

MERRY CHRISTMAS, SPLAT

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by Rob Scotton

Ages: 3 – 7; Grades: PreK - 2

Themes: Christmas, Family, Humor

Running Time:

SUMMARY

It's the day before Christmas and Splat is anxious to get his letter off to Santa. He wants a really big present, but his sister isn't sure that he's been good enough. His friend Seymour, however, is convinced that he's been *very* good. In a last minute effort to prove his good-ness, Splat decides help his mom get everything ready for Christmas. He washes the clean dishes, adds many more decorations to the tree, and buries the front entryway in snow. Despite being exhausted from his day of being 'good' Splat can't sleep. He stays awake, hoping to see Santa, but when he misses him, he's sure that his hopes for a really big present are dashed.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss winter holiday traditions.
- Students will identify ways to “be good” and practice living this value.
- Students will identify Splat's character traits and compare his traits in different *Splat* books/movies.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss Christmas and other winter holidays, such as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Depending on the demographics of your classroom, be prepared to provide background information on each holiday, if students don't have personal experience. Guiding questions:

- Why do people celebrate Christmas? Hanukkah? Kwanzaa?
- What do people do to celebrate Christmas? Hanukkah? Kwanzaa?
- What special things do you do in your family to celebrate?

Wrap up the discussion by having students complete the sentence: “I celebrate _____ by _____,” and drawing a picture to accompany their text. Tell students that they are going to see a movie about a silly cat that is concerned he wasn't good enough to

get a really big present from Santa. Encourage children to watch and listen for ways that Splat's family celebrates Christmas.

Discuss what it means to “be good” with students. Ask students to make a list of ways that they are “good” at home and at school. Scribe their list on chart paper. Read through the list with students and help them categorize the actions that they listed. For example say, “This list says to listen to your mom. So being good means listening to others.” Or, “This list says to keep your desk clean. So being good means taking care of your environment.” After creating a more generalized, or values-based list, encourage students to choose one value that is a challenge for them and to focus on it for a week. Provide students with a way to keep track of their goal for the week, such as a checklist that reads, “This week, I _____ by _____.” Encourage students to watch and listen for ways that Splat tries to be good in the movie. What values does he try to live up to?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Read another book, or watch another movie, about Splat (*Splat the Cat*; *Love, Splat*) and have students compare Splat's character in the different texts. Guiding questions:

- How does Splat act in this text?
- How does Splat feel in this text?
- What is Splat's problem in each text? How does he solve it?
- What is the same about Splat in all of the books we've read about him?
- How is Splat different in each book?

Culminate the discussion by listing character traits about Splat. Extend the discussion by comparing and contrasting Splat with another character or by making text-to-self connections with Splat.

Have students imagine what Splat's really big present was. Have them draw a picture of what Splat received. Then, guide them through writing a sentence (or more, depending on their age) that describes the present. Give students the opportunity to share their drawing and writing with each other.

Discuss the value of generosity. Explain that generosity is the quality of giving and sharing with others.

Guiding questions:

- Who is someone in your life who has been generous to you? What did he/she give you?
- What kinds of things can be given? What else, beyond material things?
- When have you been generous with others? How did it make you feel?
- When are special times that people give to others or are generous?

Organize a gift-making party and gift exchange in the classroom. Provide students with arts and crafts materials, as well as project ideas. Encourage them to make more than one gift and to give to someone that they don't know very well. As a follow up, guide children through writing thank you letters.

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