

Toasting Marshmallows

by Kristine O'Connell George

A captivating and memorable picture book of poems that will leave readers with wonderful memories of a camping trip – even if they've never been on one!



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, *Who can tell me if they have ever made up a poem?* 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 why the boy had three marshmallows and the girl one?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. 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 *Toasting Marshmallows*

- camping: living outdoors in a tent
- tent: a movable shelter of tough fabric or plastic cover held up by poles, ropes and pegs
- stakes: a wood or metal post driven in the ground to mark or support something
- billow: to fill with air
- taut: stretched tightly
- thicket: a dense growth of small trees or bushes
- trembles: shaking slightly
- poised: motionless often just before or in the midst of an action
- spindled: long and thin shaped like a table leg
- snarling: growl like a dog
- scrunch: to crumple, crush, or squeeze something together tightly
- cocoon: a silky covering which a caterpillar or other insect encloses itself until it turns into an adult
- nibbling: to take small quick bites of something
- hasty: done in a hurry
- whitecaps: the white crest of a breaking wave
- confetti: small pieces of colored paper or dried flowers – similar to confetti in shape or color
- confection: the process of combining things
- eavesdropping: to listen to a conversation without the speakers being aware of it
- lure: a device attached to a fishing line to catch fish
- cattails: a tall, slender, brown, tube-shaped plant found in a marsh
- hillside: the side of a hill
- ancient: very old
- passages: a path enclosed on both sides
- cinderblocks: a light, hollow block made from coal ashes mixed with cement used in building and construction work
- gawk: to stare rudely
- scaffold: a supporting framework
- scallops: a fan-shaped edge

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What color was the family's tent? Orange? What color is your tent?
- What is a doe deer? Buck?
- What is the dog's name? Have you ever taken your dog camping?
- What did the girl sleep in when camping? What do you sleep in?
- Can you tell me what a chipmunk looks like? What do they eat? Have you seen one?
- What did the children follow on their camping trip? Have you followed a path? Where did it take you?
- What are some things the children found on the path? Cabin? An old GMC truck?
- When the wind begins to blow and black clouds start to rumble, what is happening? Where should you go?
- What is it called when you dance for rain? Have you done one?
- What did they roast over the campfire? Have you ever roasted marshmallows? Do you like yours cooked?
- What did the children think the moon was doing on them in the tent? Have you ever done this?
- What is a bait shop? What can you buy?
- Where did the girl and her mother row? Have you ever been to an island? Where?
- What did the children find in the cave? Have you ever been in a cave?
- What does a moose look like? Have you seen one?
- Can you name some noises you may hear at night? An owl?
- What kind of insect did the children see spinning her web? Have you seen one?
- What did the little girl hide in hopes of finding it next year on the camping trip? Have you done this?
- What did the girl do with her favorite camping shirt? Do you have a favorite piece of clothing for your camping trips? What?



Do

Go Fishing!

Set up a rocking boat or a large box in the classroom or outdoors. Prepare paper fish with paper clips attached to them. Include a fishing pole made from a wooden dowel and a long string with a magnet attached to the end.