

MAX'S CHRISTMAS

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By Rosemary Wells (Dial)

Theme: Holidays/Siblings/Christmas

Grade Level: Pre-K-1

Running Time: 5 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

MAX'S CHRISTMAS is a charming tale about a little boy named Max and his older sister Ruby. It's Christmas Eve and Ruby gets Max ready for bed so that Santa can come down the chimney with his holiday gifts. As Ruby helps Max prepare for bed, the little boy is full of questions about Santa- who is coming? where is he coming? when is he coming? When Max asks why he can't see Santa, a frustrated Ruby answers "Because!"

Ruby finally gets Max into bed, only to have the little boy climb out, sneak downstairs, and wait by the fireplace for Santa. When Santa arrives, Max begins with his questions again. Santa eventually says it is time for him to go, and for Max to go sleep. When Max asks "Why?" and Santa answers "Because!"

Santa leaves his hat, along with the presents, and flies up the chimney. Ruby comes downstairs and sees Max, covered by a bulging, bumpy blanket, and wearing Santa's hat. Ruby asks why the blanket is so bumpy, and as she pulls it off Max discovering the Christmas packages as Max answers, "Because!"

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the Christmas holiday.
- Children will explore bedtime rituals.
- Children will explore sibling relationships.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book MAX'S CHRISTMAS with the children.

Then ask:

- How did Max feel on the night before Christmas?
- How do you feel?
- Would you like to see Santa Clause? Why? Why not?

Share other books about Christmas with children. If children celebrate this holiday at home, have them bring to school some of their homemade decorations or other symbols of Christmas they might have. Encourage children to describe these items, and their family's Christmas traditions, to their classmates.

Talk with children about other winter holidays they celebrate with their families. Encourage children to describe their holiday celebrations to others in the group.

Ask:

- How does your family prepare for the holiday?
- What is your favorite part of the holiday?
- What other things does your family do together to make the holiday special?

Discuss children's bedtime routines. Encourage them to talk about the things they do every evening, including the health care routines they follow before going to bed. Have children compare their own rituals to those that Max and Ruby follow. Ask:

- Which of the things that Ruby helps Max do before bed do you do at home?
- Who helps you?
- What might happen if you forget to do some of these things?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss the Christmas stockings children saw in the story.

Then play a game of "Guess What's Inside the Stocking." Provide a large sock. Have children close their eyes and place an object into the sock. Have children open their eyes and take turns reaching into the sock and, without looking, feel the object. See if children can identify the object simply by feeling it. Continue the game by placing different objects in the sock.

Talk about how people around the world celebrate Christmas in Scandinavia, France, Spain, etc. using books about Christmas from the library.

Suggest this as a story starter: One Christmas Eve I couldn't sleep so I sneaked downstairs. There before my eyes was...

Talk with children about the relationship between Max and Ruby in the story. Ask:

- How do you think Ruby feels about caring for Max?
- How do you think Max feels about being cared for by his sister?

Encourage children to describe their own sibling relationships, including how they feel about being cared for by older siblings.

Other videos and films about winter holidays available from Weston Woods include:

CHICKEN SOUP WITH RICE by Maurice Sendak

THE CLOWN OF GOD by Tomie de Paola

THE LITTLE DRUMMER BOY written by Katherine Davis, Henry Onorati and Harry Simeone & illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats

MORRIS'S DISAPPEARING BAG by Rosemary Wells

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS by Robert Broomfield

ZLATEH THE GOAT written by Issac Bashevis Singer & illustrated by Maurice Sendak

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