

The Relatives Came

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ABOUT THE STORY

One summer, a car full of relatives came a long way to visit a family. The relatives hugged and ate and stayed for weeks, tending the garden and fixing around the house. And when they left, the house was too quiet, and the family and the relatives dreamed about their next reunion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cynthia Rylant grew up in West Virginia, in a town without a library. As an adult, she got a job working as a clerk in a public library and fell in love with children's books. She has been writing books for children ever since, including the Henry and Mudge series, available as readalongs from Live Oak Media. Ms Rylant lives in Eugene, Oregon.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Stephen Gammell is the Caldecott Award-winning artist of over 50 books for children. He grew up in Des Moines, Iowa but now lives with his wife in St. Paul, MN.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever been to a family reunion. Have volunteers describe their experiences at reunions. Then tell them that this story is about a reunion of many, many relatives.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- From where did the relatives come?
- What kind of car did the relatives drive?
- Where did the relatives sleep?
- How long did the relatives stay?
- How did the relatives feel about the crowded house? Explain your answer. (*Make inferences*)
- Why were the beds too big and quiet after the relatives left? (*Draw conclusions*)

Vocabulary

Write these words from the story and the following sentences on the chalkboard. Have volunteers write the vocabulary word above its underlined synonym in the sentence.

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- The relatives journeyed a long way.
- The relatives' clothes were rumpled.
- No one was picky about where to sleep.
- The relatives helped take care of the garden.
- The house seemed quiet after the relatives left.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Art: A Family Tree

Ask children to create a family tree showing what relatives might come to a reunion. Encourage them to include any living grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and parents or guardians on their family trees.

Science: Local Fruits

The relatives eat strawberries and melons and come from a place where grapes and peaches grow. Children can make a list of the fruits that grow in their area that visiting relatives might enjoy eating.

Social Studies: Map Your Relatives

Provide the group with a large outline map of the United States. Ask children to find out where their relatives live and locate them on the map with colored dots or star stickers. When all the children have noted where their relatives live, display the map.

Math: Counting the Relatives

Have children make a chart of relatives, with a column each for grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They can write how many of each they have, and then add the relatives together and write a total at the bottom of their chart.

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.

The Relatives Came...From Virginia

Children can find out about Virginia, where the relatives are from, by searching for sites using the keyword *Virginia*. Encourage them to find out three facts about Virginia and tell them to the group.