistakes his hat for the cat!

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore family relationships.
- Children will investigate different kinds of pets and the roles they play in families.
- Children will become familiar with unfamiliar words and phrases.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book THE THREE-LEGGED CAT with children. Then ask:

- Why do you think Mrs. Gimble wants Tom to be a quiet, sleepy kind of cat?
- How do you think Tom feels about Mrs.

Gimble?

- How do you think Mrs. Gimble feels about her brother Cyril?

Talk with children about their pets and relatives.

Ask:

- How do you care for your pets?
- What do you like to do with your pets?
- Who is your favorite relative? Why?
- What kinds of things do you do together?

Emphasize to children that different places in the world have different climates, vegetation, people with different lifestyles who speak different languages, etc. Then have children describe real places or fantasy places that they would like to visit or live in. Later, have children draw pictures of these places.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Provide a variety of hats for children to try on. As children experiment with the hats, encourage them to talk about the ways the hats make them feel.

Children might feel more grown-up, wealthy, tall, elderly, etc. wearing the different hats. Have children walk around the room with the hats.

Encourage children to pay attention to the ways the hats make them walk differently, hold their heads differently, and assume different attitudes.

Help children understand that although Tom was a three-legged cat. He still managed to move about, and see the world. Have children discuss people they might know who have physical disabilities but still manage to do many different kinds of

things. Later, have children imagine that they cannot see. As children close their eyes, encourage them to describe the things they can hear, smell, touch. As you involve children in this activity, emphasize that although people may have disabilities, they are still capable of doing many, many things and experiencing life fully.

Print some of the new words and phrases in THE THREE-LEGGED CAT on the chalkboard. Read paragraphs from the book in which these words and phrases are found. See if children can identify the meanings of these words and phrases. Also, talk about other signs of a different culture introduced in the book, including houses clustered together, a cup of tea and a chitchat or "chin-wag," etc.

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