

ACTIVITY FOR DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION 5

Aesop’s Fables

About 550 B.C., a Greek slave named Aesop began writing and collecting his now famous fables. Each fable had a moral or lesson to teach within the story. People have been entertained by Aesop’s fables for centuries. Three short fables are presented below.



The Bat and the Weasels

A Bat who fell upon the ground and was caught by a Weasel pleaded to be spared his life. The Weasel refused, saying that he was the enemy of all birds. The Bat assured him that he was not a bird, but a mouse, and thus was set free. The Bat again fell to the ground and was caught by another Weasel, whom he likewise entreated not to eat him. The Weasel said that he had a special hostility to mice. The Bat assured him that he was not a mouse, but a bat, and thus a second time escaped.

MORAL: It is wise to turn situations to one’s benefit.

Avaricious and Envious

Two neighbors came before Jupiter and prayed him to grant their hearts’ desire. Now the one was full of avarice [greed], and the other eaten up with envy. So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on condition that his neighbor had twice as

much. The Avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold. But all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbor had two rooms full of gold. Then the Envious man could not bear to think that his neighbor had any joy at all. So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, by which means his companion would become totally blind.

MORAL: _____

The Dog in the Manger

A Dog looking out for its afternoon nap jumped into the Manger of an Ox and lay there cozily upon the straw. But soon the Ox, returning from its afternoon work, came up to the Manger and wanted to eat some of the straw. The Dog, in a rage at being awakened, stood up and barked at the Ox, and whenever it came near attempted to bite it. At last the Ox had to give up the hope of getting at the straw and went away hungry.

MORAL: _____

CHAPTER 5

Directions: Use the fables to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. **Analyze** Most of Aesop’s fables end with a *moral*. The moral for “The Bat and the Weasels” is given above. Write your own morals for the other two fables shown above.
2. **Explain** What do these fables—and other familiar stories such as “The Tortoise and the Hare” and “The Fox and the Grapes”—tell us about the values of ancient Greeks? Explain your answer.