THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE
Adapted by: Janet Stevens
Publisher: Holiday House

THEME:
Being a winner means more than just being the first or the best; more importantly, it means trying hard and being true to yourself.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:
The time-honored classic about a tortoise who wins the race against a speedy hare is retold. LeVar faces a big challenge when he gets ready to compete against some of Hawaii's top bicyclists in a race. When he decides to tackle the tough obstacle course the Marines use in Hawaii, LeVar realizes that to be a "winner" means trying hard and doing your best. He also finds out more about "doing your best" when he visits the Japan International Karate Center and talks to young karate students.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:
Invite students to share experiences with tasks that have been very hard for them to accomplish.

Discuss why Hare lost the race when he was actually a much faster runner than Tortoise. What lesson did Hare learn from losing the race?
Tortoise had the support and encouragement of his friends. How did this help him in the race? Discuss how the support of our friends helps us in our daily lives.

Discuss good sportsmanship with the class. Have students cite evidence from the story that Hare did not always display good sportsmanship.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:
Lead the students in constructing a Venn diagram comparing a turtle and a tortoise.

Invite someone who operates a bicycle shop into the classroom to explain how the parts of a bicycle work.

Brainstorm a list of bicycle safety rules. Have students select a rule they wish to illustrate on a bicycle safety poster, and display these posters around the school. Students might also write "public service" announcements about bicycle safety and present them over the school intercom.

Invite a karate instructor into the classroom to demonstrate some moves and explain the philosophy of this martial art.

With the assistance of the physical education teacher, plan a simple obstacle course that contains a variety of tasks for students to try. Downplay the competition element and stress the importance of trying their best, even at the most difficult tasks on the course.

Obtain some fables to read to the class. (Some, like The Tortoise and the Hare, exist in single illustrated versions, and others are in collections.) Talk about the characteristics of a fable (i.e., stories are short and usually feature animal characters, there is a "moral" or lesson to be learned and it is generally stated at the end, etc.) Discuss the lessons or morals at the ends of these stories.

There are a number of sports figures whose stories about never giving up are well known. Possibilities include Wilma Rudolph, Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, Lou Gehrig, Greg Louganis, John Elway, and others. Many of their stories are available in picture book biographies. Obtain some of these biographies. Place students with partners to research these individuals. Have them draw portraits of their subjects and write captions that tell why their accomplishments are significant. Display the captioned pictures on a bulletin board titled, "They Never Gave Up.”

Set up a graffiti board that features good sportsmanship. Encourage the students to be on the lookout for evidence of good sportsmanship on the playground, in physical education class, in extracurricular sports activities, and other places. Have a supply of paper word bubbles available that students may use to write the examples of good sportsmanship they see and attach these bubbles to the graffiti board. They might also look for examples in the news that they could add to the board. Periodically, discuss the items that the students have found.

RELATED THEMES:
folktales
sports
RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:
Program #68 — Bicycle Man
Program #91 — Amazing Grace
Program #65 — Sports Pages
Program #117 — Uncle Jed's Barbershop

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
As a child, Janet Stevens was labeled the "class artist." Today, she views herself primarily as an illustrator and frequently chooses to retell folktale and illustrate them with her own particular style of humor. She especially likes to draw animals. She usually draws from models, and objects in her home often appear in her illustrations. Janet's advice for children is (just as Tortoise did in the story) "pursue your dream, even if everyone else doesn't believe you can do it." She received Caldecott Honor Book status for Tops and Bottoms and presently lives in Colorado with her husband and children.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:
SAM JOHNSON AND THE BLUE RIBBON QUILT
by Lisa Campbell Ernst (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)
HOORAY FOR SNAIL!
by John Stadler (HarperCollins)
ALBERT THE RUNNING BEAR'S EXERCISE BOOK
by Barbara Isenberg & Marjorie Jaffe, illus. by Diane de Groat (Clarion)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:
ALLIE'S BASKETBALL DREAM
by Barbara E. Barber, illus. by Darryl Ligasan (Lee & Low)
THE GREAT BALL GAME: A MUSKOGEE STORY
retold by Joseph Bruchac, illus. by Susan L. Roth (Dial)
TWELVE TALES FROM AESOP
retold and illustrated by Eric Carle (Philomel)
BUNNIES AND THEIR SPORTS
by Nancy Carlson (Viking)
BICYCLE RACE
by Donald Crews (Greenwillow)
KOALA LOU
by Mem Fox, illus. by Pamela Lofts (Harcourt Brace)
BICYCLE BOOK
by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House)

THE GREAT RACE
by Paul Goble (Bradbury)
AESOP'S FABLES
illustrated by Heidi Holder (Viking)
JOJO'S FLYING SIDE KICK
by Brian Pinkney (Simon & Schuster)
THE TOWN MOUSE & THE COUNTRY MOUSE
adapted and illustrated by Janet Stevens (Holiday House)
THE MUD FLAT OLYMPICS
by James Stevenson (Greenwillow)