

STONE SOUP

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By Marcia Brown (Scriber's)
Themes: French Culture/Values
Grade Level: K-3
Running Time: 11 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

STONE SOUP is set in a small French village. Tired and hungry soldiers approach the villagers for food and a place to rest. The unknown soldiers frighten the villagers. The villagers hide their food and inform the soldiers that they do not have a place for them to sleep.

The soldiers tell the villagers that they will make soup from three smooth stones. The villagers are excited by this idea and eagerly help the soldiers gather the pot, water, and stones to make the soup. When the soldiers hint that a few vegetables will make the soup even better, the excited villagers run home and return with many of the vegetables they had previously hidden.

The soldiers and villagers happily enjoy a huge feast together. The villagers even volunteer to bring meat, bread, and cider to the feast. After spending the night in the homes of several outstanding members of the village, the villagers and soldiers say their good-byes. The end of the story finds the once frightened villagers thanking the soldiers for having introduced them to stone soup.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about French culture.
- Children will explore values.
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Locate France on a map. Talk about the continent of Europe, France's neighbors, its climate and Farming regions.

Share the book STONE SOUP with children.

Talk with children about the many modern conveniences we have today including refrigeration, supermarkets, and modern transportation. Then talk with children about what their lives might have been like with out these conveniences. Ask:

- How do you thin you would get to school every day?
- Where would your food come from?
- What kinds of jobs do you think your parents would have?

Talk about the differences between the lives of the villagers and the way we live today. Ask:

- What do you think you would like most about living in a village like this?
- What would you like least?
- How well do you think you would know your neighbors?
- What kinds of chores would you have?
- What would you do for fun?

Have children discuss the different places in their homes where objects are stored, including attics, cellars, tool sheds, garages, etc. Ask children to watch for the many different and unusual kinds of storage places (lofts, wells, cupboards under beds, carrot bins) in the story.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask:

- How do the villagers feel at the beginning of the story as the soldiers first come into the village?
- Do you think the villagers should feel that way> Why? Why not?
- How do you think the soldiers feel when the villagers refuse them food and a place to rest?
- How do you think the villagers and soldiers feel at the end of the story?
- What new things do the villagers learn?
- What do you think the soldiers learn?
- How do the soldiers solve their problem?
- What would happen if the soldiers were to get angry with

the villagers for saying no to them? What if they left the village?

- What other things might the soldiers have done to convince the villagers to give them food and a place to rest?

After discussing these question, present children with a variety of problematic situations they might be involved in. For example, say "Imagine that your friend has a kite that you would really love to fly. Your friend doesn't want you to use the kite. What could you do to help your friend understand that you want to fly the kite?" Encourage children to consider as many different solutions to these situations as they can.

Take children outdoors and collect a variety of objects they can use to make their own imaginary soup. You might collect leaves, rocks, twigs, flowers, etc. Work with children to create a recipe on the chalkboard using these items. For example, children might decide that three sticks, four rocks, two flowers, and ten leaves would make a wonderful "wild soup." (Use a picture reading recipe for younger children and a printed recipe for older children). Then place a large pot on a tabletop. Have children "read" the recipe and work together to put the appropriate ingredients into the soup. Later, have children take turns changing the recipe and seeing if their classmates can follow it.

Try making supremely delicious stone soup with your choice of hearty vegetables.

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