

Reading with children can improve their language, literacy, and social-emotional skills, increasing their knowledge of the world around them. With the right book choices, reading can introduce children to healthy eating habits too!



ROSARIO'S FIG TREE

by Charis Wahl

What It's All About

The little girl thinks her neighbor, Rosario, is a magician. He can perform all sorts of magic in his garden! One day, Rosario plants a new type of tree in his yard. Join the little girl on an adventure as Rosario plants, harvests, and performs a great magic trick with his fig tree.



Discover a World of Words

Throughout the story, introduce new vocabulary words using gestures, tone of voice, pointing to illustrations, or providing brief explanations. Examples include:

- *magician*: a person who has the power to make impossible things happen
- *soil*: the top layer of earth in which plants grow
- *fig*: a sweet fruit that grows on a tree
- *sprinkle*: to drop or spread small pieces or amounts of something over something

Make Connections Beyond the Book

After reading the story, make connections to an aspect of the child's real life by:

- Trying figs! Just like the little girl tried figs for the first time, head to your local grocery store or farmer's market to try figs. Be sure to ask questions about the size, color, and texture of the fruit.
- Creating a fig tree. Using brown crayons, draw the branches of a tree. Then, add the leaves using a green paint and the child's fingers! When the paint has dried, add in some purple figs using purple crayons. What a fabulous fig tree!
- Talking with neighbors about what they grow in their garden. Engaging neighbors in conversation is a great way to build a child's vocabulary as well as open their eyes to new things growing all around them!

Dig into the Story

Develop children's comprehension of the story by discussing higher-level information (e.g., link characters' feelings to their actions and/or events in the story, predict what might happen, summarize chunks of text). Use prompts throughout the story, such as:

- *The little girl looks happy to be helping Rosario on planting day. Why do you think she is happy to help Rosario plant? What would you like to help with on planting day?*
- *Rosario does not look sad when he is burying his tree, but the little girl looks very upset. I wonder if Rosario knows something special about the tree that the little girl does not. I think the tree is going to be okay.*
- *The tree started to grow a little leaf! The little girl thinks that Rosario is a magician. What do you think? Is Rosario a magician, or is he a very good gardener?*

Jumpstart

Jumpstart is a national early education organization working toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Learn more at jstart.org.

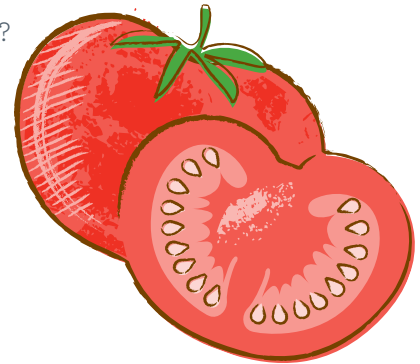
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Definitions taken from: *Learners Dictionary*. (2016). (Merriam-Webster, Incorporated) Retrieved from LearnersDictionary.com.

Together Time Activity

CHART YOUR FAVORITE FRUIT'S GROWTH CYCLE

Like Rosario's fig tree, many fruit trees go through seasonal growth stages and have a dormant season (when they don't grow)—but not all of them! Find out what your favorite fruit tree looks like at different times of the year. Then if you're feeling crafty, draw or paint a picture of it.

- 1 **Pick a fruit tree.** Do you love apples, bananas, oranges, plums, or avocados? Choose your favorite fruit tree—or just the one you're most curious about—and search online to find out what it looks like. (There are also fruits that grow on shrubs or vines instead of trees.)
- 2 **Find out where the tree grows.** What country or region does it grow in? What type of weather does it need? How many varieties are there? If it grows in a place with four distinct seasons, it may look very different in summer than in winter. If it grows in a place with a fairly steady temperature, you may discover that it looks about the same year round.
- 3 **Learn about the tree's growth cycles.** What are its main stages? Does it produce fruit all year or just once a year? Do different varieties grow at different times of the year? How many years is this tree expected to live, or for how many growing seasons can it produce fruit?
- 4 **Draw or paint** what your favorite fruit tree looks like in winter, spring, summer, and fall.



Talking Points

- Talk about the climate and growing seasons in your area. What fruits and vegetables are you able to grow locally? Are any of them fruit trees? Make a plan to plant a fruit tree in your own yard, if possible.
- Discuss the benefits of shopping for and eating a particular fruit or vegetable while it's "in season." This often means the flavor is at its best, and sometimes the prices are lower because more is available at this time.
- Talk about the benefits of eating fruit instead of other sweets made with refined sugars. Make a plan to replace sugary desserts with seasonal fruit on weeknights. Also, learn how to substitute fruits like figs or dates for refined white sugar in recipes.