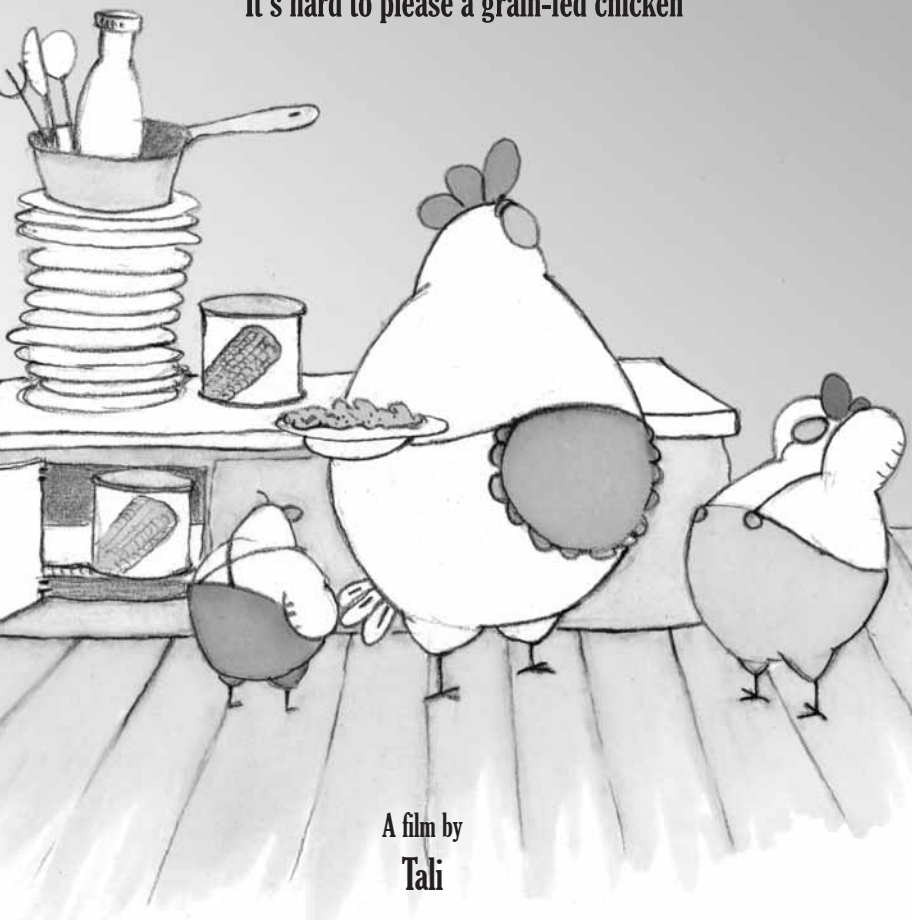


LESSON PLAN

At Home with Mrs. Hen

It's hard to please a grain-fed chicken



A film by
Tali

A NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRODUCTION



Lesson plan prepared by Louise Sarrasin, Educator
Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM), Montreal, Quebec

At Home with Mrs. Hen

Director: Tali

Producer: Marc Bertrand

2006 - 7 min 52 s

Technique: paper drawings and colouring

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Canada 1 800 267-7710

Web site www.nfb.ca/animation

At Home with Mrs. Hen

LESSON PLAN

Objective

Help students demonstrate openness towards the family and understand the factors that promote harmonious relationships among family members

Target audience

Students 8 to 10

Connections

Languages

Personal development

Arts education

Materials

VCR, television set, sheet of white paper, coloured pencils or markers and illustrated books and stories depicting scenes of everyday family life

Summary of the lesson plan

This lesson plan tackles the theme of the family, examining the issues that could cause problems, or provide satisfaction, in family relationships. It will enable students to demonstrate openness about the family, and reflect upon how the behaviour of each member of their family affects their own. The plan comprises an activity related to the lesson theme and an enrichment activity.

Start and preparatory activity

Approximate duration: 45 minutes

Explain that, throughout the activity, the students will be asked to discuss the relationships that each member of a given family develops with the other members. First, they will probe the nature of such relationships, their quality and the ways they can be improved if necessary. Tell the students

that their discussion must be conducted respectfully. The point of this exercise is not to judge families, but to understand how family members can build harmonious relationships with one another.

To start off the discussion, divide students into groups of three to look at images representing a variety of families. To each group, hand an illustrated story or book containing images of everyday family life, such as a family of bears picnicking in the countryside, a mother reading a book to her little boy or parents going to the market with their children. The stories can be about human or animal families. Students can use the following questions to help them in their thinking:

- Who are the characters in the family? Describe them briefly.
- What activity are the family members engaged in together? In your opinion, how does each of the family members feel?
- How is this family like your own family? How is it different?

After the students have looked at the images carefully in teams, bring all the teams together and start them thinking about the theme, using the following questions:

- How can you tell whether family members have a good relationship with one another? Give some examples.
- What sort of things could cause problems among them?
- Give examples of problems like those in everyday life.

To close the discussion, you could reiterate the positive examples of family relationships given by the students.

Activity

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Step 1: Explain that the class will be seeing an animated film that humorously tells the story of a family problem in an ordinary family. Screen the first few minutes of *At Home with Mrs. Hen*. Stop the film when the eldest swipes at the can with his foot and chirps at his little brother in the kitchen. Tell the students they have to guess how the film continues, and act out the continuation through a role-playing game.

But first, determine their understanding of each character with the following questions:

- In your opinion, what kind of mother is Mrs. Hen? Is she affectionate? Authoritarian? Understanding?
- How is she looking after her children so far?
- How does the eldest behave towards his mother? How does he behave towards the youngest? What makes him act the way he does?
- Why does Mrs. Hen leave the house and go sit in the tree?
- How will the children react to her leaving the house?

Step 2: Ask the students to go back into the same teams and assign a role to each team member: one student plays Mrs. Hen, another plays the youngest child, and the third plays the eldest. Ask them to act out how the film continues, by imagining how each of the characters will react. You can take about 15 minutes for this step.

Step 3: Bring all the teams together and have them discuss their role-playing using the following questions:

- What happened in your role-playing scenario?
- What did the children do after their mother left the house? What did Mrs. Hen do?
- How did your story end? What solutions did you find to deal with the problem?
- How did you feel while playing your role?
- Could scenes like the ones in the film take place in your own home? How? Why?

Step 4: Out of all the possible endings acted out, ask the students to choose which they consider most likely. Ask them to explain why. Then, screen the rest of the film so that the students can compare the ending they expected with the film's real ending. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

- How does Mrs. Hen feel at the beginning of the film? How does she feel at the end?
- What do you think of the eldest child's behaviour at the beginning of the film? What do you think of it at the end?
- Why did the eldest child change his behaviour?
- How is the real ending different from the ending you imagined?

Conclude the discussion by introducing more general questions:

- What was the director trying to say with this film?
- How can we understand a film that has no words?
- What images in the film did you find funniest?
- Why did the director choose to portray her problem using humour?

Recap

Suggested duration: 60 minutes

Suggest that the students go back into their teams and create a short story with images only. For inspiration, they should think about a conflict similar to that experienced by Mrs. Hen. For example: Mom or Dad would like the child to go to bed, but the child refuses. After each team's story is finished, ask the other teams to guess the story from the images alone.

Reflective sharing

Help the students determine what problem Mrs. Hen is having with her eldest child, and help them understand that the same problem could come up in many families. Determine how well the students understand the problem, and encourage them to suggest possible solutions. Make sure that the issues are discussed with respect, and that no student belittles the solutions suggested by others. The students should also understand that humour can often be used to play down situations and make them less dramatic.
