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Activity Guide

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Madeline and the Gypsies

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ABOUT THE STORY

The call of the circus is answered by Madeline and Pepito as circumstances place them in the midst of a colorful and energetic gypsy troupe. Miss Clavel, as always, sets things right.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

Probably the greatest gift this native German gave to his adopted America is Madeline, one of the classic heroines of children's literature. Her refreshing adventures are continued in *Madeline*, *Madeline and the Bad Hat*, *Madeline in London*, and *Madeline's Rescue* (for which Ludwig Bemelmans was awarded the Caldecott Medal). The adventures and settings of the Madeline books reflect the author/illustrator's wide personal experiences.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group if they have ever been to a traveling circus or carnival. What were some of the things they liked best about it?

This story is about Madeline and her friend Pepito and their adventures in a circus with some gypsies.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why did Madeline and Pepito get left behind at the carnival?" (*Draw conclusions*)
- "How was Madeline rescued from the Ferris wheel?"
- "What did the Gypsy Mama do to keep Madeline and Pepito from being discovered?"
- "Why do you think the Gypsy Mama wanted the children to stay with the carnival?" (*Make judgment*)

Vocabulary

Divide children into small groups and together write the vocabulary words in alphabetical order on the board. Ask each group to write a new story using all the words in order. Have someone from each group read their story aloud.

fortunate	caravan	potent
grace	steed	postmark
disaster	pelt	fascinating

Rhyming Words

Read aloud these lines from the book and ask the children to say the missing rhyming word at the end of each sentence:

- Pepito said, "Don't be afraid, I will climb down and get some ____ (aid).
- For Gypsies do not like to stay. They only come to go ____ (away).
- The strong man suddenly felt weak, And tears were running down his ____ (cheek).
- Round and round; the children cried, "Dear Miss Clavel, just one more ____ (ride).

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

History: Now and Then

Ask the children whether they think Madeline is a story that takes place today or years ago. Can they find clues in the story to indicate that it is not a modern one? Make a list of all the items they observe, such as the type of taxi, steam engine, clothing, household appliances or fixtures.

Math: All in a Row

Have the children become "math manipulatives" – have them stand in two rows of six. Discuss fractions. Madeline represented $\frac{1}{12}$ of the girls, each row of six is $\frac{1}{2}$, etc. Have the children create their own "problems" and solve them.

Art: Just a Note

Madeline sent a postcard to Miss Clavel to let her know that she and Pepito were at the circus. Ask the children to imagine that they have joined the circus. What would they like to do? Have them design a postcard with a picture from the circus. On the back, have the children write a note to their parents about their adventure.

Music: The Sounds of a Circus

Play some circus music for the group and discuss how the music makes them feel. Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine they are at the circus while the music plays. Have them draw what they feel as they listen to the music.