



# Activity Guide

800-788-1121

## Fix-It

### ABOUT THE STORY

Emma, a young bear with human characteristics, is distressed when she is unable to turn on the television set. Her parents both try unsuccessfully to resolve the problem, and resort to calling a repairman. While they wait for the television to be fixed, Emma's parents do their best to distract her. It's not until Emma's mother introduces the youngster to the joy of reading that the crisis is averted, and with surprising results.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

David McPhail was born in Newburyport, MA in 1940. He spent much of his childhood in the woods near his home drawing. After high school he worked for a short time in a factory, which he disliked very much. He attended Vesper George College on an art scholarship, but left to pursue a musical career in California. He later returned to the east coast to attend the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School. McPhail has authored and illustrated numerous picture books, of which the "Pig Pig" books are his most popular. He is also the recipient of several awards and honors.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to raise their hand if they enjoy watching television. Have them pretend it's time for their favorite show and the television is not working. How would they feel? Explain that in this story, when the young girl bear is unable to watch television, she is very upset until she discovers something that may be even better.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- Why was Emma upset? (she couldn't watch television)
- Why didn't the television work? (it was unplugged)
- What did Emma's mother and father do to try to distract her? (balloon, singing, pretended to be a horse, read her a book)
- What made Emma forget about watching television? (a book)
- How did the television get unplugged?(cat was chasing a mouse behind TV)
- Did Emma go right out to watch television after it was fixed? (no, she read)

#### **Vocabulary**

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, simply discuss the terms, or have children look them up in a dictionary.  
emergency, pretended, finished

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Language Arts: Express Yourself**

During this oral expression exercise, ask the children to share their television viewing habits at home. What rules do they have to follow? Do they think the rules are fair? Stress the good things about television, but also emphasize the need to avoid spending excessive amounts of time on any of their day's activities. Be sure to express the joy and entertainment of reading.

#### **Math: How Much Time?**

This activity would work well in conjunction with the "express yourself" suggestion above. Chart the number of hours spent by the children in your class reading. Use various criteria and make different variations of the chart (minutes per day, hours per week, top five favorite books, time of day, etc.)

#### **Language Arts: Scrambled Sentences**

Duplicate the following sentences on strips of oak tag. Cut each sentence apart word by word, scramble the pieces, and distribute them to members of the group. Have the children put the words in order to form sentences from the story. Hang completed sentences on a wall. You can have children arrange the sentences in chronological order as the events happened in the story.

- Emma's mother tried to fix it.
- The fix-it man came right away.
- Her mother sang a song.
- Finally her mother read her a book.
- Now I'll read to Millie.
- Emma asked her mother to fix it.

#### **Science/Social Studies: That's Television!**

Visit your library and gather materials on the history of television. Have students use them to research basic questions (When was TV invented? Who invented it? How has it changed? How do you predict it will change in the future?) Find an old television that you can disassemble and use to display the major parts.

### INTERNET ACTIVITIES

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

#### **Television**

Use the Internet to gather information for the science/social studies activity above (That's Television!). Have the children print out information and use to create a simple report on the history of television. Try to locate pictures of the inside of a television. Discuss the major components of a television set.

David McPhail is a prolific author. Have students visit the library to look up additional books he has written. Also, use the Internet to locate information on the author. Compile the information gathered into a class book called "What We Know About David McPhail".