
LUDLOW LAUGHS

Author: Jon Agee

Publisher: Farrar, Straus & Giroux

THEME:

Laughter is the best medicine because it makes people feel good.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Ludlow is a big grump who never laughs or even smiles. One night he has the funniest dream ever. When he starts laughing, the whole world laughs with him.

LeVar learns how to be funny from a 'comedy makeover specialist'. Viewers also see old slapstick comedy shows and take a peek behind the scenes of a comedy club where they meet a real-life stand-up comic.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Ask the students, "What makes you laugh?" Discuss why all the different situations they mention make them laugh.

Invite students to share an experience in which something very funny happened to them.

There was proof in *Ludlow Laughs* that laughter is contagious. Discuss how this happens and why it is hard *not* to laugh when others are laughing.

Explain "slapstick comedy" to the students and give examples from the program, such as the pies in the face, the physical comedy in the old-time movies, and the falls of the stand-up comic. Discuss why people find this type of comedy funny. Also discuss why untrained people should not try some of the physical comedy shown in the program.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Obtain several joke and riddle books. Have them search the books for jokes and riddles they especially like and write them on slips of paper. Put the slips of paper in a box for a daily drawing of "Joke of the Day." Write the joke or riddle on the board in the morning so that students have the day to try to figure out the answer. Have the student who submitted the item to the box tell the answer at the end of the day.

Brainstorm a list of comics from the newspaper. Have the class conduct a survey of students' favorite comic strips. For a larger data pool, survey other classrooms in the building as well. Have students compile the survey data on a graph.

Start a list of books that the class thinks are funny. These might be books that the students have heard as well as books they have read independently. For class read-alouds, discuss why students think they are funny. When students add titles they have read themselves, invite them to share funny parts of the story with the class. After students have compiled several titles, have them make a poster of their recommendations and place it in the school library media center.

As a class, compose a funny story. Decide on characters, a setting, and allow the plot to unfold as students make contributions to the story. Edit the story, also as a class. Print or type the lines of the finished story on enough pages so that each student can illustrate a page. Bind the pages into a book for the classroom library.

Begin a list of words that are synonyms for "laugh." Encourage students to listen for such words when they hear stories and notice them when they read books themselves. The list might include such words as "guffaw," "chuckle," "chortle," "giggle," "snicker," etc. Discuss the differences among the words and invite students to demonstrate how they might sound.

Have students work with a partner to compose riddles. Provide time for each pair to try to stump the class with their riddle. Have students illustrate their riddles and make a riddle book for the school library.

Obtain some face paint and enlist the aid of adult volunteers to paint students' faces as clowns. Collect some old dress-up clothing, hats, wigs, and shoes for clown costumes. Have a clown parade around the school building.

Brainstorm a list of tips, "How to Make Someone Laugh." Post the list in the classroom, and whenever someone needs cheering up, check the list for some ideas.

Have students draw self-portraits of themselves laughing or smiling. Have them cut out the portraits and glue them to a long piece of bulletin board paper. Leave space above the heads for a word balloon. In each balloon, have them write "laughing words," such as "Ha! Ha!" or "Tee hee!" or "Ho! Ho!" or others they might think of. Post a sign above the portrait display that says, "Here we are...laughing!" or "Laughter is the best medicine!" or "Laugh and the world will laugh with you" or something similar.

RELATED THEMES:

emotions
forms of entertainment

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #28 — Feelings

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jon Agee has written and illustrated several books for children as well as illustrated books for other authors. He makes his home in New York City.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

PIG WILLIAM

by Arlene Dubanevich (Simon & Schuster)

SHAKE MY SILLIES OUT

A Raffi Song to Read, illus. by David Allender (Crown)

THE MAKE ME LAUGH! JOKE BOOKS

A series illus. by Joan Hanson (Lerner)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

WHAT'S SO FUNNY, KETU?

by Verna Aardema, illus. by Marc Brown (Dial)

THIS IS ME LAUGHING

by Lynea Bowdish, illus. by Walter Gaffney-Kessell (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

I WANT TO BE A CLOWN

by Ivan Bulloch & Diane James, illus. by Debi Ani, photos by Fiona Pragoff (World Book/Two-Can)

READY, SET, READ—AND LAUGH!: A FUNNY TREASURY FOR BEGINNING READERS

edited by Joanna Cole & Stephanie Calmenson (Doubleday)

DON'T LAUGH, JOE

by Keiko Kasza (Putnam)

THE RANDOM HOUSE BOOK OF HUMOR FOR CHILDREN

selected by Pamela Pollack, illus. by Paul O. Zelinsky (Random House)

FOR LAUGHING OUT LOUD

selected by Jack Prelutsky, illus. by Marjorie Priceman (Knopf)

FUNNY STORIES

compiled by Michael Rosen, illus. by Tony Blundell (Kingfisher)

THE JESTER HAS LOST HIS JINGLE

by David Saltzman (Jester Company)

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY

by George Shannon, illus. by Meg McLean (Houghton Mifflin)

