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Activity Guide

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Stevie

ABOUT THE STORY

Robert enjoys being an only child, and has difficulty adjusting when little Stevie begins staying at his house during the week while his parents work. Dwelling on the annoying things Stevie does, Robert can't wait until each weekend when Stevie's parents come to pick him up. But when the day comes that Stevie and his family moves away, Robert is surprised at how he feels.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

John Lewis Steptoe attended the High School of Art and Design in New York City but did not graduate. He instead submitted illustrations to Harper Junior Books, where an editor encouraged him to write a book to accompany his drawings. Steptoe's first picture book, *Stevie*, earned him national recognition and a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators. Steptoe illustrated sixteen books, ten of which he also wrote. Two of them, *The Story of Jumping Mouse* and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, were named Caldecott Honor Books. He was the recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration, for *Mother Crocodile* and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. Mr. Steptoe died in 1989.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group if they have ever had another child come stay at their house for an extended period time. Describe the experience. Explain that in this book, Stevie is a little boy who stays with Robert, an older boy, and Robert's family during the week while Stevie's parents work. Point out that the story is told from Robert's point of view, and focuses on all of the trouble Stevie causes him.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- Why did Robert's mother look after Stevie? (Stevie's parents worked)
- What did Robert think of Stevie? (that he was a pest)
- What were some of the things Stevie did that bothered Robert? (crawled on his bed, played with his toys, was a crybaby)
- Why wasn't Stevie allowed in the park? (got hurt there)
- Why did Robert's cereal get soggy at the end? (he was remembering good times with Stevie)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard and review their meanings. Then ask volunteers to use the words in sentences.

greedy company nerves breadbox boogieman mickies marshmallows

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts/Critical Thinking: Give It Some Thought

- Discuss the reasons why Robert, who spends most of the story complaining about Stevie, has only nice things to say about him at the end.
- At the end of the story Robert says that Stevie was "kinda like a little brother". Ask the group if they agree or disagree with Robert's statement and explain why.

Home and Career Skills: Break the Stereotype

Robert's friends make fun of him and call him a "babysitter". Find out if any boys in the group have ever babysat. Were they uncomfortable with it? Discuss why babysitting has traditionally been a female role.

Language Arts: Confounded Compounds

Write the following two lists of words on the board. Review the definition of a compound word. Have volunteers draw lines to connect words that form a compound found in the story.

cow	work
door	prints
foot	plane
cry	bell
bread	baby
air	box
home	boys

Language Arts: What's in a Name?

Write "Stevie" on the board vertically. Think of adjectives that describe Stevie for each letter. Have each member of the group do the same with their own names.

Art Appreciation/Research Skills: Illustrator Honors

Point out that several of Steptoe's books received awards for their artwork (see "About the Author/Illustrator"). Have students research his books to see which ones have one, as well as which awards they were given. Examine the Caldecott Honor Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award for Illustration stamp. What do the awards look like? (This activity could also be done as an Internet activity.)

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.

John Steptoe

Have students research this interesting African American author. (Note that he died from AIDS related complications.)

Caldecott Medal

Do research to learn more about this medal. Why is it given? When was it first awarded? What does it look like? What are some of the books that have won it?