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Activity Guide

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Silvestre y la Piedrecita Mágica

ABOUT THE STORY

Silvestre Duncan is a donkey whose hobby is collecting pebbles of unusual color or shape. On a rainy day during summer vacation, he comes upon a magic pebble that has the power to grant his wishes. Before he can return home with it, however, he is confronted by a mean and hungry lion. Fear causes him to panic and he wishes he were a rock. Of course, his wish is granted and, though he is safe from the lion's attack, he is now unable to wish his way out of his predicament. It remains for the patient love of his parents to restore Silvestre and reunite the Duncan family.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

William Steig has been delighting young readers for more than a quarter century. His books include *The Amazing Bone*, a Caldecott Honor Book; *Abel's Island*, a Newbery Honor Book; and many other favorites, among them *Brave Irene*, *Spinky Sulks*, and *Shrek!* Mr. Steig earned the Caldecott Medal for *Silvester and the Magic Pebble*. He lives in Connecticut with his wife, Jeanne.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children how they think mice, cats, and dogs interact. Explain that this book is about a cat that invites mice to dinner and gets a surprise guest.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- Why did Silvestre pick up the magic pebble?
- Why did Silvestre wish he were a rock?
- Once he turned into a rock and the lion left, why didn't Silvestre turn himself back into a donkey again?
- How did Silvestre finally become his old self again?

Vocabulary

Duplicate and distribute the following list of words in English or Spanish. Have each member of the group look up and write down its translation.

la lemonade	-	lemonade
el pajama	-	pajamas
la cesta	-	basket
la manta	-	blanket
la zapatería	-	shoe store
la hormiga	-	ant
el sofa	-	sofa
la mostaza	-	mustard

el taxi	-	taxi
el carbón de leña	-	charcoal

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Animal Friends

In their search for Silvestre, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan asked the "children" – Silvestre's young animal friend – if they had seen their son. Have the group identify these animals and write their names on the board. When you have done so, ask the group to look and write down the translation of each word.

(NOTE: In this and the following exercises, all words to be defined are listed in both English and Spanish so that you are free to structure sequence according to the strengths of your group.)

los cachorritos	-	puppies
los gatitos	-	kittens
los potrillos	-	colts
los cerditos	-	piglets

Animal Parents

Ask the group to name the parents of the animals listed in the exercise above. Write them on the board (in English or Spanish, as you wish) and, once you have done so, have the group translate each word.

los perros	-	dogs
los gattos	-	cats
los caballos	-	horses
los credos	-	pigs

Science: The Seasons

a) Silvestre's story takes place through the seasons. Write the names of the seasons on the board and have the group look up the translation of each word.

la primavera	-	spring
el verano	-	summer
el otoño	-	fall
el invierno	-	winter

b) Have the group write the above words as headings across the top of a sheet of paper. Write the following words on the board and have the group look up the translation of each, then write the translation under its proper heading. Note that some words may be correctly listed under more than one heading.

la nieve	-	snow
la lluvia	-	rain
las hojas verde	-	green leaves
la hierba	-	grass
el capullo	-	bud
el viento	-	wind
la brisa	-	breeze
las flores	-	flowers