

# OWL MOON

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By Jane Yolen, ill. by John Schoenherr (Philomel)

Themes: Families, Nature

Grade Level: K - 3

Running Time: 8 minutes, iconographic

## SUMMARY

This is a story of a little girl and her father, who go owling together on a moon-lit winter night. As the father and daughter walk through the woods on their search for the great horned owl, the daughter discovers many things about how a winter night feels, how much is said in silence, how much can be learned from listening and watching. At the end of the story, the father and daughter meet up with the owl they were in search of. The owl stares at the father and daughter. The father and daughter stare back at the owl. Then, the owl flies away and the father and the daughter head for home. The magic of winter, of the love between a parent and child, and the growth of a little girl who sees the world as a magical, wondrous place is explored in this simple yet telling story.

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore relationships
- Children will investigate the many things they can learn through the use of each of their five senses.
- Children will learn about nocturnal animals

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, *OWL MOON* with children. Ask: What kinds of things did the artists do to make you feel that the weather was very cold? How would you have felt walking through the woods at night if you were the girl in the story? How do you think the girl would have felt if she and her father did not see an owl? What might have been her favorite part of the night walk? Why do you think the girl decided not to say anything after she saw the owl? What

do you think the girl did when she arrived home? How do you think the girl might feel on her second owling trip? Would she feel differently, or the same way she did on the first trip?

Talk with children about special things they may have done with a close friend or family member. Ask: What do you like most about spending time alone with this person? What kinds of things do you talk about? What other kinds of things do you like to do with this person? Explain to children that the film, *OWL MOON*, is about something special that a father and his daughter do together. Tell children to pay special attention to how the girl feels about spending time with her father. Later, have children compare the girl's feelings to the feelings they have when spending time alone with a close friend or family member.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Have children recall the way sounds the girl in the film heard with her ears, the things she saw with her eyes, the way her mouth felt when covered by the scarf. Then take children outdoors. Have them close their eyes and describe what they "see" by using their ears. (You might want to bring along some musical instruments or other objects that create sound and see if children can identify them.) Throughout the year, when outdoors with children, talk with them about the ways the weather makes their faces, hands, toes feel. Use every opportunity to help the children in your group develop sensory awareness.

Ask children if they have ever seen or heard an owl. Emphasize that owls are nocturnal animals. Explain that they have the ability to see very well at night. Describe other nocturnal animals that are busy hunting for food or building their homes while children sleep. (These animals include cats, rabbit, some birds, and tree frogs.) Later, supply a large

sheet of craft paper and black paint children can use to paint a night scene. Then supply white chalk that children can use to draw nocturnal animals on the night scene.

Encourage children to look outdoors on a clear moonlit night. The next day, talk in the class about the way the moon changed the look of the night time. Ask: What did the moon look like? What did the ground look like? How did you feel when you looked out at the moonlit night? (You might also play some different kinds of music in the classroom and ask children to describe which recording felt most like a moonlit night.)

Offer children a story starter such as the following: One night a boy and his mother went searching for a..... Let each child in the group contribute to the story, printing each child's contribution as they speak. When the story has been completed, give each child art supplies that they can use to illustrate their story. Later, encourage children to explore their own story further by asking questions similar to those you may have asked about *OWL MOON*. For example: How do you think the mother and son felt about one another in the story? What might have happened to the mother and son after the story ended? How does this mother and son remind you of you and your parents? How are they different?

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