

CHATO AND THE PARTY ANIMALS

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by Gary Soto, ill. by Susan Guevara

Themes: Birthdays, Friends, Communities,

Latino Culture

Grade Level: K-4

Running Time: 10 minutes

SUMMARY

Chato, a cool cat first introduced in *Chato's Kitchen*, throws a birthday party for his friend Novio Boy. After discovering that Novio Boy is from the pound and has never celebrated a birthday, Chato rounds up party favors like flea combs and collars with bells, makes a *piñata* out of newspaper and an empty cat food box, and cooks up some beans, guacamole and his signature tortillas. He invites all the animals from *el barrio* to attend the surprise *pachanga*. Unfortunately, in his excitement, Chato forgets to invite Novio Boy himself. This minor oversight launches a neighborhood-wide search for the guest of honor. Finally, the animals give Novio Boy up for lost, kidnapped, or “run over, flat as a tortilla.” As they sadly reminisce amidst untouched water balloons and a mouse-colored cake, Novio Boy pops up, with two new friends. The animals rejoice and the party begins. They dance, throw water balloons, open presents, and celebrate *la familia del barrio*.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss friendship and compassion.
- Students will learn about community.
- Students will make connections to Latino cul-

ture and language.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with students about the types of communities they live in. Guiding questions:

- Do you live in a city community or a country community?
- What language do most of the people in your community speak? Does anyone in your community speak a different language than you do?
- How do people in your community celebrate events such as birthdays?
- What makes your community unique?
- How is your community similar to others?

Talk with students about friendship. Guiding questions:

- What qualities are important to you in a friend? Why?
- How do you show a friend that you care about him/her?
- Have you ever helped a friend solve a problem or feel better? How?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use a Venn diagram to help students make text-to-self connections. Each student will compare his/her own community with Chato's. Encourage students to think about:

- language
- celebrations
- stores/houses (neighborhood layout)

Second language learners can draw differences and similarities on their diagrams.

Students can create “My Neighborhood

Dictionary.” Draw the students' attention to the Spanish words and phrases in *Chato and the Party Animals*. If there are native Spanish speakers in your class, ask them to pronounce the words, if they are comfortable doing so. Practice pronouncing the words with the whole class. Discuss how different communities use different languages, expressions, and dialects. Follow up with having students create a dictionary with certain words or phrases that are unique to their community, family, or group of friends.

Students can plan a party for a favorite friend or relative. Encourage students to write or draw a list of what they will need. Whom will they invite? Where will it be held? Why will the guest of honor appreciate this type of party? To conclude, have students illustrate a hypothetical scene from the party and write a brief description or caption about what is happening.

Other Weston Woods programs about multicultural celebrations include:

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Sam and the Lucky Money by Karen Chinn, ill. by Cornelius Van Wright & Ying-Hwa Hu

Seven Candles for Kwanzaa by Andrea Davis Pinkney, ill. by Brian Pinkney

Three Cheers for Catherine the Great! by Cari Best, illustrated by Giselle Potter

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