

THE BIG SNOW

by Berta and Elmer Hader

Caldecott Medal book (1949). A delightful picture book with beautiful pictures showing how woodland animals prepare for winter.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *Does anyone have a bird feeder in their yard?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder if the animals smell something – it looks like their noses are in the air?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Ask the children to try and remember as you read what the animals did to prepare for winter. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *The Big Snow*

- ebbled: to move away from the land
- pouches: a pocket-shaped space in the skin
- retire: to go to bed
- hollow: an empty space
- frolic: to dance or play in a lively way
- trilling: a high-pitched sound made by a bird
- blotted: to cover up so you can't see it
- snow-laden: covered with heavy snow
- throng: a large crowd

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Why do birds fly south for the winter?
- Which animals go to sleep during the winter? What is that called?
- How did the squirrel prepare for winter?
- How do the animals that stay awake during the winter find food when the ground is covered with snow?
- Which animal knew what a rainbow around the moon meant?
- What would have happened if the little old man and woman had not put food out for the animals?
- Let's try and remember the animals that are in this story...

Do

Make a Pine Cone Bird Feeder

Find a large pine cone. Tie a three to four foot piece of yarn around the top of the pine cone for the hanger. Mix two tablespoons of peanut butter and two tablespoons of softened margarine together. Spread the mixture onto the pine cone. Pour some bird seed on a newspaper and roll the pine cone into the mixture. Place the seed-covered pine cones in the freezer for about an hour or until firm. Hang your pine cone feeder at the end of a small branch (so the squirrels don't get it!) in a tree.