

## Book Club Questions – Sylvester and the Magic Pebble

### Author Bio

William Steig wrote and illustrated cartoons for many years for *The New Yorker* magazine and then began a career in advertising. He started to write and illustrate books for children when he was in his sixties.

### Dialogue Questions

#### *Before reading the story:*

- When do you make a wish?
- What are some of the things that you wish for?

#### *During the reading:*

- Who collects things?
- What are some of the things that you collect?
- What happened to Sylvester when he wished for the rain to stop?
- When Sylvester headed home with his magic pebble, how did he feel?
- Do you think Sylvester's wish to be a rock was a good wish? Why or why not?
- How do you think Sylvester is feeling now? Do you think it was a good wish? Why or why not?
- Is there anything else Mr. and Mrs. Duncan can do to find Sylvester? Give me an example.
- How did Sylvester's wish come true?
- Why do you think it was a good idea to put the pebble in the iron safe?

#### *After the reading:*

- Where does the story take place?
- Who were the characters in the story?
- What was the problem in the story and how was it solved?
- What lesson do you think Sylvester learned?

Discuss the illustrations including the following points:

- Why do you think this book won the award?
- Are the illustrations realistic or stylized?
- What emotions do you feel as you look at the picture?
- Do the illustrations go well with the text?

### Family Relationships

- How will Sylvester's life, after his experience in this story, be different? Why do you think these changes would happen?
- What kinds of things do you like doing with your family? What in particular do you like about your parent, sibling, etc.

### Dreams

- If you had a magic pebble, what would you wish for? Why? How would these things make your life better? Do some wishes bring only good, while others cause only evil?
- What special collection do you have?

### Critical Thinking

- If you were Sylvester and you saw the lion approaching, how would you have used the magic pebble to help you?

### Cause and Effect

Sylvester collects rocks. He finds a red, shiny pebble.

Sylvester wished the rain would stop. It ceases.

Sylvester sees a lion. He is frightened.

He is frightened. He wishes he is a rock

Parents were worried. They looked for Sylvester

Sylvester was lost. Parents went to police

Parents found pebble. Mother wished for Duncan

Duncan found. Everybody happy

### Activities:

**Play the picnic game.**

Have the first player start with, "I'm going on a picnic, and I'm going to bring ..." adding something that begins with the letter A, such as apples. Know that the next player must repeat the same phrase, name the item the first player chose and then add something beginning with the letter B. Continue on, with each player repeating the phrase and the alphabetical list and adding something for the next letter of the alphabet. Once each player has added to the list, the first player takes another turn, and the cycle continues. Try to get to the end of the alphabet without anyone forgetting an item.

### **Pebble Painting**

Question students to stimulate discussion by asking:

1. *How do you think pebble painting is done?*
2. *What do you think the finished product will look like when completed?*
3. *What happens when two primary colors are mixed?*
4. *What will happen if all three colors are mixed?*

*Steps:*

1. Students will first choose three different sized pebbles.
2. Students will tape the paper to the box.
3. Each student will dip two pebbles into the two colors they choose.
4. Placing the pebbles on the paper, students will now start to shake or tilt the box creating the design.
5. After pebble painting with the two colors are completed, students will now use all three primary colors and pebbles to paint their second painting.

### **Wishes Game**

Have children write down their own wish and put these wishes into a hat, then have each child pick a paper and guess whose wish it was.