



Martha and Skits by Susan Meddaugh. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2000.

Genre: Picture book

You will need:

- Skits character card for each child
- “SuperPup!” activity supplies (page 5-3)

Martha and Skits

Host: **Skits**

Skits is the other canine member of Martha’s family—a goofy, overgrown puppy, who can always be found by Martha’s side. *Martha and Skits* tells the story of Skits’ puppy days and how the family comes to love and value Skits for his own special talents.

Episode: **Martha and Skits (#102)**

Skits joins the family bursting with puppy energy, and everyone is excited to see if alphabet soup will get him talking, too. When he has nothing to say, Skits runs away. Martha uses Skit’s special talent to help him find his way back home.

(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. Display the book *Martha and Skits* and explain that the television episode (also called *Martha and Skits*) is based on the book. You may want to ask, *What do you think is happening in this picture? What do you think is going to happen to Skits in this episode?*

After watching. Have children discuss the episode. You may want to ask, *What was your favorite part? Why did you like that part?*



Read the Book

Before you read. Ask children to look for ways in which the book is different than or the same as the television episode.

As you read. If a word seems challenging or unfamiliar, help children think about its meaning in the context of the story, then use simple terms to define it, such as,

- *specialize*: to be really good at one thing
- *competition*: a contest

After you read. Ask children about the differences and similarities that they noticed. You may want to help children make personal connections by asking questions such as,

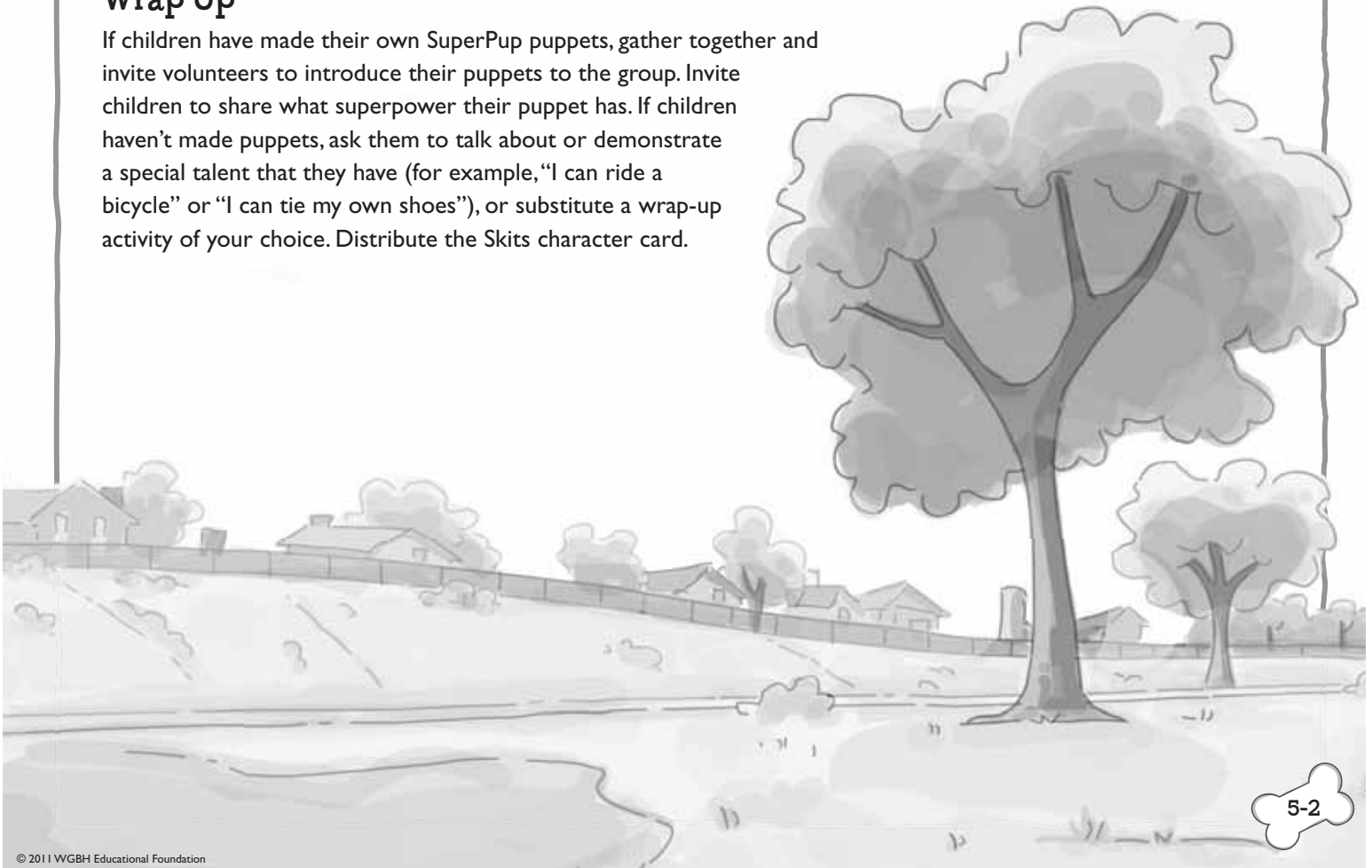
- *What special talents does Skits have?*
- *Tell me about a special talent or ability that your pet (or an animal you know) has.*
- *Tell us about a special talent or ability that you have.*

Do a Related Activity

Ask children to name a superhero. What special talents or abilities does that superhero have? Have children imagine a new doggy superhero called SuperPup. What special talents and abilities might SuperPup have? Choose one of the “SuperPup!” activities on page 5-3 or substitute an activity of your own.

Wrap Up

If children have made their own SuperPup puppets, gather together and invite volunteers to introduce their puppets to the group. Invite children to share what superpower their puppet has. If children haven’t made puppets, ask them to talk about or demonstrate a special talent that they have (for example, “I can ride a bicycle” or “I can tie my own shoes”), or substitute a wrap-up activity of your choice. Distribute the Skits character card.



SuperPup!

You will need:

- Paper lunch bags (one per child)
- SuperPup Parts template for each child or a set of SuperPup parts (dog ears, paws, and capes), cut from construction paper or wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons
- Tape or glue stick

You will need:

- One SuperPup bag puppet (see directions in Option 1)
- A drum or tambourine (optional)

Option 1: SuperPup Puppets

Give each child a paper lunch bag. Demonstrate how to draw eyes and a nose on the bottom flap of the bag. Then pick up the bottom flap and draw a mouth. Have children do the same to their paper bags. Then, have each child attach a set of SuperPup ears and paws to the bag. Ask, *What is your SuperPup's name? Mine is Brave Beagle Benjamin because my SuperPup is brave.* Write kids' SuperPup names on their capes and have them tape the cape to the back of their bags. Children can make their puppets talk by putting their hands inside the paper bag and making the mouth open and shut.



Option 2: SuperPup, SuperPup, What Can You Do?

Before the session, make one SuperPup puppet, following the directions in Option 1. Sit in a circle with the children. Introduce your SuperPup puppet and name a few special talents your SuperPup has—for example, she can jump over high buildings, she can catch a shooting star, etc. Invite children to dream up some other special superhero talents for SuperPup.

Beat the drum as you pass the SuperPup puppet around the circle. Together chant to the beat: *SuperPup, SuperPup, what can you do? SuperPup, SuperPup, what can you do?* When you stop beating the drum, have everyone stop. The child holding the SuperPup puppet will put it on his or her hand and name something new that SuperPup can do (*I can drink up the ocean!*) Invite the kids to act out that superpower. Then pass the SuperPup puppet around the circle again as you beat the drum and say the chant.



SuperPup Parts

