

Family Paideia Seminar Plan

Text: *The Velveteen Rabbit*, by Margery Williams

Ideas, Values: Beauty, Experience, Love, Reality, Wisdom

Pre-Seminar Content

Big Ideas Chat:

A day or two before the seminar, discuss as a group the following question: how does someone or something become *real* to you? Have everyone—adults and children—give an answer.

1st Read:

Have a volunteer read the story aloud while family and friends listen. Check for any words that are unknown, to talk about them after you finish reading the story.

For participants who would like to see William Nicholson’s original illustrations to Margery Williams’ story, you can hear and see the story at <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#inbox?projector=1> .

Vocabulary:

Discuss the unfamiliar words in the story. Explain what they mean, figure them out from the context, or look them up in a dictionary.

2nd Read:

Have everyone re-read the story silently, or, if you have pre-readers in the group, have a different volunteer read the story aloud. Once everyone has read the story for a second time, give everyone 10-15 minutes to sketch one of the scenes from the story.

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):
* What one sentence in this text is the most thought-provoking? (take turns responding, possibly starting with the youngest in your group)
* What does that sentence make you think about? (anyone can answer)
* Core (Analyze textual details):
* Of all the things that make the Skin Horse wise (page three), what do you think is most important? Why?
* According to the Skin Horse, who has the hardest time becoming Real? What makes it so difficult for these “people”?
* In the realm of this story, is wisdom the same as beauty and vice-versa? Why or why not?
* Does someone have to go through hard times in order to become real? Refer to the story.
* Why does the Skin Horse say that Real “lasts for always”? Is that true?
* What ultimately makes the velveteen rabbit Real? Will it last “for always”?
* Closing (Personalize and apply the ideas):
* How can you become more real during this current time in your own life? How can others become more real to you?

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:

Look back at the sketches you made of the story. Now pick another scene from the story that is “real” to you.

* Writing:

After reading and discussing *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams, draw and color an illustration of one of the scenes from the story that is most real to you. Then combine your drawing with those of your other family members to create your own illustrated edition of *The Velveteen Rabbit*. (Make sure that everyone, adults as well as children, provides an illustration for the family edition of this classic text.)

Together, discuss what each of you plans to draw for your scene. Try, if possible, to illustrate different important scenes from the book in order to fully illustrate the story.

Combine the text of the story (see below) with the illustrations created by family members. Staple or otherwise fasten the book together and add it to the family library. Decide together when would be a good time to reread the story together, using the family’s edition.

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.

The text is available in numerous editions starting with the 1922 first edition.

For a version of the text that can be used in creating your family’s own illustrated edition, email Terry Roberts at [troberts@paideia.org](mailto:troberts@paideia.org) .