

Painted Tales - In Winter Still

A Claude Monet story

Lesson Plan

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Objective

Give students the opportunity to discover the painter Claude Monet and to appreciate his artistic work through the story *In Winter Still*, inspired by Oscar Wilde's short story "The Selfish Giant."

Target audience

Students aged 6 to 9

Connections

Languages and literature
Arts and culture

Film needed for lesson plan

– *In Winter Still* (10 min 1 s)

Summary

This lesson plan will enable students to explore the artistic universe of Claude Monet through the story *In Winter Still*, adapted from Oscar Wilde's short story "The Selfish Giant" (*see note 1*).

Preparatory activity: Discovering the selfish giant.

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

Read aloud Oscar Wilde's story *The Selfish Giant* (*see note 2*). Gather students' first impressions by asking the following questions: What is this story about? Who are the main characters? Where does the action take place? Why is it winter year-round in the giant's garden? How will spring come back to the garden? How are the seasons described? How does the giant behave towards the children in the beginning? And at the end of the story? What happens to the little boy at the end of the story? Why does the giant love the little boy so much? When will he see him again? What did you learn from this story? What did you like about it? What is your favourite season? Why? What are the games you like to play each season? What is in this garden (flowers, trees, animals, colours)? Once the discussion has ended, ask students to draw or paint themselves playing in a garden with their friends in their favourite season. Ask them to form pairs and show each other their pictures and look carefully at the colours and elements of nature that each one has chosen. Then, show students Monet's paintings and explain that in the next activity they will discover what a great painter he was.

ACTIVITY: Once upon a time, there lived a painter named Monet...

Approximate duration: 75 minutes

Step 1: Show the first few minutes of the film *In Winter Still*: (10 s to 38 s). Ask students to describe these first images (falling snow and an old man) and try and guess who the person is.

Continue showing the film (38 s to 1 min 49 s), and then ask these questions: Why is Monet called a magician in this film? It was said that Monet saw worlds that no one else in the world could see and that he was able to paint these worlds with his hands. In your opinion, what does the narrator mean by that? How does the filmmaker show us what Monet was able to do? What images are shown? The film lets you see Monet's garden through his eyes and his way of painting. What are the main colours used in the images of flowers, birds, Monet himself and his clothing that are striking in this film? How does the viewer come to feel as if they are alive? What is your reaction to the singing of the birds?

Step 2: Finish showing the film and use the following questions to help your students discover some of the story's elements: What does Monet like to paint above all? What inspires him? How does the director show us this? How does the gardener behave towards the children? Why? How does the film show us that he is a selfish person? What actions does he carry out to get what he wants? How does the gardener's behaviour affect the children? How does it affect Monet? What does the little boy do to try and fight the giant's selfishness? How are the seasons shown in the film and what colours are used?

Step 3: Watch some film sequences again to show what makes Monet feel sad. Ask students the reason for his sadness by showing them the following sequences again and by asking these questions:

- Monet's sadness and the arrival of the linnet on the window sill: Why is Monet sad? What is the effect of the linnet's song on Monet? How do the images show that Monet is becoming happy once more?
- The sight of the brave little boy holding up the sign in the most remote spot in the garden: What is the little boy doing? How does Monet react when he sees him?
- Spring returns. What brings spring back? What colours are used in the film to show this?
- What is Monet's hand painting on the canvas and what happens after that? In your opinion, who is the little boy, and what does he do at the end of the film?

Step 4: To conclude the activity, use the following questions to ask students to compare the story as told in the film with the story of the selfish giant which they discovered in the preparatory activity. How do these stories begin and end? How are they similar? How are they different? What does animation add to the story? To its characters? How does the film enable us to obtain a better understanding of Monet the painter? Explain. There are a lot of musical selections in the film. How do these musical pieces affect you? How do you think that the director was able to make his characters so full of life?

Recap

Suggested duration: 45 minutes

Ask students to draw or paint a garden in the style of Monet. Ask the older ones to describe it in a few sentences and the younger ones in a few words.

Reflective sharing

Have students explain what they now know about the life of Monet: his style of painting, his favourite colours and his sources of inspiration. In addition, ask them to explain how the story makes it easier to get to know this great painter.

Note:

1. This lesson plan has been designed for students of various age groups. You can adapt it to meet the needs of your students by selecting those questions that are age appropriate for your group.

2. Many versions exist of Oscar Wilde's story "The Selfish Giant." We suggest a web version below.

Webography

- The Fondation Claude Monet website:

fondation-monet.fr/uk

Since 1980, The Fondation Claude Monet, owned by the Académie des Beaux Arts, seeks to preserve and renew the property of Giverny, Monet's family residence.

- Claude Monet Life and Art:

intermonet.com/monet.htm

- The colours of Monet:

intermonet.com/colors/couleurs.htm

This site presents extensive information on Claude Monet. A large collection of his paintings is available online.

- Marmottan Monet Museum:

marmottan.com/uk/index_uk.asp

The Museum website presents some of Monet's paintings from their large collection of the master's works.

- Ariane, Guide Interpreter, Giverny France:

giverny-impression.com

Ariane is a guide in Giverny. On her website, you will find videos and photos of Giverny garden, a source of inspiration in Monet's paintings.

- "The Selfish Giant" from *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* by Oscar Wilde:

gutenberg.org/etext/902