

Teacher's Guide

to

The Sandbox

a 13 minute animated film by
JoDee Samuelson

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada
Distributed by Bullfrog Films

ABOUT FILMMAKER JODEE SAMUELSON

JoDee Samuelson was born in Saskatchewan, raised in Alberta, and has lived in Prince Edward Island since the early 1970s where she has been part of the Island's music, art, and film scene. Her first animated film was the multi-award-winning **The Bath**. This second film, **The Sandbox**, is for young children. It is an artist's quirky and humorous take on environmental issues, wonderfully rich in idea and image.

JoDee Samuelson's inspiration for this film comes, fittingly, from children. Two drawings, both by children JoDee has taught, hang in her office. These works exhibit the striking, primary colours and the simplicity of shape that characterize the view of the world through the eyes of a child.

JoDee laughed when she was asked why she made this film. "I want to save the world, of course! I've always been environmentally aware," she said. "And I wanted to make a film for children that would not be preachy. I didn't want to just build in a message that you could see from one end of the film to the other. I wanted the film to be like child's play."





KEY CONCEPTS

The Sandbox is intended for use by teachers of children aged 5–8 to create awareness of values related to the health of our environment.

RESPECT FOR NATURE

Human life is connected to everything on earth, including all living and non-living things. Respecting nature by sharing our planet, while balancing human needs, is critical to our future well-being and the longevity and diversity of nature's creatures on earth.

COLLABORATION

Through our connectedness, we are responsible for each other. We can solve problems by collaborating and working to find solutions that are beneficial to all.

POWER OF IMAGINATION

Our imaginations allow us to dream – to dream of all things ideal in our world. Imagination creates ideas, which are our most powerful tools. Hence we create, destroy and re-create.



SUGGESTED POST-SCREENING ACTIVITIES

BEAR'S STORY

To elicit each child's particular understanding of Bear's story in the film, the following questions could be asked:

- ▶ What did Bear think when the children were making a world in their sandbox?
- ▶ Why did Bear go far away to the top of the mountain?
- ▶ What did Bear say at the end of the film when the children asked him "how should we start this time?"

By writing the children's responses on the blackboard/chart paper, the personal experiences of each child will illustrate their different points of view.

ALL ABOUT BEARS OR CATS OR...

Children could do a research project to make a class scrapbook on the life of a bear or a cat or any other animal. It could include the following:

- ▶ Where do bears/cats/etc. live and why?
- ▶ What are their habits?
- ▶ How do they live as a family?
- ▶ What do they eat?
- ▶ How do they hibernate?
- ▶ Do they have enemies?

SHARING THE WORLD WITH NATURE

The concepts of sharing, and different kinds of friendship and respect for nature could be explored as follows:

- ▶ Did the children in the film want to share their world with Bear?
- ▶ Is friendship with a person different from friendship with a pet? If yes, how?
- ▶ What do you do to show your respect for animals, birds and plants in your neighbourhood?
- ▶ How do you think people can share the world with nature?
- ▶ How do you share with your friends?

SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER

In the film, the children found Bear by working together.

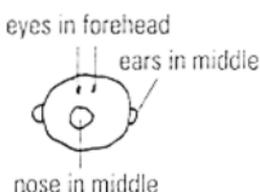
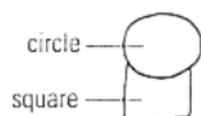
Suggested questions for problem-solving:

- ▶ Did you ever lose something and then find it with the help of a friend?
- ▶ Did you ever have an argument with someone and then ask someone else to help you find a solution?
- ▶ Did you ever want to do something but not know how? If so, what did you do?

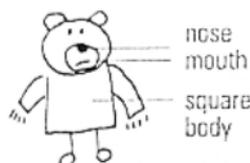
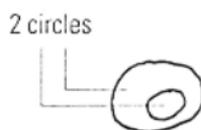
ART PROJECT

JoDee Samuelson, the filmmaker, drew the children and the Bear in the film like this:

A CHILD:



A BEAR:



Children can do this too. Use art materials in your classroom. Then you can have an exhibition of everyone's artwork.

MAKE A DANCE

The children can make a dance based on the Haida legend of creation sequence in the video when the people come out of the shell. See Resource section (right) for "The Raven Steals the Light" by Bill Reid.

Other ideas: a dance about bears, about friendship, about gardens.

MAKE A SONG

Using the familiar tune, "Old MacDonald Had a Farm," create lyrics about **The Sandbox** story. They can be about building a world, making mountains, lakes and forests, about caring for bears and other animals, about taking care of your garden, or about sharing and building friendships.

RESOURCES

Blue Planet: The Forces that Shape Our World by Barbara Embury Hehner (Toronto: Somerville House Publishing, 1994). Based on the breathtaking IMAX film, this work gives a panoramic view of Earth and its ecosystems.

Canadian Endangered Species by Colleen O. Mastin, illustrated by Jan Sovak. Nature Canada Series (Kamloops, B.C.: Grasshopper Books Publishing, 1995).

Green Teacher Editor: Tim Grant, 95 Robert Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2K5.

Tell the World: A Young Environmentalist Speaks Out by Severn Cullis-Suzuki (Toronto: Doubleday, 1994). Information on what kids can do to make a difference in their own neighbourhoods.

The Environmental Activity Guide: Project Learning Tree (American Forest Foundation, 1993). 402pp., indexed by level, concept, indoors/outdoors, time needed. Highly recommended for grades 1-6. Available from 1111 – 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein (New York: Harper Collins, 1964). A parable about a boy and a tree.

The Hummingbirds' Gift by Stefan Czernecki, illustrated by Timothy Rhodes (Toronto: Hyperion Press Ltd., 1994).

The Meaning of Respect by Dave Bouchard, illustrated by Les Culleton (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1994). When a young Cree boy is sent home from school to learn the meaning of respect, he thinks he's just getting a holiday.

The Raven Steals the Light by Bill Reid (University of Toronto Press, 1992).

The Salamander Room by Anne Mazer, illustrated by Steve Johnson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991). A little boy finds an orange salamander in the woods and thinks of the many things he can do to turn his room into a perfect salamander home.

See also Canadian children's books and magazines with environmental content.

THE SANDBOX

Children and their small friend Bear, are making a world in a sandbox. Then people come and Bear quietly disappears into the forest.

The children miss him and begin to search for Bear. The world they find is big, but with no place left for bears.

Why did Bear go so far? Can the children make a better world for Bear?

- *Imagination*
 - *Collaboration*
 - *Respect for Nature*

THE SANDBOX

A film by **Jo Dee Samuelson**

Voices **Lea Zimmerman, Ian Parsons**

Supervising Sound Editor **Alex Salter**

Dialogue Editor **Dave Ward**

Music Editor **Dominique Gusset**

Music & Lyrics **JoDee Samuelson**

Technical Coordinators **Wayne Cormier, Claude Cardinal**

Casting **John Dunsworth**

Produced **Marilyn A. Belec**

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