

NUTMEG BOOK DISCUSSION based on
THREE GOOD DEEDS by Vivian Vande Velde

ABOUT THE BOOK

Howard is a mischievous boy who, along with his friends, likes to pull pranks on the villagers of Dumphrey's Mill. Their latest victim is the supposed old witch who lives by Goose Pond. They find the lady strange due to the fact that she lives on her own and tends to a flock of geese that live there. They do mean things like tease the geese and steal their eggs. When Howard decides to steal from a nest one day, he is caught re-handed and accidentally breaks a couple of eggs.

Fed up with the boy's antics, the old witch turns Howard into a goose! Howard panics and tries to call for help, but realizes unfortunately that only the witch and her gaggle of geese can understand him. The witch tells Howard that in order to redeem himself and be turned back to a boy he must accomplish three good deeds.

The book then becomes the story of Howard's quest to do these good deeds. He quickly realizes that it's not as easy as it seems to be. True "good deeds" are not done with any expectation attached. They must come from the heart.

This book allows young readers to discover with Howard the importance of compassion and sincerity even in little daily tasks. From complimenting one of his new feathered friends to escaping poultry-hungry villagers, Howard discovers the person or goose he's meant to be. The unexpected ending will illustrate that even a prank pulling boy can learn to care for others.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITIES

I. We always begin our book discussions using a Word Search about the book.

We discuss the significance of each word to the story. Then kids take a few minutes to do the Word Search.

Attached is the Three Good Deeds – Word Search.

You can create your own word search for any book by going to the following website:

<http://puzzlemaker.school.discovery.com/WordSearchSetupform.html>

II. Discussion Questions

We place the following questions in a basket and each participant picks one to answer. They give their answers and opinions first, then other members of the group add their own takes on the question.

1. Who do you think was the real troublemaker in Dumphrey's Mill who deserved to be turned into a goose? Why?
2. What was Howard's first good deed? Explain how it came about.
3. The geese Howard met at the pond had very described names. What were some of them and why were they given that particular description?
4. What happened to Howard when he tried to go back home to find his parents?
5. When his parents finally found Howard at Goose Pond (as a goose) what took place?
6. What was Howard's second good deed? Explain how it came about?
7. Howard was always trying to accomplish "good deeds" by helping the geese at the pond. What two encounters with wildlife showed his brave side but did not help him in his cause to do good deeds?

Word Search Puzzle

Word Search - Three Good Deeds

B E U C Z W G S L V U Z Y K E
D L Z C I Q R S X O X G M S Q
N Y A T U E D E E D S Q O Z L
V F C N H Q T V E C N O X C B
O H X T K T A E A G G U E A P
Z E A N E E R K S P I M O O S
W E X B V X T T V P T N D J K
F N P D W O W K A J E Y Y L N
J Q B H O W A R D S A L P R O
Q G C R V Q D B L E M Q L M H
J F Z O Z Q L U L P W O X X H
U G G S L V V A N R G J T P V
T J U C K Y M L X P G F U F N
D G R O Y E Q O P X S P W C J
D U X E F S G G E O H P A B I

BLANKET
FEATHERS
HONK
ROSCOE

DEEDS
FEMALE
HOWARD
SPELL

EGGS
GOOSE
RAT
WITCH