

# KEEPING HOUSE

## KEEPING HOUSE

By Margaret Mahy, illustrated by Wendy Smith  
(Margaret McElderry Books)

Themes: Problem Solving, Home Sweet Home

Grade Level: K-3

Running Time: 8 minutes, animated

## SUMMARY

KEEPING HOUSE is the story of Lizzie Firkin, a songwriter, who writes songs all day and spends every evening singing, dancing, and playing the trombone in a nightclub. Lizzie is so busy that she never has any time to clean her apartment.

When things get farther out of control, she hires Robin Pucketucker, the Wonder Housekeeper to give her a hand. Realizing she must get the house ready for Robin to clean, Lizzie does the cleaning herself – with a few small exceptions – the cupboards!

## OBJECTIVES

- Children will appreciate the importance of cleaning up after themselves.
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques.
- Children will explore the special meaning of home.

## BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book KEEPING HOUSE with children. Then ask:

- Why do you think Lizzie had trouble keeping her house clean?
- How would you feel about living in a house like

Lizzie's? Why?

Have children draw pictures of their own houses or apartments. Encourage children to describe their homes to others in the group. Then ask:

- What chores do you do to keep your room clean and neat?
- What kinds of things can you do to help you family keep your home clean and neat?

Talk with children about pets they may have that are different form, or exactly like, Lizzie's. Have children discuss how to care for pets as a way of helping at home.

## AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the way Lizzie solved her cleaning problem. Then have children imagine what would have happened had Lizzie not called Robin Puckertucker. Ask:

- Would Lizzie have cleaned up if she hadn't called Robin? Why? Why not?
- What other things could Lizzie have done to help herself keep the house clean?
- What would you have done if you were Lizzie?

Remind children of the surprise ending to KEEPING HOUSE. Then play a game of "What's in the cupboard?" Provide a medium-sized cardboard box. Show one child an object and place it inside the box. Have this child describe the object without identifying it to others in the group. See if children can identify the object from the description. Continue the activity until each child has had

an opportunity to describe an object placed in the box.

Give children an opportunity to create "cluttered art work." Provide art materials including scraps of construction paper, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, scraps of fabric, pieces of yarn and ribbon, etc. Give each child a large sheet of posterboard. Have children paste the art materials onto the posterboard in their own creative ways to create their "cluttered art work."

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