AUNT FRED IS A WITCH: Teachers' Guide

GENERAL THEMES AND CONNECTIONS:

1) Stereotyping the elderly

* society's concepts of what elderly people are able to do
* society's concepts of appropriate activities for the elderly
* society's concepts of the appearance of elderly people
* marginalization and devaluation of the elderly

2) Stereotyping

* how lack of knowledge and information can lead to misconceptions of groups of people, whether they be people of different culture, language, appearance, socio-economic background, ability, gender.

3) Witches

* the history of the term witch; how witches were healers; the term "witch" used to mean wise woman; witches were knowledgeable about the herbs of healing
* how the naming of a person as a "witch" was misused to get rid of enemies
* some of the famous Witch trials, such as in Salem, Massachusetts
* how fear of the unknown can induce mass hysteria
* traditional lore for warding away evil and witches

4) Rumours and how they spread

* the power each person has to start and spread rumours
* how rumours grow and are exaggerated

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

1) Topics of discussion:

* Why did Leila think Aunt Fred was a witch?
* Why do you think that Jeremy thought Aunt Fred was a witch?
* What did Leila feel when she was invited to Aunt Fred's and why?
* Why did Aunt Fred say she was called "Witch for short."

* What did Aunt Fred mean when she said, “I get so tired of people telling me to act my age...?”
* What did Leila and Aunt Fred have in common regarding people telling them to act their age?
* Why did Aunt Fred dress as she did at first when Leila’s mother dropped Leila off?

2) Writing exercises:

* Write an account of what might happen if you visited a witch.
* Imagine that Aunt Fred is your aunt. Describe a day you spend with her with all your favourite activities.
* Write a letter that Leila might write to Aunt Fred with ideas for more time spent together.
* Write a sequel to this story about what happens when Leila and Aunt Fred go up in a hot air balloon.
* Make up a recipe for a “witch’s potion”. Describe the ingredients, and how to make it and what it might be used for.

3) Art Activities

* Draw a picture of you and Aunt Fred enjoying your favourite activity.
* Draw a picture of a ride you would like to go on.
* Draw a picture of Aunt Fred’s rainbow dress.
* Draw a picture of Aunt Fred and Leila doing something together the next day. What else they might do other than go up in a hot air balloon?

4) Extra Study and Research activities:

* Do some research on the term “witch” and write a report.
* Research a famous witch trial and do a report.

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