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Activity Guide

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Henry and Mudge in the Sparkle Days

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ABOUT THE STORY

Henry and his dog Mudge enjoy winter fun. They play in the snow, making angels and building forts. They celebrate Christmas Eve with a huge holiday dinner. They go for walks at night and then curl up, cozy and warm, in front of the fire. They love the sparkle days of winter.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Rylant has written many other books about Henry and Mudge, including *Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble* and *Henry and Mudge Get the Cold Shivers*, both Live Oak Readalongs. Her books have won dozens of awards; in 1993, she received the Newbery Award for her novel *Missing May*. She has always loved big, drooly dogs, just like Mudge, and lives with two of them in her house in Eugene, Oregon.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sucie Stevenson knows all about Mudge-like dogs, too – she has two of her own. She has illustrated all the other Henry and Mudge tales.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children what their favorite winter activities are. List their responses on the chalkboard. Then explain that this story is about a boy, his dog, and their winter fun.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “What is a sparkle day? Why is it called that?”
- “Why is Mudge scared of Henry?”
- “What do Henry’s parents cook for Christmas Eve?”
- “What does Henry wish for on the shooting star?”
- “What do you think Henry and his parents think when they see the warm lights in people’s houses?” (Draw conclusions)
- “Which of Henry’s ‘sparkle days’ do you like best? Why?” (*Responding*)

Vocabulary

Have children work in pairs. Each partner can define part of each compound word below. Then pairs can define the whole word and use it in a sentence.

hideout	neighborhood
candlesticks	candlelight

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Cold Weather Warnings

Have children find out what the special dangers of cold weather are. They can work together to create a poster for cold weather safety including instructions on staying warm, being careful on ice, and so on.

Language Arts: I Wish I May

Henry wished for chocolate pudding on a shooting star. Have children decide what they would wish for on a shooting star. They can write their wishes on paper stars and then read them to the class if they choose to. Hang the stars on a bulletin board display.

Social Studies: Christmas in Other Lands

Encourage children to work in pairs or small groups to find out how Christmas is celebrated in other cultures. Some countries to focus on include Mexico, Sweden, Great Britain, Italy, and South Africa. Groups can report on customs, special foods, and traditions of other cultures.

Health: A Christmas Eve Menu

Children can create a menu of their own for Christmas Eve, based on what they eat at home or on foods they choose themselves. Encourage them to choose a first course, main course, and dessert, and write their choices on a decorated menu.

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.

Building Your Own Igloo

Have children research how to build their own igloo or snow cave by using the keyword *igloo*. Ask them to make a list of safety rules for playing in such a cave.

Children can look for information about *Santa’s workshop*, *Santa Claus* and *Christmas* by using those topics as keywords for a search. Have them create a banner by finding how to say “Merry Christmas” in different languages and printing the phrases on a long roll of paper to hang in the classroom.