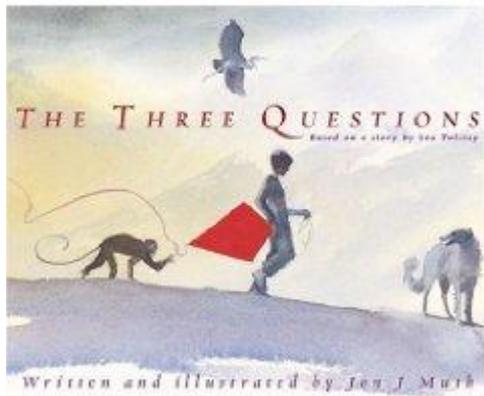


Amar Shobha Sarna, Malaysia



'The Three Questions' by **Jon J Muth**

Themes:

It is about a boy with animal friends who is looking for answers to three questions:

When is the best time to do things?
What is the most important one?
What is the right thing to do?

Along his journey, he meets 'obstacles' which turn out to be the answers to his questions. It does not have much dialogue or prose. However, there is a rich interplay of colours and illustrations which create the mood required for that particular page.

Teaching Strategies/ Techniques:

- **Name The Animal**

The teacher could take pages 1-10 and get students (SS) to identify the animals on those pages. She could then have an interactive session where they describe the animals in terms of colours, physical features, perhaps distinguishing features. She could also get them to imitate the sounds and movements of the animals and I am sure this would get the children up and about. Guaranteed to be a totally involved session!

- **What Are My Answers?**

The teacher could go through pages 1-8 with the children. She could pause at page 8 (where Nikolai was thinking of asking Leo for the answers). At this juncture, she could turn to the SS and ask them what they think the answers could be. They could work in pairs or be totally spontaneous about it. It would be interesting to listen to their viewpoints.

- **Exploit the Illustrations**

The illustrations in this book are fantastic! I shall not talk about the colours yet for they will be discussed in the next activity. Muth has cleverly designed the pages in such a way that the mood is clearly spelt out. Questions could be asked regarding the children's impressions of these illustrations.

- **Exploit the Hues**

The colour in the illustrations could be exploited. This exercise could be used for older SS or even adolescents to sensitise them to feelings and emotions associated with colours. It would also be interesting to know what coloured illustrations evoked within them.

- **Role Play**

The teacher could get the SS to role-play the story. This would be good for pronunciation and enunciation practice. She could also get the SS to create logical dialogues where the illustrations are not supported by dialogues. The answers to the three questions would also go down well with the Malaysian setting since imparting moral values is an integral part of the national curriculum.

- **Re-enacting Scenes/Modified Tableau**

This is a different from role-play. What the teacher could do is to go through the story with the students. Then she could get them into groups to create a modified tableau. They would pick the illustration that appeals most to them and create a freeze frame or a modified tableau.

- **The Question-and-Answer Game**

A post reading activity could be the following. The teacher could get each SS to write one question on a piece of paper. All these pieces of paper are put into a box. Then each SS would pick out a piece of paper, read the question and write down her/his answer on the paper itself. The papers go back into the box. The teacher picks out each paper, reads out the question and the answer and elicits responses from the SS. Alternatively, the teacher could put some manila cards on the wall. SS go round and write down a question on the cards and also answers a question posed on the cards. They can then do a gallery walk and respond to the questions and answers on the cards.

- **Choral Speaking**

The responses from Activity 7 can be compiled into a choral speaking piece. Something original and something 'owned' by the students.