

Once I Ate a Pie by Patricia MacLachlan and Emily MacLachlan Charest. Illustrated by Katy Schneider. HarperCollins, 2006.
Genre: Poetry

You will need:

- Martha character card for each child
- “A Dog’s Life” activity supplies (page 1-3)

Once I Ate a Pie

Host: **Martha**

Martha, the star of *MARTHA SPEAKS*, is outspoken, honest, loyal, kind...and very talkative! Although she speaks “human,” she still sees the world from a dog’s point of view. In *Once I Ate a Pie*, dogs of all types tell us—in their own words—how they see the world.

Episode: **Martha Speaks (#101)**

See how Martha becomes a talking dog and how her gift of gab, while not always appreciated, saves the day. (Available free at pbskids.org/martha/parentsteachers/bookclub/episodes.html or purchase from iTunes®.)

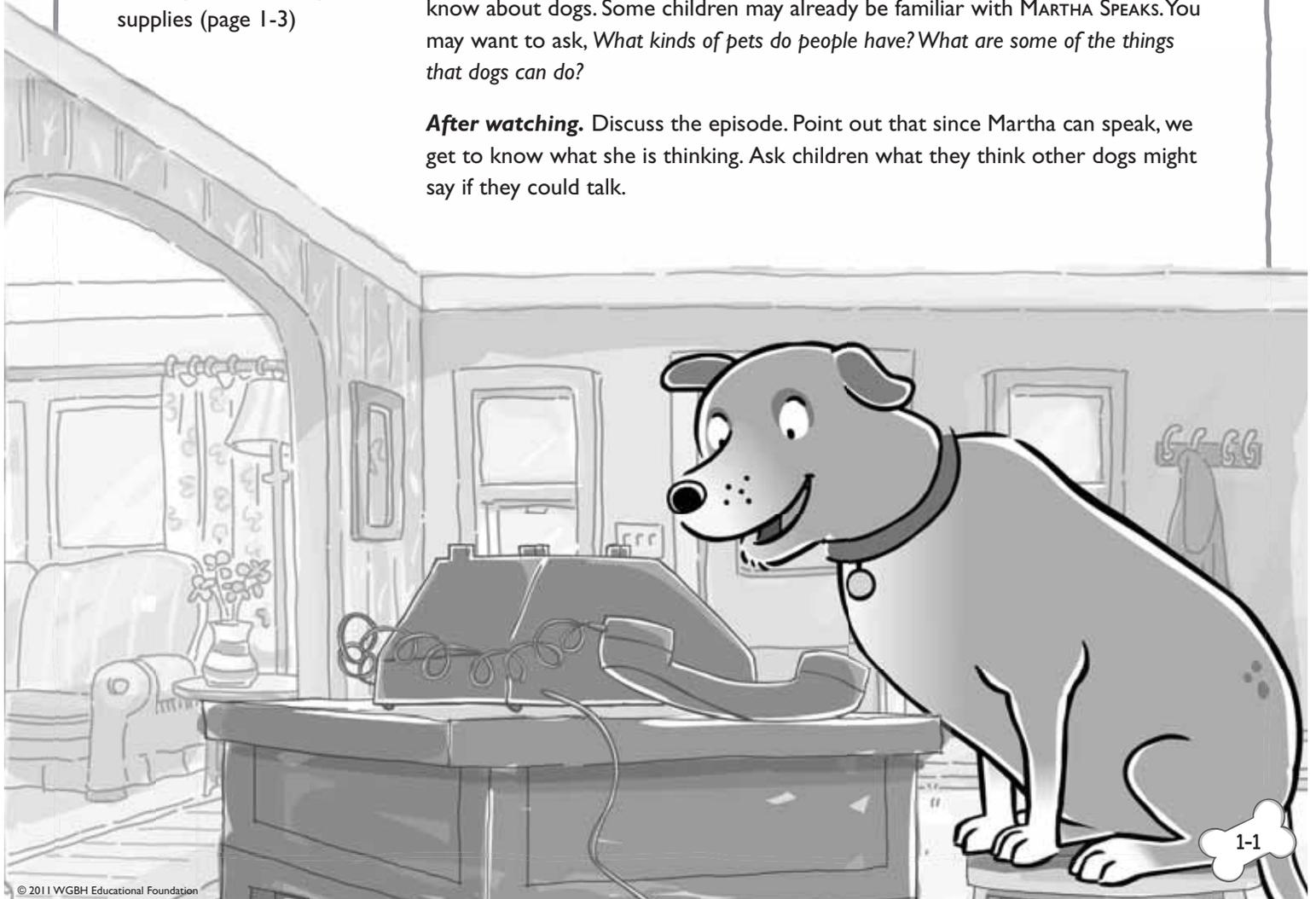
Welcome

Sing the song *M-A-R-T-H-A* (see Supporting Materials) or use another warm-up activity of your choice.

Watch the Episode

Before watching. Talk about dogs and encourage children to share what they know about dogs. Some children may already be familiar with *MARTHA SPEAKS*. You may want to ask, *What kinds of pets do people have? What are some of the things that dogs can do?*

After watching. Discuss the episode. Point out that since Martha can speak, we get to know what she is thinking. Ask children what they think other dogs might say if they could talk.



Read the Book

Before you read. Show the cover of the book. Read the title, the author, and the illustrator. Ask children to predict what the book might be about. Explain that the book is a collection of poems. If necessary, define what a poem is.

As you read. Before reading each poem, show the illustration of the dog who is “talking.” At the end of the poem, encourage brief questions or reactions.

If a word seems challenging or unfamiliar, help children think about its meaning in the context of the poem, then use simple terms to define it. Some examples include:

- *herder*: a person or animal who moves groups of animals from one place to another
- *shelter*: an *animal shelter* is a place for animals who don't have homes and a place where people can find pets

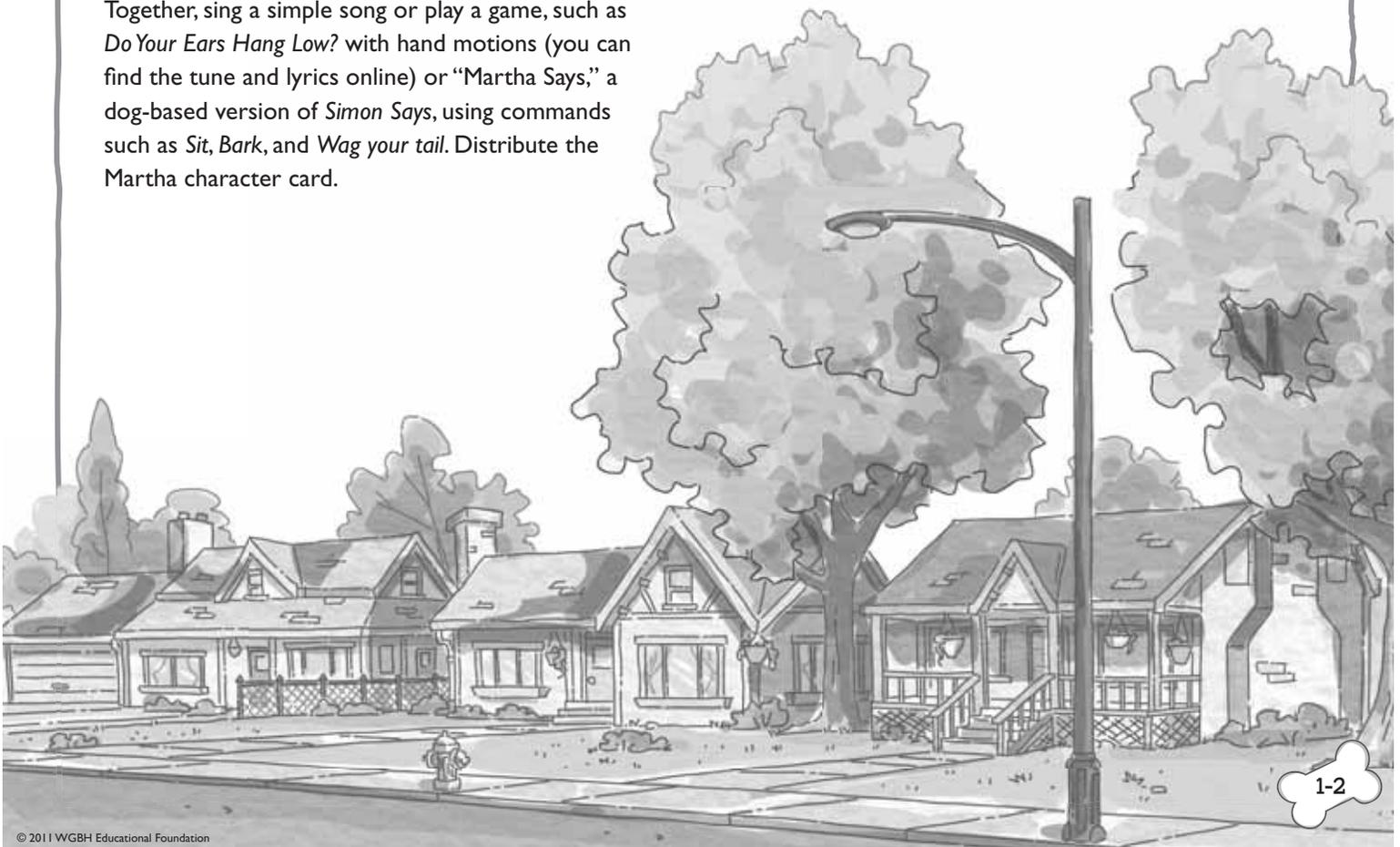
After you read. Help children make personal connections by asking questions, such as, *Which poem did you like best? Why? Did any words in the poems describe you? Which ones?*

Do a Related Activity

Continue the discussion about dogs and the differences among them. Ask, *Do different dogs have different kinds of ears? What kinds of doggy ears have you seen?* Choose one or both of the “A Dog’s Life” activities. Adapt the activities as needed or substitute one of your own.

Wrap Up

Together, sing a simple song or play a game, such as *Do Your Ears Hang Low?* with hand motions (you can find the tune and lyrics online) or “Martha Says,” a dog-based version of *Simon Says*, using commands such as *Sit, Bark, and Wag your tail*. Distribute the Martha character card.



A Dog's Life

You will need:

- Construction paper (full sheets and two-inch strips)
- Scissors (one pair)
- Markers or crayons
- Stapler
- Tape
- Doggy Ears template

Option 1: Doggy Ears

Before the session, cut construction paper lengthwise into two-inch strips. Tape together the ends of two strips to make one long strip: this will become the headband for the "doggy ears." Make at least one headband per child. Create your own shapes, or use the Doggy Ears template provided to trace and cut out upright and floppy ears from construction paper.

Give each child a headband to decorate. Then have the children select a pair of dog ears. Help kids tape or staple their doggy ears to either side of the headband, then wrap and secure it around each child's head using tape. Ask, *If you were a dog, what would your name be? I think mine would be _____.* Ask for volunteers to share their doggy name with the group and encourage them to act out a doggy behavior.

You will need:

- Chart paper
- Markers

Option 2: Doggy Poems

Work together to compose simple group poems about dogs. Ask children for words to complete the following lines:

I am Martha.
 I like alphabet soup.
 I do not like _____.
 I am _____.



Doggy Ears

