



When Zachary Beaver Came to Town

Teachers Guide

ACTIVITIES:

Before Reading:

Inspect the cover and title of the book. Make predictions about the story and where it might take place.

Read the first line aloud, "Nothing ever happens in Antler, Texas." Look at a map of Texas and locate an area where Antler could be located. Discuss the meaning of the "panhandle" of Texas.

Chapter Three:

Using a Venn diagram, compare/contrast yourself to the main character, Toby. This will give you a better insight into the character of Toby.

Chapter Six:

Cal never writes his brother, Wayne, who is in Vietnam. Write a letter to Wayne for Cal and describe to him what is going on in the town of Antler this summer.

Chapter Seven:

Toby and Cal realize that Zachary Beaver has been left behind by the guy in the Thunderbird. Make a list of ways the two boys can help Zachary, who is a stranger in the town.

Chapter Eight:

Scarlett tells Toby that he is "Great!" This made Toby feel wonderful. Pick one of your friends or someone you don't know very well that may need a little boost in self-esteem. Do something nice today to make that person feel "Great".

Suggestions:

Give a compliment Write a note expressing your appreciation for this person being your friend. Ask this person to join you at recess or lunch. Offer to help this person with homework or a class project.



Chapter Thirteen:

Cal and Toby take Zachary on an adventure to the drive-in. Since Zachary doesn't get out much, he is amazed at the sights he sees. Write a descriptive paragraph of what Zachary sees on the way to the drive-in. This can be illustrated also.

Chapter Sixteen:

In this chapter we find out that Zachary hasn't actually visited all the places he talks about. He has visited these places through books. Have a collection of travel brochures available for the students. Let them "travel" to different countries and cities by reading the brochures. After their visit, have the students write and illustrate a postcard to someone back home telling them all about the wonderful place they visited. (Check with a local travel agent for travel brochures.)

Chapter Seventeen:

After Wayne's death Toby doesn't know what to say to his best friend, Cal. Maybe it would be easier to write down his thoughts. Write a letter to Cal, as if you are Toby, expressing your heartfelt sorrow about Wayne's death. You may have lost a loved one, and can relate to the feelings that Toby is having at this time.

Chapter Eighteen:

In this chapter we find out that Juan comes from the "Mexican" part of town which seems to be a poor section. Juan is embarrassed to attend a function with Scarlett because he doesn't have the proper attire. This would be a wonderful opportunity to discuss with the class about people who are less fortunate than they are. Most students have clothing at home that they have outgrown. Have the students collect unwanted clothing to share with those that are less fortunate in the neighborhood, the community, or even at the school.

Culmination Activity #1:

The Ladybug Waltz is an important event in Antler, Texas. Select some classical music, preferably Mozart, to listen to while drawing your version of what the Ladybug Waltz looked like. On a large sheet of white paper, draw the cotton field with all the Antler folks standing in the middle of it with paper bags full of ladybugs. Don't forget that Zachary Beaver was there also to experience this wonderful adventure.

Culmination Activity #2:

Miss Myrtie Mae, the photographer, is very proud of the photos she has taken this summer. Ferris hangs them on the wall of the cafe for all to see. Your students can make a class photo album of their own. On 5x6 index card, have the students illustrate their favorite part of the book. Glue the "photos" on construction paper and bind them together for a class photo album. What a great way to remember all that happened in the town of Antler, Texas that summer of '71!

JOURNAL IDEAS:

Chapter Two:

Toby and Cal see Zachary Beaver for the first time. What if you were Zachary? How would you feel having people pay money to gawk at you?



Chapter Three:

Toby's mom is away for awhile and the men have to do all the cooking and household chores. Do you think it is important for boys and men to know how to do "women's work"? Explain.

Chapter Four:

Toby is an only child and Cal has brothers and sisters. Which type of family would you prefer to live in and why?

Chapter Seven:

In this chapter Zachary has a chance to "rat" on Cal and Toby for breaking the window in his trailer. Why do you think Zachary kept quiet and didn't say anything to the sheriff?

Chapter Eight:

Toby's mom didn't win the singing contest in Nashville and she has decided not to come home for awhile. How would you feel if your mother did something like this?

Chapter Eighteen:

Scarlet is rather disgusted with Juan because he doesn't seem to know how to treat a girl. Write some tips for Juan on how to act around girls and some of the nice things a girl would like for a young man to do.

Chapter Nineteen:

In this chapter Toby's dad tells him, "You are a lucky person if you go through life and have one person need you." He was referring to Cal needing Toby to help him get through losing his brother, Wayne. Do you have a person in your life that needs you? Explain.

Chapter Twenty:

Zachary Beaver has never had the opportunity to be baptized. Why do you think it is important to him that he fulfills this goal?

After reading the book:

Friendship is a very important issue in this book. In your own words, explain what it means to you to have friends, and most importantly, to be a friend.

RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES:

Carnival Side Shows

Vietnam War

Baptisms in various Religions

The Ladybug Waltz

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