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Jan/Feb/Mar 2007

The Mitten

Good literature can be a spring board for a variety of learning opportunities. The Mitten, a Russian folktale is one of my favorites to share in January. Plan to spend at least a week with The Mitten theme and related activities.

Begin the week by reading either the Jan Brett or the Alvin Tresselt version, read the other version the next day.

On the third day review the two versions by comparing and contrasting. Have a class chart prepared before your discussion with two headings: Same and Different. Record the children's answers on the chart as they share. What is the same? What is different? Do they have the same animals? If not, what animals are different? Does one have more animals than the other? Which has more? Which has fewer? Compare the illustrations of the two books.

On the fourth day review both stories by using a felt board set or showing the illustrations of both books. Have the children think about which version they like best. Have butcher paper prepared ahead of time to make a large class graph. Entitle the graph: My favorite version of The Mitten is by Jan Brett or Alvin Tresselt. Have gold and white mitten cut outs available to glue under the author's name. As each child takes their turn, have them state their choice in a complete sentence. "My favorite version of The Mitten is by _____." As the graph progresses compare and contrast, which column on the graph has the most mittens? Which has the least? At the end count and write the totals on the graph. Read the favorite version before the children go home that day.

An idea for the culmination activity for the fifth day could be to have the children sew large mittens and have pictures of animals to

go inside. Prepare ahead of time two large mittens per child (these can be felt or poster board) if felt is used, you will need large plastic needles to sew them together. If poster board is used, you will need to pre-punch holes around the outside of the mitten for the children to sew. Pictures for the story can be die cuts (these are available for the Alvin Tresselt version by special order from Sisters In Stitches) or, you may have black line masters with pre printed pictures on them to go inside mitten. This is a great opportunity for the children to retell the story to a partner at school and to their family at home.



Mitten Extension Ideas

Discuss with children the concept of pairs. Mittens come in pairs, what other things come in pairs? Brainstorm with the children; socks, shoes, boots, etc. Have the children bring a pair of something to school, line the items up in a row and practice counting by twos.

Cut mitten shapes out of sponges (cut large and small mitten shapes), have the children

sponge paint a white 8 ½” X 11” piece of construction paper, using the large mitten to sponge paint the middle of the paper. After it is dry, have children use the small mitten to create a border (using an A, B, A or an A, B, B pattern) around the edge of the paper.

Decorate pre cut mitten shapes with stickers or pre cut shapes such as snowflakes then attach the two mittens together with yarn. Hang through out the classroom.

Have a discussion on winter clothing. Make a chart with what children would need to keep warm in the winter. List all the children’s ideas. Another class graph idea would be to discuss whether your children preferred mittens or gloves. This could be extended to make a class book. Have preprinted pages with “I like wearing

take dictation or if the children are able, they can write their own idea down. For illustrations, the children can draw self portraits wearing either the mittens or gloves or just draw a pair of mittens or gloves on their page.



mittens because _____.” Or “I like wearing gloves because _____.” You can

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