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Activity Guide

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Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner

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ABOUT THE STORY

Annabelle, who is very excited about starting kindergarten, receives some last minute lessons from her big sister, Lucy. However, when Annabelle applies this knowledge to her first day of school, the other children in her class laugh. Upset, Annabelle tearfully tells her sister that everything she says is wrong. Lucy rises to the occasion and reminds her little sister that she is Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner, and she is very brave. Things start turning around for Annabelle when she is the only child in her class who knows how to do something special for her surprised teacher.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Amy Schwartz was born in San Diego, California. She attended Antioch College and received her B.F.A. from the California College of Arts and Crafts. In addition to authoring her own books, Ms. Schwartz has published several of her titles and has illustrated books for other authors. She is the recipient of many awards and honors, including the "New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Book" and "Booklist Editor's Choice Award" in 1995 for her book "A Teeny Tiny Baby". Ms. Schwartz credits her insight into the world of children to real events in her own childhood.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to share their memories of their first day of school. Did they ride the bus? Who walked them to their classroom? How did they feel? Did they make mistakes? Allow the children to share their stories. Tell them that this book is the story of Annabelle Swift's first day of Kindergarten.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- Why is Lucy able to teach Annabelle "all she needs to know about Kindergarten"? (because she's older and in third grade)
- Where did Annabelle first keep her nametag so she could touch it when she needed to feel brave? (pocket)
- Who was Annabelle's friend on the first day of school? (a chubby boy)
- How much milk money did Annabelle count? (\$1.08)
- How many cartons of milk did she carry back to her classroom? (18)
- Why did Annabelle clear her throat loudly as she passed the third grade class? (she felt proud and wanted her sister to see her)

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:

remember, importantly, straightened, geography, globe, "raving scarlet", arithmetic, infinity, classmates, concept whispered, recognized, announced, stunned, rejoice

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Math: Luscious Lollipops

Divide the class into groups of three. Give each group a bag of lollipops (with various colors). Have the children count to see how many of each color lollipop are in the bag. Next, have each group report their findings to form a class chart. Use the chart to answer various questions (Which color has the most lollipops? The Fewest? What's the difference between these two numbers? How many lollipops all together?, etc.).

Language Arts/Creative Writing: Those Were the Days

Remind the group of the stories they shared during the introduction of the book. Have the children write their memory down and illustrate it. Compile their work into a class book called "Kindergarten Memories" and share it with a kindergarten class in your school, or donate it to your school library. You may want to make a second copy for your classroom library.

Social Studies: Play GeoBALL (geography)

Have the children sit on the floor in a large circle. Take turns tossing an inflatable globe from student to student. As the children take turns catching the globe, ask them to identify something about the area their hands are touching when they catch it. (Name the country or ocean, identify land or water, continent, etc. depending on grade level of the group.)

Career/Life Skills: Speaking of Siblings

Have the children raise their hand if they have brothers and/or sisters. Are they older or younger? In the story, Lucy is very supportive of her little sister, and spends a lot of time teaching her things. Discuss the ways the kids in your group help their siblings. If you don't receive a lot of positive feedback, brainstorm ways children could become kinder and more helpful.

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.

Amy Schwartz

Have children search for biographical information on the author. Find out the names of some of her other books. Have each student read one and write a short report about it (give summary and tell if they liked the story - why or why not?). Post biographical information about the author somewhere around your classroom library.