

Madeline

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ABOUT THE STORY

In this Caldecott Honor book, little Madeline awakes one night in need of an appendectomy. After the other girls at her private school in France see her scar and gifts, they want to have their appendixes out, too. Miss Clavel, their teacher, tells them to count their blessings and be happy they are well.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

German author Ludwig Bemelmans is most likely best known for his lovable character Madeline. His simplistic, rhythmic books about the young heroine are based on his personal experiences. He was awarded the Caldecott Medal for Madeline's Rescue and the Caldecott Honor Medal for Madeline.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Explain to students that boarding schools are places where children stay during the school months. They eat and sleep there in addition to attending classes there. Tell them this is the kind of school that Madeline attends and that it is in Paris, France.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

1. In the story the twelve little girls "broke their bread". Discuss what this figure of speech means. (ate their meals together)
2. Why was Madeline taken to the hospital? (to have her appendix out)
3. What was the special kind of vehicle that took Madeline to the hospital? (ambulance)
4. What was crank on the end of Madeline's hospital bed used for? (to adjust the bed)
5. Discuss why each of the other little girls wanted to have her appendix out, too. (to receive gifts and have a scar)

Language Arts: Rhyming

Have children identify the words that are missing from the following rhyming lines of the book.

1. "Everybody had to cry - not a single eye was" (dry).
2. "Little Madeline sat in bed, cried and cried – her eyes were " (red).
3. "They went home and broke their bread, brushed their teeth and went to" (bed).
4. "In the middle of the night, Miss Clavel turned on the" (light).
5. "She was not afraid of mice - she loved winter, snow, and" (ice).

Language Arts: Creative Writing

Have children imagine that they live at a boarding school like Madeline's. Have them write a story about what they think a day there might be like.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

History & Research Skills: French architecture

Ask students to identify the landmark that is on the cover of the book (Eiffel Tower). Then have children examine the illustration first seen as they open the book (Place de la Concorde). Bring the children to the library media center and research these two landmarks. Use the information found to give a presentation or write a short report.

Math: Brought to Life

Use the children as math manipulatives. Have them line up in two rows of six and act out various mathematic problems (try addition, subtraction, or fractions).

Like Skills: Field Trip

If possible, bring the children to a hospital for a guided tour. If a field trip is not possible, discuss what hospitals are like. Ask if anyone has ever been in a hospital. If so, what was it like?

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Use the Internet to conduct research about the historic landmarks in France. Children gather information and then design posters or other projects demonstrating what they have learned. (Research Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Versailles, Place de la Concorde, River Seine, etc.)