Activity Guide

Live Oak Media

Henry and Mudge and the Starry Night

ABOUT THE STORY
Henry's parents, Henry, and Mudge decide to go camping. They hike through the woods to Big Bear Lake, set up camp, sing songs around the campfire, and settle down for a wonderful sleep full of stars and dreams.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Cynthia Rylant has written many other books about Henry and Mudge, including Henry and Mudge and the Snowman Plan and Henry and Mudge and the Sneaky Crackers, both Live Oak Readalongs. Her books have won dozens of awards; in 1993 she received the Newbery Award for her novel Missing May. She has always loved big, drooly dogs, just like Mudge, and lives with two of them in her house in Eugene, Oregon.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR
Sucie Stevenson knows all about big Mudge-like dogs, too — she has two of her own. She has illustrated all the other Henry and Mudge tales.

INTRODUCING THE STORY
Ask the children if they have ever been camping or slept out under the stars. Have volunteers describe their experiences. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a boy, his dog, and his parents who take a camping trip.

READING ACTIVITIES
Comprehension/Thinking Skills
a. "Is Henry's mother a good camper? Explain."
b. "Is Henry's father a good camper? Explain."
c. "What does Henry want to see on his camping trip?"
d. "What does Henry not want to see?"
e. "What do Henry and his parents do after dark?"
f. "What do you think Henry's favorite part of camping is?" (Draw conclusions)
g. "What do you think the writer means by 'green dreams'?" (Analyze)

Vocabulary
guitar, raccoons, slippery, fawn, lanterns, sappy

Write these words from the story on the chalkboard. Then ask these questions. Have children choose the correct word to answer each question.

• What do you call furry animals with markings that look like masks?
• How can you describe a song that is very, very romantic?
• What are battery or candle-powered lights called?
• When you can slide easily on a surface, what do you call it?
• What is the name for a baby deer?
• What do you call an instrument with strings that you play with your fingers?

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES
Science: The Night Sky
Henry and his parents find the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper in the night sky. Have the children look in an atlas of the sky to find the constellations. Help them locate the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper among the constellations, and point out other familiar constellations.

Music: Campfire Songs
Henry's father sings "Love Me Tender" by the campfire, but there are many other songs that are more often sung around a campfire. If possible, play some recordings of these songs for the class. Possible recordings include By the Light of the Moon: Campfire Songs and Cowboy Tunes by Charlie Daniels, Cowboy Songs by Riders in the Sky, and Camp Songs, an album by various artists. Have the children choose a song to learn themselves, and practice it until they can sing it together.

Science: Forest Animals
Henry thinks about seeing a deer, a raccoon, and a bear on his camping trip. Ask the children to work in pairs to find out about another animal Henry might be likely to see in the woods. Ask them to write a brief description of the animal, its habits, and its habitat and share the information with the rest of the class.

Language Arts: Green Dreams
Henry and his parents sleep and dream green dreams. Ask children to imagine what a "green dream" might be like. They can write their own version of a green dream as they imagine it. When they are finished, children can share their dreams with the rest of the class.

INTERNET ACTIVITY
Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Campfire Recipes
Have children use the keywords "campfire recipes" to locate recipes for cooking over a campfire on the Internet. Children can copy the recipe that appeals to them the most. Collect the recipes in a class Camping Cookbook.