Animal School:
Pokey the Mighty Warrior

Parents and Teachers' Resources

Suggested ages: 4-8 years | Early Years / Primary

About the Story

Pokey Porcupine has a wonderful imagination. He can be a schoolteacher, an astronaut, a firefighter or even a superhero. One day, he decides to become a mighty warrior and invites his animal friends to join the fun.

Pokey invites Danny Dingo too, but Danny responds unkindly. Fergus Frog, Robbie Rabbit and Candis Koala stand up for their friend. At the end, Pokey offers Danny another chance to join the game, and the friends march through Animal School together.

Themes to Explore

- Imagination and make-believe
- Friendship and belonging
- Kindness and second chances
- Standing up for a friend
- Recognising feelings and making better choices

Before Reading

- What can you see on the cover?
- What do you think a mighty warrior might do?
- What do you like pretending to be?
- What might happen in a place called Animal School?

During Reading

- What does Pokey imagine himself being? Which would you choose?
- Who joins Pokey in his game?
- What does Pokey say to invite Danny to play?
- How does Danny respond to Pokey and his friends?
- How do you think Pokey feels when Danny laughs at him?
- What do Pokey's friends say to stand up for him?

After Reading

- What happens when Danny tries to pull out Pokey's quills?
- Why do you think Danny says nobody wants to play with him?
- Pokey had already invited Danny to play. Why do you think he invites him again?
- How does Danny respond to the second invitation?
- How might Pokey and Danny feel at the end?
- What could Danny do to be a good friend as they play?
- Which character would you like to play with? Why?
- Which part of the story did you like best?
- How can we make someone feel welcome in a game?
- What adventure could the friends imagine next?

Classroom Activities

1. Put the Story in Order

Draw four pictures showing the main events: Pokey starts the game; Danny is unkind; the friends stand up for Pokey; Pokey invites Danny again. Put the pictures in order and use them to retell the story.

2. A Favourite Character

Draw Pokey, Fergus, Robbie, Candis or Danny. Add a speech bubble with something that character says, or something you imagine they might say. Tell a partner why you chose that character.

3. Feelings in the Pictures

Choose a picture from the beginning, middle and end. Look at the characters' faces and bodies. What might they be feeling? Draw a face or choose a word to match each moment.

4. Come and Play!

Use animal puppets or paper characters to make up a short conversation. One character invites another to join a game. What could they say? How might the other character reply?

More Creative Activities

5. Pokey's Next Adventure

What could Pokey pretend to be tomorrow? Draw him in a new role and give your picture a title. Add a sentence beginning, "Today, Pokey imagined he was..." Younger children can tell their idea to an adult.

6. Danny's Next Day

Imagine Danny arriving at Animal School the next morning. What might he say to Pokey? Draw a two-picture scene or write a few lines showing how their next game begins.

7. Make a Friendship Poster

Create a poster called "Come and Join Us!" Add drawings and friendly words that could help someone feel welcome. Children can contribute one picture or phrase to a shared class display.

8. A New Animal Friend

Invent another animal who could attend Animal School. Give the character a name and draw them. What game would they enjoy? How would Pokey introduce them to the others?

Learning Connections

English: listening, speaking, retelling, predicting, describing characters and creating dialogue.

Personal and Social Learning: recognising feelings, friendship, cooperation and kindness.

Visual Arts and Drama: drawing characters, making puppets and inventing pretend adventures.

At Home

Share a favourite page together. Ask, "What would you say if Pokey invited you to play?" Then imagine a new adventure for Pokey and his friends. Your child could draw it, tell it aloud or act it out with toys.

A Final Question

What do you think makes Pokey a mighty warrior?