

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text:  **The Song of the Jellicles** by T. S. Eliot

Ideas, Values: Animal, Art, Movement, Joy, Seen and Unseen

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

What is the difference between things we see and things we don’t?

Discuss the difference, and then make two lists: (1) things we see, and (2) things we don’t. Talk about the difference between the two lists.

1st Read:

Read aloud the text while family and/or friends listen.

Vocabulary:

Check to see if there are any words that need to be talked about before the discussion begins. Listeners or readers can use context clues to help figure out possible definitions or use a dictionary or device to get a formal definition. Make sure to add the following words: *Jellicle, caterwaul, airs and graces, gavotte and a jig, toilette, repose, terpsichorean, and caper*.

2nd Read:

Listen to the poem being performed: <https://youtu.be/x24PJf0ddiw>

Discuss if you like the flow of the poem better if it is read more slowly or quickly like a song.

Pre-Seminar Process:

* Share why you are having the discussion.

(Sample script from our classroom Paideia Seminars: Modify to fit your household.)

*“A Paideia seminar is a collaborative, intellectual dialogue about a text, facilitated with open ended questions.”*

*“The main purpose of seminar is to arrive at a fuller understanding of the textual ideas and values, of ourselves, and of each other.”*

* Describe what you want to accomplish.
* Set a Family Goal.
* To balance the talk time
* To refer to the text
* To ask a question
* To speak out of uncertainty
* To build on others’ comments

Seminar Questions:

* Opening (Identify main ideas from the text):
  + Why would it be fun to be a Jellicle Cat? Have younger kids share first if they feel comfortable, and go around by age.

(Don’t share why until everyone has had a chance to answer.)

* + What in the story made you choose that answer? (anyone can share)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
  + Why do you think the author describes the cats so differently in each stanza? How do you know? (Anyone can share)
  + Do you think that the cats only dance when no one is watching?

(reference the text to share how you know.)

* + There are many dance and movement related words in this poem. When you imagine the cats practicing their movements, what do you see?
* What is the purpose of the Jellicle Ball, if any? Why do you think this?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
  + What do you think your favorite type of animal does when no one is watching? What about if they got together as a group?

Post-Seminar Process:

*“Ask each person what they liked most about the discussion.”*

* Have the family do a quick check of the discussion goal.

Post Seminar Content:

* Transition to Writing:

Review and discuss key ideas that you heard, said, and thought during the family seminar.

Writing:

Think back to the closing question of our discussion, “What do you think your favorite type of animal does when no one is watching? What about if they got together as a group?” write a poem or story using that animal and the idea you mentioned.

Compare your draft with family members and pick one to work on together to write a final draft.

This Paideia Lesson Plan was created by:

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\*Text is attached if open sourced.

\*Text is cited if it needs to be procured.

<https://poets.org/poem/song-jellicles>

The Song of the Jellicles

By T.S. Eliot

*Jellicle Cats come out tonight,  
Jellicle Cats come one come all:  
The Jellicle Moon is shining bright–  
Jellicles come to the Jellicle Ball.*

Jellicle Cats are black and white,  
Jellicle Cats are rather small;  
Jellicle Cats are merry and bright,  
And pleasant to hear when they caterwaul.  
Jellicle Cats have cheerful faces,  
Jellicle Cats have bright black eyes;  
They like to practise their airs and graces  
And wait for the Jellicle Moon to rise.

Jellicle Cats develop slowly,  
Jellicle Cats are not too big;  
Jellicle Cats are roly-poly,  
They know how to dance a gavotte and a jig.  
Until the Jellicle Moon appears  
They make their toilette and take their repose:  
Jellicles wash behind their ears,  
Jellicles dry between their toes.

Jellicle Cats are white and black,  
Jellicle Cats are of moderate size;  
Jellicles jump like a jumping-jack,  
Jellicle Cats have moonlit eyes.  
They’re quiet enough in the morning hours,  
They’re quiet enough in the afternoon,  
Reserving their terpsichorean powers  
To dance by the light of the Jellicle Moon.

Jellicle Cats are black and white,  
Jellicle Cats (as I said) are small;  
If it happens to be a stormy night  
They will practise a caper or two in the hall.  
If it happens the sun is shining bright  
You would say they had nothing to do at all:  
They are resting and saving themselves to be right  
For the Jellicle Moon and the Jellicle Ball.