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Activity Guide

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The Bear's Toothache

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ABOUT THE STORY

A small boy, roused from his bed by the moans and groans of a large bear, invites the nocturnal prowler into his home in an eventful and finally successful attempts to relieve the bear's toothache.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

David McPhail lives with his family in Barnstable on Cape Cod. He has worked as a miller and an incinerator man and likes to watch trains with his two sons. Mr. McPhail illustrated *The Bear's Bicycle*, written by Emile McLeod, also available as a Live Oak Readalong.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children if they know anyone who has ever had a toothache. Have them describe how they think it felt and volunteer ideas about how to make it stop. Then tell them that this story is about a bear with a toothache and the boy who helps him.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "After the boy first tried to pull out the bear's aching tooth, what did he think might loosen it?"
- "Why did the boy try to hit the bear's tooth with a pillow? What happened instead?"
- "How did the boy and the bear finally pull out the aching tooth?"
- "Why was the bear happy when the tooth popped out?" (Draw conclusions)
- "What do you think happened after the boy put the bear's tooth under his pillow?" (Make predictions)

Vocabulary

Write the following words from the story on the chalkboard.

examined budge windowsill loosen

Ask volunteers to give a definition for each word. Then have the children make up silly sentences using the words, such as *I tried to push the elephant off my homework, but he wouldn't budge.*

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Health: Avoiding Tooth Trouble

Have children work in small groups to create posters showing the steps necessary for dental health – steps the bear might not have taken. Children can illustrate their posters. Display them on the walls of the classroom.

Art: Animal Toothaches

Have children imagine what kind of animal would have the worst toothache. They can draw or paint a picture of the animal suffering with a toothache. Encourage them to think about what animals have the biggest teeth and might suffer from the biggest toothache.

Science: A Bear Diet

The bear in the story eats steak and other items from the refrigerator. Have children find out what bears in the wild eat. Have books about bears and encyclopedia articles available for the class. Encourage each child to write down at least two things that bears eat and report on their findings to the class.

Language Arts: An Animal Story

Ask the children if they have ever thought or dreamed about helping an animal in distress, as the boy does the bear. Have them write a story about such a rescue. After they finish, children can read their stories aloud to the group.

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.

Animal Teeth

Have children use the keyword *animal teeth* to find out facts about animals and their teeth. Ask each child to write down three facts about animals and their teeth and read the information they have found to the class.