

Racing Stripes-Zink the Zebra® Activity Guide



His stripes made him an outcast. His heart made him a hero.

Movie Summary

In the middle of a raging thunderstorm, a traveling circus accidentally leaves behind some very precious cargo--a baby zebra. Horse farmer Nolan Walsh, who takes him home to his young daughter Channing, rescues the gangly little foal. Once a champion thoroughbred trainer, Walsh has given up horse training for a quiet life with Channing on their modest Kentucky farm. The little zebra, or "Stripes," as Channing calls him, is soon introduced to the farm's misfit troupe of barnyard residents, led by a cranky Shetland Pony named Tucker and Franny, a wise old goat who keeps the family in line. Goose, a deranged big-city pelican that's hiding out in the sticks until the heat dies down in Jersey, joins the group. The un-aptly named bloodhound Lightning keeps a lazy eye on goings-on at the farm - in between naps. The Walsh farm borders the Turfway Racetrack, where highly skilled thoroughbreds compete for horse racing's top honor, the ultra-prestigious Kentucky Crown. From the first moment Stripes lays eyes on the track, he's hooked--he knows that if he could just get the chance, he could leave all those other horses in the dust. What he doesn't know is--he's not exactly a horse. But with characteristic zeal, he devotes himself to training for the big time, with a little help from Tucker, who has coached a host of champion racehorses in the past.

The Walsh farm also borders the Dalrymple Estate, where highly skilled thoroughbreds train to compete for horse racing's top honor, the ultra-prestigious Kentucky Open. Channing has a similar ambition – she longs to train as a jockey, but her protective father refuses to let her compete in the potentially dangerous sport. But her father can't ignore her enthusiasm (or her stubbornness) for long, and she convinces him to come out of retirement to train her and Stripes for the Kentucky Open.

Stripes constantly battles the ridicule of the Estate's thoroughbreds-in-training, led by spoiled bully Trenton's Pride who taunts him relentlessly about his lack of breeding and...unusual appearance. But the Estate is home to some kinder residents, particularly Sandy, a beautiful filly whose admiration and affection for Stripes further enrages his rival.

Stripes makes some friends down at the track as well, most notably the manic horsefly duo Buzz and Scuzz. As he thrusts himself into a world of elite athletes, intense competition and enormous stakes, Stripes must prove he's fast enough and tough enough to run with the big horses if he wants to land in the winner's circle at the legendary Kentucky Open.

Some champions are born, not bred!

The following activities are to be completed after the movie has been viewed:

Discussion Questions

*How are Zink the Zebra and Stripes the Zebra alike? Did their friends eventually accept Zink and Stripes even though they were different? (Some thoughts might be...they both felt isolated, they both wanted friends, etc.) When Zink and Stripes were upset about things, whom did they turn to for advise? (Zink the other animals in the jungle, her parents. Stripes mainly went to Tucker and Fannie...both turning to the older, wiser and more experienced) When you need advise, who do you go to for help?

*Taking care of lost and abandoned animals is important. What do you think would have happened to Stripes if Mr. Walsh had not taken the time to stop on the road and rescue him? What would you do if you found an abandoned animal in the road? *Make sure the first thing they should do is get an adult to help them.* If you could not care for it yourself, investigate agencies in your community that could help. There are also many service opportunities to help with these agencies. Check it out!

*What were some of the obstacles Stripes had to overcome in order to be a champion? How did he overcome them? (Some thoughts could be self-doubt, criticism, curve on the track, gate, physical limitations, etc.)
What are some of the obstacles you face? Create a game plan to help overcome them.

*Did you notice how the animal friends at the Walsh Farm made sarcastic comments and put downs when talking to each other? Some might have thought the comments were funny, but do you think the friend on the receiving end thought they were funny? Does this ever happen among your group of friends. Try to make it a goal when communicating with your friends only to say things that build them up not tear them down.

*Sir Trenton, the father of Trenton's Pride became angry when he saw his son playing with Stripes. Stripes asked Tucker, why Sir Trenton's father would not let them play together. Tucker responded, he really didn't know, but to some horses different is scary. How are you different from others? Have you ever been not allowed to play with someone because you were different than they were? If yes, share how that felt.

*"You don't have the body of a racehorse. But you have more heart than any of them," Tucker said. "I know you can do it!" "You have more on the inside than all the other race horses put together." Do you think Stripes would have won the race if he had finally not accepted the fact that he was a Zebra that was a racer, not a racehorse? How does this quote by Henry Ford fit into Stripes racing abilities, ***"Whether you believe you can or you can't you're right"***.

What are the things in your life that you love? Is there anything that you put your heart into despite the fact that others might think you cannot succeed? Think of famous people who have overcome huge physical and emotional obstacles to achieve greatness doing what they love. (Some thoughts...Kelly Weil, the author of Zink, did some amazing things while she was ill. A lot of her friends treated her different because they thought since she was sick that most of her abilities changed too. Tom Cruise battles with learning disorders, Plus Size models are having tremendous success as in magazines and TV as models...even though they do not fit the typical super thin model stereotype, and many many more...)

*Channing's dream was to be a jockey like her mother. Why was Channing's father afraid to let her race?

-Her mother was killed in a racing accident. He didn't want anything bad to happen to her too.

What are your dreams? Do you have any fears that stand in the way of those dreams? Do your parents or guardians protect you? If yes, in what ways do they protect you? How does that make you feel?

Games

Barnyard Game

Each child is given the name of an animal with two other children also being assigned that same name. No one is allowed to tell another which animal they are. At the signal each child makes the noise of the animal that he has been given. The first group of three animals to find each other and sit down is the winner.

Animal Relay

The players form two lines with equal numbers on each team. The first player on each team is an animal, the second a different animal. On the word "go", the first person acts like the animal they represent, run, hop or crawl to a given place and back. The next person then acts like their animals and so on until one team is finished and sitting down. Use animals such as kangaroos, bunnies, dogs, cats etc...

Masks

Supplies: Masks with numbers

Make some identical masks. For one day, all boys and girls will wear the same mask and will be distinguished only by a number worn on their chests. They will refer to one another as 1, 2, 21, and so on, and not by name (the adult leader will also address them like this, in the course of their activities; whether at school, field trips, scout meetings, etc.). Afterwards, the group will discuss their impressions of this experience: how does it feel to be recognized only on the basis of a number and to have the same face as everybody else? Isn't it better for everybody to be different from everybody else?

Craft Projects

Thank you!

Supplies: Construction or drawing paper, markers

What did Stripes do with the victory roses after the race?

-He gave them to Tucker to thank him for all of his hard work in training him and encouraging him to be the best racer he could be. Who else played a part in Stripes winning the big race? How could he thank them?

"Tucker represents someone who is quite valuable, if not invaluable to our society, who goes unappreciated, who goes unrecognized," says Dustin Hoffman the voice of Tucker. Tucker is like an unsung hero. Nobody would have ever dreamed that Tucker coached champion racehorses based on his appearance and size.

Who are the people in your life that have really coached, supported, guided and accepted you for who you are? Make them a card to let them know how much you appreciate them.

1. What is it about this person that makes them so special? Some reasons might be: they are kind, helpful, fun, thoughtful, smart, patient and so on.
2. Use these reasons to design a Thank You Card for your special person.
3. Fold construction paper into a card. Make it whatever shape you like!
4. Use Crayons to write the words that tell why your friend is special.
5. Create eye-catching illustrations to match your words. For extra shine, rub the crayon with a bit of paper towel. Share your card with your special person.

Zink Link

Supplies: Scissors, Markers, sturdy paper (recycled folders, construction paper), glue, tape or stapler

In the movie there was a lot of bullying! Focus on ways to treat each other with understanding, compassion, respect and acceptance. Use these bright paper rings—looped into a chain—to highlight kind and respectful ways to treat people. Remember...even bullies want friends!

Emotional bullies use words and gestures to hurt others. Some bullies use physical force. Make this Zink Link as a reminder of ways to avoid intimidation and how to make friends. Some of the racehorses and even some of his barnyard friends bullied Stripes. What were some of the things said? (*No Freaks Allowed, Go Back to Where You Belong, You are a Joke, and on and on*) What were some of the physical things done? (*They trampled on Stripes to try to keep him from racing and took and hid Sandy so she couldn't help Stripes*). As they make the chains of the links, have them share words and actions they have heard or seen that are harmful to others. Brainstorm ways that bullying could be stopped.

1. **Design paper rings.** Use scissors to cut wide strips of paper. With markers and your imagination, decorate the borders of each strip.
2. **Write phrases.** In the center of each strip, write a way that people are kind to one another: "Take turns." "Use a gentle voice." "Speak up for yourself!" "Offer to help." What were some of the encouraging words they heard in the movie?
3. **Combine the links together.** Glue, staple or tape ends of loops to create the Zink Links. Where can you hang this friendship reminder to catch attention?

Zebra — Wood Turnings

Supplies:

Wood turnings by Darice®

- Spool - 1 1/2" x 2 1/8" (1, body)
- Spool - 1" x 3/4" (1, head)
- Spool - 3/4" x 5/8" (1, neck)
- Spools - 1/2" x 5/8" (12, legs)
- Sunflower - 1 1/4" x 3/16" (1, head)
- Stars - 3/4" x 3/16" (2, mane)
- Moon - 1 1/2" x 3/16" (1, tail)
- Round head plug - 1/4" (1, nose)
- Beads - 8mm (2, eyes)

Paints:

Aleene's™ White

Aleene's™ Black

Brushes:

1/4" angular shader

Detail brush

Miscellaneous:

Acrylic spray varnish

Hot glue gun



Directions:

Assemble Zebra with hot glue, using photo as reference. Paint entire zebra white. Apply a second coat for good coverage. With detail brush, paint on Black stripes, similar to photo. Paint hooves, mane and outsides of tail. Paint nose area, eyelids, face stripes, and Black dots for eyes. Paint short white lines on mane. Seal with spray varnish.

Be sure to visit www.zinkthezebra.org to participate in special Racing Stripes contests!