

CHATO'S KITCHEN

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Book by Gary Soto, illustrated by Susan Guevara

Themes: Latino Culture/ Neighborhoods/

Friendship

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 11:00

SUMMARY

A "cool cat" named Chato decides he'd like to have his neighbors, a family of mice, over for dinner. The mouse family, smelling a rat, asks if their friend can come along. When Chato discovers the friend is a "cool dog", he panics, but just for a moment - until he realizes they can all eat enchiladas together.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will become familiar with Spanish words and phrases and the cultures of Spanish speaking countries.
- Children will investigate the meaning of friendship and friendly behavior.
- Children will explore different neighborhoods.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *Chato's Kitchen* with children.

Then ask:

- What kind of a cat is Chato?
- What kinds of things did Chato do to show how he was feeling?
- What did Chato do to make the mouse family want to come to his house for dinner?
- How did Chato and Novio Boy feel when they

saw Chorizo, the surprise visitor?

- How do you think the mice, dog, and cats got along once the meal was over?
- Share the Spanish words used throughout the story and discuss their meanings. (You will find the Spanish words and English translations in the glossary at the front of the book.) Then encourage children to share words and phrases in other languages that they may be familiar with.
- Have children discuss the ways Chato tried to welcome his new neighbors. Encourage children to think of things they might do to help new neighbors or new classroom friends feel comfortable. Emphasize that being kind to new friends and neighbors is as important as offering gifts.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

- Have children recall the mambo twinge that Chato felt when he heard the mouse family next door. Explain that the mambo is a dance of Cuban origin. Play some mambo music in the classroom, giving children a chance to enjoy the music. Have someone in your school familiar with the mambo teach some basic steps to children or simply let children move in their own creative ways to the music!
- Investigate the cultures of Spanish speaking countries with children. Visit your school library, explore appropriate museum exhibits, and invite friends and relatives of children with some background in the customs and traditions of these countries to visit the classroom and share their

knowledge with children.

- Talk about the different foods Chato and Novio Boy were preparing in the story. Encourage children to describe the looks, smells and tastes of some of these foods. Mix up some guacamole with children and serve it with tortilla chips for a classroom snack. Follow the recipe below:

Guacamole

- Peel, seed, and chop two large, ripe avocados
- Mash avocado with fork
- Add 1 clove minced garlic, 1 medium chopped jalapeno pepper, 3 teaspoons lemon juice, 2 tablespoons olive oil, dash of salt.
- Mix thoroughly. Serves eight.

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