

Ugly Duckling Teacher's Information

Synopsis

In the park, a group of ducklings and their mother wait for an enormous egg to hatch. The baby duckling who emerges is the strangest-looking duckling they've ever seen. His feathers are the wrong colour, his neck is too long and even his beak is the wrong shape. The other ducklings - Fluffy, Pecky, Chirpy and Waddles - christen their new sibling "Ugly".

Ugly struggles with most aspects of being a duckling - he can't chirp, peck or even waddle as the others do. In a song, big brother Fluffy tries to teach Ugly how to be a good duckling, but Ugly just can't get it right.

However, Ugly impresses everyone in the pond with his swimming skills. His Mummy Duck praises Ugly, but his siblings become jealous - especially Fluffy. The jealous ducklings trick Ugly into a "game" of Hide-and-Seek, but don't come to look for him.

Realising that he's been rejected by his siblings, Ugly looks for advice from the other creatures in the park, looking for a tribe to belong to. A Wild Goose tells Ugly to be tough and self-reliant. A Dog tells Ugly to do tricks and to beg for attention. A Cat tells Ugly to be cool and aloof. But none of these ways of coping with the world feel right to Ugly.

Ugly sees a flight of wild swans and is both delighted and saddened by their elegant beauty - he'd love to be like them! But he's just an ugly duckling. Ugly reflects on the curse of being born "ugly", and decides that he's not going to accept the rejection of the other animals and birds. In a defiant song, he rejects the "ugly" label - the people who call him ugly are the ones with a problem. They're ugly on the inside, not him.

As winter comes, Ugly doesn't return to the nest. Fluffy begins to feel guilty about what he did. The other ducklings grow up and fly away, but Mummy Duck still misses her little Ugly Duckling.

Then, one day, the swans come back.



Mummy Duck remembers that she saw them fly past on the day Ugly disappeared, and goes to speak to them - asking if they've seen her lost duckling.

Ugly, watching the swans, realises that his mother has never stopped looking for him. He rushes out to greet her - but she doesn't recognise him. Ugly has transformed into a beautiful swan.

The swans tell Ugly he's one of them, and he can join their flight. But he hesitates, not wanting to leave Mummy Duck. She persuades him to go and take advantage of the opportunities of being a swan.

The Swans fly away, Ugly with them. But he promises to come back...

Next Spring, Ugly returns to the nest to see Mummy Duck, who is waiting for a new clutch of eggs to hatch. One of them looks very different to the others. Mummy and Ugly wonder who's about to burst out of their shell this time...

Themes

'It's not what you look like, it's what you do that counts!'

Mummy Duck

- Self-confidence
- Heritage
- Remembering where you come from
- Believing in yourself
- The insignificance of labels
- Determination
- Uniqueness of families
- Acceptance

Characters

Ugly Duckling

Mummy Duck

Fluffy

Goose

Swan

Cat

Dog

