



Classroom Guide

Title: **Abiyoyo**

Author: **Pete Seeger**

Illustrator: **Michael Hays**

Theme: Stories can be told through many means, including song and dance.

Program Summary: Folk singer and storyteller Pete Seeger performs this “story song,” based on a South African lullaby and folk story, in which a boy and his father come up with a plan to save the townspeople from the giant, Abiyoyo. LeVar reveals some of the ways a story can be told with music, including an upbeat music video, a rap music performance by the group Run DMC, a professional dance group’s interpretation of “Beauty and the Beast,” and computer animation accompanied by music.

Topics for Discussion:

Discuss the concept of “story” with the class. What makes a story a story? What are some different types of stories? Invite students to name some of their favorite stories.

A common plot in folktales involves a small or undistinguished character that lacks power defeating a character that is large, strong, or powerful. Besides *Abiyoyo*, what other stories can students recall that use this plot device? Discuss the ways in which the large, powerful characters are subdued in these stories.

Discuss the fantasy vs. reality aspects of monsters. Where do they originate? With what monsters are students familiar (i.e., through stories, television, movies, etc.)?

Pose the question to the class: “How would you tame a monster?” Encourage creative responses.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Develop a set of creative dramatics cards utilizing scenes and characters from familiar stories. Restrict the scenes to 1-3 characters and choose scenes that have obvious emotions. Students must dramatize the scenes using facial expressions and hand and body movements, but no words. For example, they might act out the following: Goldilocks sampling the bowls of porridge; Red Riding Hood realizing her grandmother is really the wolf; Cinderella fleeing from the ball; an enraged Rumpelstiltskin after the miller’s daughter guesses his name; and others.

Gather a collection of wordless picture books and share some of them with the class. Discuss ways in which the illustrators tell stories without using words. Have students make their own wordless books and provide an opportunity for them to share their stories with the class. Place their books in the classroom library.



Classroom Guide

Title: **Abiyoyo**

Author: **Pete Seeger**

Illustrator: **Michael Hays**

Obtain a copy of the book, *Abiyoyo*, and read the passages that describe the creature to the students. Provide art materials (crayons, chalk, or paints) and have them create their own version of what “Abiyoyo” looks like.

Enlist the aid of an instrumental music teacher and some older students (middle or high school) to bring the instruments that represent the characters in “Peter and the Wolf.” Have them demonstrate how the instruments are played as students listen to the differences in the sounds they make. Obtain a recorded version of “Peter and the Wolf” and play it for the students. Discuss how the sounds of the instruments are appropriate for each of the characters.

With the assistance of the music teacher, listen to recordings of familiar folk songs with students and have a sing-along. Discuss with students that folk songs are like folk tales in that they are songs “of the people,” often relating to occupations, life experiences, or geographical regions.

Play selections of different types of music and discuss the feelings evoked by each piece. Discuss the music in terms of emotions, such as sad, scary, joyful, angry, confused, etc. Talk about the types of story characters that the pieces of music suggest.

With the help of the library media specialist, have students locate information about “monsters” that some people believe are real. Possibilities for research include the Loch Ness Monster, the Abominable Snowman, Bigfoot, Yeti, Sasquatch, or figures from regional lore with which students are familiar. (They might find that the same creature can be referred to by different names.)

Gather a collection of song picture books. (See “Supplementary Booklist” for a few suggestions.) Read and sing the books with the class. Discuss the stories in the songs, i.e., name the characters, identify the setting, relate the events in the plot.

Book Review:

Peter and the Wolf, adapted from the musical tale by Sergei Prokofiev, illustrated by Erna Voigt

Supplementary Booklist:

This Land Is Your Land by Woody Guthrie, illustrated by Kathy Jakobsen



Classroom Guide

Title: **Abiyoyo**

Author: **Pete Seeger**

Illustrator: **Michael Hays**

Frog Went A-Courtin' by John Langstaff

Hush Little Baby by Sylvia Long

Skip to My Lou by Robert Quackenbush

I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly by Glen Rounds

The Hobyahs by Robert D. San Souci, illustrated by Alexi Natchev

Over in the Meadow by Olive A. Wadsworth, illustrated by Mary Maki Rae

Related Themes:

- communication without words
- storytelling
- dance

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #28 — Feelings
- Program #85 — Sophie and Lou
- Program #95 — Silent Lotus

About the Author: The recordings of folksinger and storyteller Pete Seeger are enormously popular with both children and adults. Born into a musical New York City family, Seeger traveled the United States, mostly by train and hitchhiking, acquiring many songs from people along the way. He also mastered his favorite instrument—the five-string banjo. Well-known songs that Pete Seeger either wrote or collaborated on include “Where Have All the Flowers Gone,” “If I Had a Hammer,” and “Turn, Turn, Turn.”

About the Illustrator: Michael Hays has a degree in illustration from the Rhode Island School of Design. He teaches courses in children’s book illustration at Columbia College in Chicago. *Abiyoyo* is the first children’s book he illustrated.