

Teacher's Guide

Allie's World: Block Party

By Karen Valentin

Illustrated by Michelle Dorenkamp

Published by Marimba Books

Book Description:

Allie has waited and waited. Finally the day of the big neighborhood block party has come. At a block party there are so many exciting things to do. Jump rope, play freeze-tag and hide and seek with friends. Taste the yummy dishes that the neighbors bring. Listen to the musicians play the bongos, trumpet and guitars. Cool off with an icy piragua. But the weatherman has forecasted rain. Will the rain stay away so Allie can enjoy all the fun that she has been waiting for?

Target Ages: 4-8

Themes: family, friendship, Latino culture, food, summer, planning

Pre-Reading Questions:

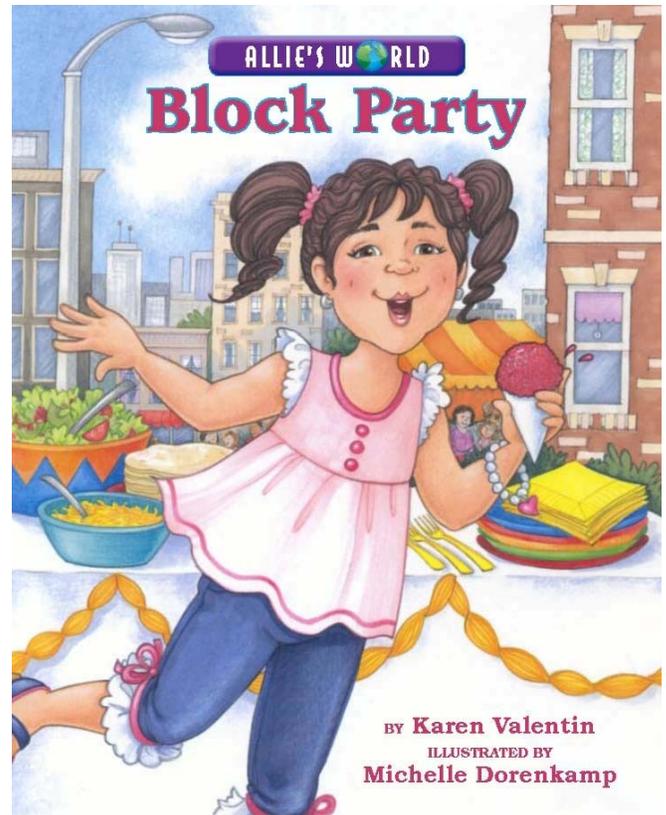
- Look at the cover. Does it give you any ideas of what the book is about?
- Do you know what a block party is?
- Do you have similar events in your neighborhood?

Comprehension Questions

- How often is the block party held?
- What do Allie's family members do to prepare for the block party?
- What is Allie worried about?
- What does *Abuela* do or say to help make Allie feel better?
- What kind of food is at the block party?
- Name the games Allie and her friends played.
- Why did Eddie take the cap off the hydrant?
- What did Allie do after eating her *piragua*?
- How did the day end?

Discussion Questions:

- In this story, weather threatens to ruin the block party. Can you think of other things that might have forced the neighborhood to cancel or postpone the event?
- The rain eventually comes at the end of the block party. What if it rained earlier, or if it rained all day? Do you think that would have changed what happened that day? In what ways?
- Is there a day or event that you look forward to every year? What makes it so special to you?



WRITING/LANGUAGE ARTS

- Write a definition for the term "block party." Make sure to include pronunciation and part of speech.
- Write about a time an unforeseen circumstance forced you to change big plans. How did it make you feel? How did you handle it?
- What does this story tell you about Allie? What three adjectives would you use to describe her?
- **Block Party** includes a few Spanish words:
Mami Papi Tio Tia Abuelo Abuela piragua
Can you tell what these words mean just by their context? If not, use the Internet to translate them.
- Make a list of other Spanish words you know and write each word's meaning beside it.
- Do you know words in other languages? Make flashcards to share these words with other students in the class. Write the word and the language it comes from on one side of the paper; write the definition and draw a picture illustrating the word on the other side.

ART

Create a flyer for your own neighborhood block party (see activity under "OTHER")

OTHER

Form a "neighborhood block party" planning committee with 3 or 4 other students. Schedule the day's activities. Where and when will the event take place? What food will each person bring? What artist/band would you like to play? Will there be a theme? Decorations? Present your group's ideas to the class.

About the Author

Karen Valentin is a Puerto Rican-American writer who has authored several books including *The Flavor of Our Hispanic Faith* and *Hallway Diaries*. A graduate of Fordham University with a B.A. in English Literature, she is also a contributor to Guideposts Books. Karen lives in New York City with her family. **Block Party** is the second title in her *Allie's World* picture book series.

About the Illustrator

Michelle Dorenkamp has been drawing since age three. She earned a BFA in Illustration and has since illustrated more than fifty children's books. Her work is also featured monthly in National Wildlife's Wild Animal Baby magazine. Michelle works from her home studio using traditional watercolors, pen and inks, markers and prismacolors as well as digital illustration. She resides in St. Louis, Missouri, and enjoys spending free time with her family, especially her granddaughter Katlyn.

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