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Activity Guide

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How to Dig a Hole to the Other Side of the World ABOUT THE STORY

This is the story of a child who takes an imaginary 8,000-mile trip through the center of the Earth. Combining imaginative text and realistic how-to instructions for digging and drilling one's way through the various layers of the earth, this title provides readers with an enjoyable understanding of the earth's composition.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Faith McNulty was born in New York City in 1918. She attended Barnard College and was employed as a newspaper reporter and magazine editor before becoming a staff writer for New Yorker magazine. She is the recipient of several awards for her animal and nature books.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Born in Paris, France in 1915, Marc Simont became a naturalized citizen of the USA in 1936. He studied art in three Paris academies as well as at New York City's National Academy of Design. Simont has worked as an artist and illustrator since 1939, and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Caldecott Honor award in 1959 for *The Happy Day* and the Caldecott Medal for *A Tree Is Nice* in 1947.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the children if they have ever dug a hole in the ground. How deep did they go? What did the dirt look like? Ask them if they think it would be fun to dig a hole right through the earth. Where do they think they'd come out if they dug to the other side of the world? Explain that in this story they will find out what they'd see if they really could dig a hole to the other side of the world.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

1. What is loam or topsoil made of? (tiny bits of rock mixed with decayed matter)
2. What do you come to after you've dug through the topsoil? (clay, gravel, or sand)
3. What is the earth's crust made of? (solid rock)
4. What makes a geyser? (hot water)
5. What do you call the hot, melted rock that sometimes shoots out of volcanoes? (magma - which turns into lava)
6. What is at the very center of the earth? (ball of solid iron)
7. How much would you weigh at the very center of the earth? (nothing)

Vocabulary

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, simply discuss the terms, or have children look them up in a dictionary.

Loam, topsoil, limestone, sandstone, diamonds, emeralds, geysers, asbestos, basalt, submarine, Celsius, magma, lava, jet-propelled, reel

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science/Arts: Circle Time

Draw a large circle on the board to represent the earth. Give each student a reproducible copy Modeling on the board, have children draw smaller circles within the large one to show the eight layers that make up the earth from its' top to center. Refer to the book to properly label each layer.

Geography: What's on the Other Side?

The book says that if you drilled through the earth from the U.S. all the way to the other side, you would come out in the Indian Ocean. Using an actual globe, demonstrate this to the students. Experiment with different starting points: What if you started in Canada? Australia? China? Let children take turns determining opposite points on the globe.

Science: Suit Up!

The child in the book wears different diving suits. Discuss what a diving suit does and how it protects divers. Where else would they wear a diving suit? See Internet activity below for expanded idea.

Math: What Makes a Mile?

Many sections of the book tell how many miles thick each layer of the earth is. Help children understand how long one mile is. Before the lesson, drive in various directions from the school and find out what local landmarks are one mile away. Weather permitting, go on a walk, (1/2 mile out and 1/2 mile back), to demonstrate the length of one mile. Depending on age of class, use other measurements to determine a mile (how many yards? Meters?).

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Diving Suits/Wet suits: Have children research diving suits. What are they made from? How do they protect divers? Why do divers wear them?

Earth's Crust: Have children search for additional information on each of earth's 8 layers. Assign eight small groups each a different layer to research. Combine information into a classroom project and display.