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Activity Guide

800-788-1121

Chato Y Los Amigos Panchangueros

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ABOUT THE STORY

It's Chorizo's birthday, but why is Novio Boy so unhappy? Chato asks him and learns that Novio Boy came from the pound. He doesn't know who his parents are – or when his own birthday is. Chato decides to throw his friend a surprise birthday party, and it turns out to be the best party ever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A finalist for the National Book Award for his adult poetry and winner of the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award for his memoirs, Gary Soto is also the author of many novels and picture books for young people. He was born and raised in Fresno, California, and serves as Young People's Ambassador for the California Rural Legal Assistance and the United Farm Workers of America. Chato's Kitchen, also a Live Oak Readalong, won the 1996 Pura Belpré Award for illustration. Gary Soto lives in Berkeley, California, where he is a professor at the University of California.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Susan Guevera has traveled all over the world. She lived in Paris and Belgium, where she studied with an impressionist painter and took courses at the Royal Academy of Fine Art. About her children's book illustrations, she says, "Illustrating books is a journey fraught with danger and excitement...It satisfies me to the bone."

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to describe their favorite part of a birthday party. Write their responses on the chalkboard. Then explain that the book they will read is about a special birthday party for a very special cat.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

"Why is Novio Boy sad?"

"What does Chato decide to do?"

"What does Chato forget?"

"How have Novio Boy's feelings about birthday parties changed by the end of the story?" (Compare and contrast)

"Why do you think Novio Boy is so happy at the story's end?" (Draw conclusions)

Vocabulary

Write the vocabulary words and the definitions on the chalkboard. Have children copy the definitions and write the word that fits beside its definition.

valiente

cojín

guardafangos

maravilloso

hinchable

Something that can be blown up

Something that is very beautiful; marvelous

Something to sit on

Something that is part of a car

Someone who is very brave

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Art: Make a Piñata

Children can work together to make a piñata in whatever shape they choose. Begin with a blown-up balloon, and have children paste strips of newspaper over the balloon in many layers. They can add layers of paper to create the shape they want, leaving a hole at the top. When the piñata is dry, pop the balloon through the hole and fill it with treats. Children can paint the piñata if they choose to. Have a piñata party, where children take turns trying to break open the piñata with a stick.

Language Arts: Novio Boy's Journal

Have children imagine what Novio Boy must have felt about not having a real birthday. Ask them to write a journal entry as if it was written by Novio Boy, for the day of Chorizo's birthday. They can describe how the party made them feel. Then children can write another entry for the day of the surprise party, describing how the second party made them feel.

Health: Birthday Party Menu

Chato's birthday party includes a menu of cheese, cream, dog biscuits and cat crunchies. Have children decide what menu they would most like at their birthday party. Have them write down their menus and decorate them with appropriate illustrations.

Language Arts: Special Birthday Traditions

Have children write a description of a special tradition they enjoy or would like to experience on their own birthdays. The tradition can be a special food, an activity, or any other kind of celebration. Volunteers can read their descriptions aloud to 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 be make sure the sites are suitable.

Mexican Recipes

Have children look online to find recipes for the dishes Chato makes for his party, guacamole and salsa. Encourage them to copy or print out one recipe each. Collect them in a class book of Mexican recipes. If possible, bring in examples of each dish for children to try.