



Discussion Guide for

THE CAROUSEL

Author:

Liz Rosenberg

Illustrator:

Jim LaMarche

Publisher:

Harcourt Brace

THEME:

A legacy is passed from one generation to another; connecting the past with the present and the future~much like a carousel that moves in a circle, with no beginning and no end.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Carousel, written by Liz Rosenberg and illustrated by Jim LaMarche, is the touching story of sisters who, after the death of their mother, search for her legacy through their memories, imaginations and a magical ride on a carousel.

LeVar visits children in Harlem who are working with artists and designers to build a carousel for their community park, illustrating how the power of legacies are passed on to us by special people in our lives.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Before viewing the program, obtain a copy of the book and read the story to the students up to the point where the girls have fixed the carousel and need to tame the horses. Have students brainstorm ways to bring the horses back. Then finish the story to see how the author solved the problem.

Discuss items that have been passed down through generations in students' families. Talk about who these items belonged to in the past, who has them now, and the special significance they have. Teachers might model this discussion by sharing a story about an heirloom from their own family.

In the program, LeVar defines "legacy." Invite students to share legacies they might wish to pass to their children and grandchildren.

Discuss what it means to have an imagination. List all the students' ideas on the board or a chart, and have them formulate a definition of "imagination."

In this story, one "answer" to the question, "What if carousel horses came to life?" is presented. Brainstorm with the students other possibilities for "what if..." questions when inanimate objects come to life. Save the ideas so that students searching for fantasy story writing topics may use them.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Make a class "Memory Box." At the end of each week, discuss possible items to be placed in the box and, as a class, choose one. The item for the box might be an actual object, or it might be a description of something which happened that made the week memorable. On the last day of school, open the box and discuss the memories from the school year.

In a space large enough for creative movement, pantomime the motion of a carousel. Before doing the actions, discuss how a carousel starts slowly, gradually increases in speed (both forward and up-and-down), and then gradually slows again until it comes to a stop. Play appropriate carousel music to accompany this movement.

Have students write additional adventures for the two sisters on carousel horses. Where will they go? What will they do?

Lippizaners are mentioned in the story. Have students research them and other breeds of horses. Have them record their findings on a chart that tells the distinguishing characteristics of each type.

Have the students make carousel horses. Include a variety of materials for them to use in addition to paper, such as cloth, glitter, ribbon, assorted fabric trims, etc. For small horses, drinking straws may serve as the poles. For larger horses, students might work with partners and use cardboard wrapping paper rolls for poles. In both instances, they will need two horses identically decorated so that the insides can be glued together with the "pole" between them. Display the smaller horses by placing the straw poles in small bits of clay and setting them on a "lazy Susan" or similar object that will turn around. Display the larger horses going up and down around the classroom walls.

Use the story to review the concepts of fantasy and reality. Make a two column chart, with the words "Fantasy" and "Reality" at the top of the columns. Have students brainstorm events from the story and decide whether they could really happen or not. Record the story events in the appropriate column on the chart.

In the story, one of the sisters lured the horses back to their places on the carousel by playing "Clair de Lune" by Debussy. Obtain a recording of this piece and play it for the students. Discuss how it made them feel and why it was a good choice for bringing the horses back.



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Have students write a "Fix-It" Handbook. Brainstorm with the students a list of things they know how to fix. Have them write a page of instructions describing how to fix an object, illustrating their directions if necessary. Compile their pages into a handbook.

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

- The Patchwork Quilt
- The Lotus Seed
- Mrs. Katz and Tush

RELATED THEMES:

- family traditions
- Imagination
- merry-go-rounds
- memories

About The Author:

Liz Rosenberg is an award-winning poet and the author of several books for children. She teaches creative writing at the State University of New York at Binghamton, where she lives ~ ~ith her husband and son.

About The Illustrator:

Jim LaMarche has worked as a commercial artist and portraitist and has illustrated many books for children, including the prize-winning Rainbabies. A Wisconsin native, he presently lives in Santa Cruz, California, with his wife and three sons.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

UP AND DOWN ON THE MERRY-GO-ROUND by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, illus. by Ted Rand (Henry Holt)

THE ALWAYS PRAYER SHAWL by Sheldon Oberman, illus. by Ted Lewin (Boyd's Mills Press)

THE LONG SILK STRAND: A GRANDMOTHER'S LEGACY TO HER GRANDDAUGHTER by Laura E. Williams, illus. by Grayce Bochak (Boyd's Mills Press)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

THE MEMORY BOX by Mary Bahr, illus. by David Cunningham (Albert Whitman)

THE WOODEN DOLL by Susan Bonners (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)

CAROUSEL ROUND AND ROUND by Kay Chorao (Clarion)

CAROUSEL by Donald Crews (Greenwillow) RETURNING NICHOLAS by Deborah Durland DeSaix (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

MY MAMA HAD A DANCING HEART by Libba Moore Gray, illus. by Raúl Colón (Orchard)

BASKET by George Ella Lyon, illus. by Mary Szilagyi (Orchard)

THE KEEPING QUILT by Patricia Polacco (Simon & Schuster) THE SONG OF THE LAST MIGUEL by Carol Saul. (Whispering Coyote)

BRINGING THE FARMHOUSE HOME by Gloria Whelan, illus. by Jada Rowland (Simon & Schuster)

Programs Details

Length:

30 minutes

Subject Areas:

Heritage

Audience Levels:

Ages 6 - 11

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