

The Sundown Kid: A Southwestern Shabbat

Read Aloud Guide

Themes: Jewish Culture & Traditions, Community

Book Brief: A young boy and his family move to the desert Southwest and struggle with feeling lonely as the only Jewish family in their new town. To help cure his mother's homesickness, the resourceful boy decides to invite all their new neighbors over for a warm Shabbat dinner.

Author:
Barbara Bietz

Illustrator:
John Kanzler



Before Reading

The Cover: Ask students to make a prediction about the story based on the cover.

The Pictures: Take a brief picture walk and ask students what they notice.

Prior Knowledge: Ask, "Have you ever felt new in a new place and wondering if you would fit in?"

Vocabulary: Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [Vocabulary Guide](#).

Purpose for Reading: "As we read, think about how the young boy reached out to others to make friends and create community."

During Reading

Check for understanding & make connections:

- Why did the young boy feel lonely in his new town?
- The boy's mama says "Too much soup, not enough family." What does she mean? What feeling is she expressing?
- How did he bring his neighbors and others together to form his new community?
- What makes a place feel like home? Use at least two details from the story and connect to your own experience.
- What Jewish traditions did the story describe as part of shabbat? Were you familiar with these?



Think Aloud:

"I notice that the young boy was concerned about his mother's homesickness and decided to help in some way."

I'm wondering..."Have you ever noticed something bothering your parents or a sibling?"

After Reading

Our Purpose: "How did the young boy go about finding new friends and community?"

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.

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Extension Activities

Finding Community

Directions:

Using a large poster paper, have the students make a list of words and activities that would make others feel comfortable in a new setting (school, neighborhood, town).

Making Connections

Directions:

To read more about creating community and a welcoming spirit, try:

[Hello, You](#)

[Green, Green: A Community Gardening Story](#)

[Grandfather's Journey](#)

Point-of-View

Materials:

- Book, [The Sundown Kid: A Southwestern Shabbat](#)
- Writing paper
- Pencils, pens, and markers

Directions:

1. Using the writing paper, write a short narrative from the boy's point-of-view, describing his concern for his mother's well-being.
2. Explain the motivation behind the act of inviting neighbors to join his family for Shabbat.
3. Using the framed illustrations in the book as a guide, illustrate your work in a similar manner.