

DIG DEEPER

VICTOR

!SURVIVES
BEING a KID!

Heidi Vertrees

DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY GUIDE

VICTOR SURVIVES BEING A KID
DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY GUIDE
DIG DEEPER

Hello!

I have written “Dig Deeper” to be a rewarding experience for both readers and any adults who are aiming to enrich the readers’ experience with pertinent and interesting questions. I want to recommend that the overall goal in using this guide is to spark interest in children so they will want to continue on the path of becoming strong readers. You may very well have your own questions and activities. Please use those if you prefer for the child or children you are teaching. Meanwhile, I hope you find useful the material below.

In addition, as a veteran teacher, I understand that adults do not always have the time to read and become familiar with all the books students are reading. This guide provides you with the scope of topics for each chapter so that meaningful discussions and possible writing assignments can ensue. The guide should allow the readers to become the leaders in sharing what they are learning, enjoying, and pondering from their reading.

In general, I suggest each reader have a notebook, paper or electronic, in step with their reading. Children can keep a running journal of their thoughts as they read, and be encouraged to add in questions and ideas about how they personally relate to the text. This process adds much richness to reading. In addition, children should be given the opportunity to talk about their reading experience with others who are reading the book, as well as with adults who are guiding their reading.

As to checking for reading comprehension, the “five finger rule” is helpful, especially if a child is reading independently. Pick a random, full page in the book and ask the child to read and put up a finger each time a word is too difficult to decode or understand. If this occurs more than five times on the page, the book may be too hard for the child to read on his or her own. (You may want to try this on a few pages.) For some children, it is best that children read at a level that is considered “Just Right” --not too hard and not too easy. If a book is simply incomprehensible to the reader, children



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may do well to read another book that may be easy, but of high interest, so that the child can continue to enjoy books and grow comfortable with the reading process.

However, we should not underestimate youth and their capacity to grow when we nurture them. If the book will be read in a guided reading group, or if the child has a high interest in reading the book, it may still be a good choice even when it presents challenges. They can enjoy reading for the overall story and meaning, rather than as a vocabulary test. Reading around a “pothole” stays in the flow of the story—continues engagement with characters and action, evoking emotion as well as intellect.

After all, if a reader does not enjoy and enter into the story, we cannot expect them to read much more in the future, no matter what words they may learn. It is your judgment and the reader’s own interest when you alone, or in a group, encourage them to discover a book’s magic and keep wondering, “What’s next!”

Since children in the middle grades are still developing their reading skills, please keep in mind that they need opportunities to read silently as well as aloud, to check for correct pronunciation and develop fluency in their reading. Many children may need to read a passage more than once in order for them to process the story. For the child who is shy about reading aloud, lots of encouragement and perhaps reading aloud alongside or with another child may help. Also, where fiction has a lot of dialogue, it can be fun for the children to have different character parts to read aloud, and either an adult or child reading aloud the narrations in between.

Children also need to develop the lifelong skill of finding “proof” in the text, so it is important to include questions that ask the readers to find where in the text they can find information to support their answers.

Here are some general questions for fiction that you may want to rely on when checking that reading comprehension is taking place. Since fiction has characters and action usually based on problems and discovery, questions can spring up from these components.

1. Who is the most important person so far in the book?
2. Can you tell me about him/her?
3. Does s/he have any challenges or problems?
4. What is he or she trying to do to fix those problems?
5. What do you like best about this chapter?
6. What do you think you might do if you were in this situation?
7. What do you think/hope will happen next?

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If children stumble over too many of these questions, suggest they reread the chapter and answer some of these questions in group or in a reading journal.

Again, reading should be exciting and interesting in order to develop the love of reading, so always aim to not get bogged down in any fashion that discourages the young reader; keep a good pace and know that a book should act as a happy springboard for children to want to go on with further reading.

The book honestly includes how Christian faith weaves into a family in their daily life and in crisis. Yet the book is not sectarian. I believe the book opens its arms to the reality of the range of faith life among others. The hero and his family worship in the Roman Catholic tradition, which is common in many Hispanic communities. The author herself is Protestant. Some adhere to non-Christian religions; there are those for whom faith is irrelevant; and there is a range of belief spanning from agnostics who doubt to atheists who deny that there is a God nor basis for communities of faith. All are welcome to this book. If we cannot agree, we can understand each other. Jesus brought God's Light and Love to redeem all persons.

I have written *Victor Survives Being a Kid* with much love for children and the ones I have taught. It is my earnest desire that children have opportunities to enjoy reading this book and be nurtured with this in mind. I still remember being assigned *Treasure Island* as a teenager, in which our entire class read the book and our teacher unintentionally ruined the experience with far too many drawn out, reading comprehension questions. The joy of reading was zapped!

So, in using "Dig Deeper," please aim to choose only optional questions from each chapter that may spark your dear readers' interest and lend to good discussions, further research, writing, and desire to read more. The questions are not designed to be a step-by-step checking but with the very intent that instead the whole process remain positive, upbeat, and fun.

Thank you to all of you for guiding children with the love for reading. The written word heightens our brains and souls.

God bless you all, or as Victor might say,

¡Dios los bendiga!

Heidi Vertrees

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Denver, Colorado, where Victor lives near the Rocky Mountains

EPIGRAPH *(Bible quotation at opening of book)*

1. Why is humility an important part of victory?
2. How can someone be humble and still stand up for truth and righteousness?
3. What awesome deeds do you hope to accomplish with a sense of great victory?

CHAP. 1

Check for Understanding

(Note: Answer key for all chapters for this section is at the end of Dig Deeper.)

1. What are Victor's problems? Where is his father? Does Victor want to go to a new school?
2. Grandma says Victor has a "gift," – a special ability blessed from God. What is it? Find the text that answers this question and reread it.

Know More

1. How far is Denver, Colorado from your home? What would you like to learn about Denver? Research answers to your questions and share them with someone.
What are some of Denver's interesting qualities compared to those near your home?
2. Victor speaks both English and Spanish. What languages are spoken in your home, by other families you know, by other students in your school, and by the ancestors leading up to your family?
3. If Spanish is new to you, make flashcards each time you read Spanish words and phrases. Write Spanish on the front and English on the back. The free, downloadable pronunciation guide on this website may help you. If you can, ask a native Spanish speaker to help you learn

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the proper sounds, or find practice sites on the Internet, such as www.LetsSpeakSpanish.com. Memorize the phrases, study the important words, and reuse them in your own sentences by changing the nouns.

4. Victor's last name is Ortega. Research the meaning of this name.
5. Victor's Mom is a phlebotomist, someone who draws blood for medical purposes. Read about the different blood types and see how they compare to each other.
6. How can gas (fizz) get trapped inside some liquids? Why does shaking cause a fizzy drink to bubble over?

Keep Thinking

1. Would you want to tell your new teacher all your best achievements you have had in your previous class? Why or why not?
2. How did Victor's mother feel about Papá's long absence? Is someone you love having to be away for a long time? What can you do to be active and healthy in the meantime? Who is someone you can rely on for help with this? Can your faith in God and love of family help you?

Have Fun

1. Find a book or online information and learn three sentences in Spanish. Have fun saying them to your family or friends to see if they can figure out what you are saying. You might need to use hand gestures and give them a few hints.
2. God gives each one of us special talents and abilities which He gives us as free gifts. With your family, make a list of all the gifts your family members have that make them special.

CHAP. 2

Check for Understanding

1. Who does the *vaquero* (cowboy) in Victor's dream remind you of?
2. Is Victor a good older brother? How do you know?
3. At school, who is giving Victor trouble?
4. How does Victor feel about this trouble?
5. Who helps Victor?

Know More

1. A lowrider is a fancy car. Look for a picture of one and see how it may be fun in a parade.
2. Read about the Lord's Supper in the Holy Bible (Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and John 13 in the New Testament), and learn about the famous painting by Leonardo da Vinci called "The Last Supper."
3. Read how the trombone slide makes different pitches.
4. Learn some healthy strategies to consider if confronted by a bully.

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Keep Thinking

1. Why might Victor have this dream now?
2. Have you or someone you know ever moved to a new home, school, or church? What helped make these changes more comfortable or less difficult?
3. Have you ever been bullied, or seen someone else being bullied? How did it make you feel? Do you think you might sometimes be bullying others?

If you are being bullied -- bullies do need help with healing inside from troublesome ways -- it may be important to tell a compassionate, Christian adult to help them and also help you to learn ways to cope with such people. Always remember to pray for everyone involved because our awesome God can work wonders! Again, an adult can help bullies learn the right ways to treat others, so you may be helping them, yourself, and others by being brave enough to talk to an adult whom you can trust.

If you think you have a problem with bullying others, maybe a younger brother or sister for instance, also pray to God to guide you to an adult whom you trust to help you overcome such habits that can be harmful to you and others. If you change your ways for the better, you may feel joy in your relationships with others. If you are an older sibling, remember, younger siblings like to look up to and learn from their older siblings.

Have Fun

1. Look up recipes for *huevos rancheros* and make some with a grown-up's help.
2. Draw or paint a picture of the lowrider car image you have found. Add people and some fancy designs of your own.

CHAP. 3

Check for Understanding

1. Whom is Victor drawing?
2. Does Victor like to draw?
How do you know?
3. Is Victor's Mom happy?
What clues tell you this?
4. What challenges does Victor have with his relationship with his mom?



Carlos vs Victor--what will happen next?!

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Know More

1. Study Garth William's pencil drawings from the books *The Cricket in Times Square*, *Charlotte's Web*, *Stuart Little*, or *Little House in the Big Woods*. Examples of his work are also available on the Internet. What do you especially admire about his artwork?

Keep Thinking

1. What might improve Victor's relationship with his mom?
2. Do you have challenges in relating well with some of your family members? How might you be able to make some improvements in this regard?

Have Fun

1. Observe a real-life scene you would like to draw. Perhaps something in nature, maybe with animals and/or people, or you might prefer an indoor scene.
2. What details are important to notice?
3. Remember those details as you draw the scene.

CHAP. 4

Check for Understanding

1. Is Victor happy at his new school? How do you know?
2. What does he remember about his old school?
3. Who is friendly to him?
4. How does his new friend deal with the class bully?

Know More

1. What instruments are in a symphony orchestra?
2. How is a saxophone designed to produce music?
3. What kind of music is jazz?
4. Listen to several instruments that are new to you.

Keep Thinking

1. In chapter two you identified good ways to deal with any time you might be confronted by a bully. Given a little more time and thought, which strategies do you think might be the best for you to remember for yourself or when helping others?

Have Fun

1. If you play a musical instrument, find a Mexican song you like and learn to play it. If you do not yet play a musical instrument, name the top one or two instruments you would like to play. Find a Mexican song you like and listen to see if it includes your favorite instruments.

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2. With a friend, write a skit that includes dialog with a bully and others he or she is trying to manipulate by using bully tactics. Include responses from the other characters that solve the problem and even help the bully to learn how to treat others better and in so doing, follow the second greatest commandment – Love thy neighbor as thyself. (Sometimes bullies suffer from low self-esteem. Your skit might include ways to help the bully with his or her self-image, too. Maybe your bully needs to trust God’s deep and powerful love more.)
3. Act out this skit. Do it more than once, so different people can role play being the bully and being bullied.
4. Write about and discuss with the group how it felt to be the bully and a victim. Plan ways you might share this creation so others can learn from it as well. With help from a teacher or parent, maybe you can film your work in order to share it with a larger audience.
5. When you do share your work, create a way that your audience can share their feedback too.

CHAP. 5

Check for Understanding

1. Where does Victor’s class go for a field trip?
2. Does Victor like it?
3. Does this trip help him?
4. How does Victor feel about returning to school?
5. Does anyone help him?
6. Who gives him trouble?
7. How does he try to deal with his troubles?

Know More

1. How do sound waves travel through gas, liquids, and solids?
2. How does one tune a string instrument?
3. Learn about Shakespeare, the famous English playwright.
4. Read about kettledrums and listen to their sound.
5. How did the term Indian Summer originate?

Keep Thinking

1. How can you best deal with bottled-up problems you might have?
2. Sometimes a short rest from one’s troubles is helpful. This can help broaden one’s view of the situation. It is important to pray to God for guidance. Do you pray? Some people also like to write their prayers and thoughts to God.
3. A short break might mean going on a walk or playing a game, musical instrument, or sport to work off some stress and relax to help you cope better. Do you find this strategy helpful?

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4. Solving problems sometimes requires the help of a trusted adult. Keep in mind, it is wise to try to lift your spirits as part of getting your mind off your troubles temporarily, so God can help you have a refreshed view of your problems and increased awareness of how to solve them or cope with them if solutions cannot be done quickly.
5. The expression, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” teaches that we need to look at the bright side, and see God’s light and guidance.

Have Fun

1. Learn about a tuning harp.
2. Have someone teach you how to tune a guitar, violin, banjo, harp, or other string instrument.
3. Watch someone tune a piano. Perhaps you can find a good Internet video for this.

CHAP. 6

Check for Understanding

1. Why is Victor worried about his parent-teacher conference?
2. What happens at the meeting?
3. What are Victor’s thoughts about his papá?

Know More

1. Sometimes boys and girls who know two languages work hard to help their parents, grandparents, or other family members understand a new language and help their families by translating words into a familiar language for their elders. This requires skill, patience, and caring. Do you know someone who does this? Ask him or her to share about this important role, so you can appreciate and understand it better.

Keep Thinking

1. What do you like or dislike about participating in competitions? Why?
2. Imagine you are at a parent-teacher conference. What would you like to suggest could improve your learning?

CHAP. 7

Check for Understanding

1. Is Victor happy with the class’s writing assignment?
2. What does he do?
3. What does Victor tell his teacher?
4. What does Mrs. Rodriguez do to build Victor’s trust in her?

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Know More

1. Friends trust each other on many levels. How can you build trust with others? Think of at least three ways and work very hard to show these ways with your family and friends.
2. Sometimes easy solutions to our problems just aren't possible. Sometimes solving problems takes extra creativity and patience. Read the "Serenity Prayer" (written by Pastor Reinhold Niebuhr in 1951) below and talk about what it means to you. Look up the word serenity to help you.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen.

3. This is a great prayer to memorize. Challenge yourself to do so.
4. Victor's teacher shares grapes from her backyard grapevine. Do you know Jesus uses a grapevine to teach an important Bible verse? It's a great one to look up and memorize! It's in the New Testament, fourth Gospel, which is John, Chapter 15, verse 5.

Keep Thinking

1. Victor explodes like a bottle of pop shaken up, opened, and the fizz bursts out. Grandma says he is gifted in making situations better, but how will he make this situation better? What do you predict?
2. Why is Victor's black jacket important to him? What does it represent?
3. How do you try to handle stress?
4. Victor is worried that his classmates may not be kind to him; he is afraid to trust them with his problems. Have you ever hidden your problems or seen others try to do this because of fear?

Have Fun

1. With a friend, write a script where one person has a problem, but is afraid to share it and trust others, and the others in the script show very kind and thoughtful responses to try to help that person.
2. Draw a cartoon story of your script and share it with others.
3. Consider acting out your script.
4. Talk about what you have learned about trust from this project.

CHAP. 8

Check for Understanding

1. What happens in their class meeting?
2. What becomes the class's dream?
3. How do they agree to help make their dream possible?

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Keep Thinking

1. Sometimes sharing big dreams is difficult. Think about a special dream/hope you have and how you can share it with someone you trust.
2. Write it down with today's date. Save the paper in a special place. It would be good to also pray about it.
3. What steps can you do to start making your dream happen? Write a plan for action. Will it take money, hard work, team effort, or a lot of self-discipline? Write about these in your plan.

CHAP. 9

Check for Understanding

1. What pranks does Victor do to Carlos?
2. How do they manage as reading buddies?
3. What book are they reading?
4. What does Carlos do to Victor when he discovers Victor tricked him? Then what happens?
5. Does Victor like to read? What does he say about reading?

Know More

1. Sometimes a class bully shows bad behavior to distract others from noticing he or she is struggling with learning. Carlos behaves this way with Victor when they are buddy reading. Learning is hard work. If you notice someone is struggling with school lessons, consider being a peer tutor. Some schools offer this as a program to help students. If you are having difficulties with school lessons, try to speak up for yourself by asking your teachers for their help and/or help from others. It is important to be an *active* participant in one's learning, seeking what you need, to do your best.
2. When is the phrase "Missing in action" usually used?
3. What does the expression "Spill the beans" mean? Find out how this expression got started.

Keep Thinking

1. How does Victor feel about his grandmother?
2. Think about someone you see often whom you admire and love. Write down the reasons you admire and love this special person in your life. Consider making a nice card for this person and sharing your thoughts of why you think this person is so wonderful.

Have Fun

1. The book Victor is reading is part of a great series called *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S. Lewis. Perhaps you have seen some of these stories as movies, too—*The Lion, the Witch, and the*

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Wardrobe, The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, and Prince Caspian. Try reading these books to discover how good they are!

2. Draw your version of a “pointy-headed alien,” like Victor did, and don’t worry at all if you think you are not good at drawing, coloring, or painting. Just have fun and have an “art show” with some friends to talk about and enjoy your drawings.

CHAP. 10

Check for Understanding

1. What does Victor’s class do for a fundraiser?
2. Who are their first two customers?
3. What does Barbara do to Pedro?
4. Do they get in trouble?

Keep Thinking

1. If you see someone stealing, what should you do? When is it a good idea to get an adult’s help with this?
2. Have you ever been tempted to take something that is not yours? If so, ask God to take away these wrong desires and instead ask Him to help you feel peace, joy, and gratefulness with what you do have in your life.
3. Sometimes while trying to achieve a dream/hope, problems develop. Persistence is important. Learn from the problems and see how to improve your plan for your dream. The word discourage means to lose hope. Stay *encouraged*, which means inspired with hope. Best way is to keep prayer as part of your action plan.

Have Fun

1. Have you ever helped raise money for a good cause? Some children help raise money to help others who are less fortunate. Consider organizing a fundraiser and talk to an adult for guidance.

CHAP. 11

Check for Understanding

1. What does only Victor see Carlos do?
2. What happens next?
3. Who catches up with Carlos first?
4. What happens to Carlos?
5. How does Carlos respond to getting caught and bullied?
6. How does Victor feel about what he witnessed? What does he wonder about Carlos?

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7. What does Victor compare bullies to?
8. What dreams does Victor decide to pursue?
9. Do you think his “catching fizz” is starting to come alive again?

Keep Thinking

1. If you see someone stealing, what should you do? When is it a good idea to get an adult’s help with this?
2. Sometimes while trying to achieve a dream/hope, problems develop. Persistence is important. Learn from the problems and see how to improve your plan for your dream. The word discourage means to lose hope. Stay *encouraged*, inspired with hope. Best way is to keep prayer as part of your action plan.

CHAP. 12

Check for Understanding

1. How will Victor’s schoolmates celebrate Halloween?
2. What do Carlos and Roberto do at the party?
3. How is Victor a hero?
4. Why does Victor leave his black jacket behind?
5. Why does Victor imagine his papá giving him a thumbs up?

Know More

1. Read about the history and traditions of *El Día de los Muertos* (The Day of the Dead), All Saints’ Day, and All Souls’ Day.
2. Why do people in the Mexican culture celebrate the “Day of the Dead?” Is this just a scary time to be afraid in the dark? Does it reflect the belief that human souls remain alive even after the body dies?
3. Read about cockroaches – “The survivors from the dinosaur era.”

Keep Thinking

1. In Matthew 19:30 and 20:16, Mark 10:31, and Luke 13:30 -- found in the New Testament in the Bible -- we read the first will be last and the last will be first. What can we learn from this? What example do Rafael and Victor try to show regarding this? Sometimes children try to be first or the very last -- just to get attention. What do you think about this? How does this line up with the second greatest commandment: Love thy neighbor as thyself?

Have Fun

1. Day of the Dead is a happy celebration to remember, honor, and celebrate loved ones who have died. Plan with your family how you can create a special way in your family to

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fondly remember your deceased family members. One tradition might be to pick a special day to set out your loved one's photos and as a family share good memories you have. If you were too young to have known this person, make a real effort to learn about them and then share this special family history with a good listener or write what you have learned inside a journal you can keep and treasure.

2. Create a craft to remember a deceased loved one. Inflate a white balloon and use markers to draw a picture of this special relative. If keeping with Day of the Dead traditions, you may want to also add flowers, heart shapes, and stars in your drawing.
3. Similar to the idea in the balloon craft, you may want to paint a nice stone and add words that describe good things about your relative. Decorate it with glitter or sequins. When you later see and hold your stone, you can be reminded of your loved one and enjoy happy memories again.

CHAP. 13

Check for Understanding

1. Where is Victor and his class going?
2. Why was it hard for Victor to get permission to go?
3. What made hiking in the snow difficult for Victor and some of his classmates?
4. What story/movie is Victor thinking of when he says the bus might turn into a pumpkin?

Know More

1. Look on a map to see the extent of the Rocky Mountain range.
2. Where are the highest peaks?
3. What are their names and elevations?

Keep Thinking

1. It is important to get parents' permission for so many things, and trust that your parents are trying to guide you and protect you. When you need your parents' permission, do you do a good job of explaining the circumstances and why their permission is important? Do you show them proper respect and let them know that you value their guidance? If you aren't very good at this, or if you think your parents aren't really listening to your desires, ask if you can practice getting better at this as a process.
2. When we travel from home, it is wise to pack the essentials but otherwise not overpack. If you are going hiking and camping for a few days, what essentials would you think to pack? Imagine you would have to carry all your gear in a backpack, think about how you could lighten your load and still have what you need.

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Have Fun

1. Use the packing ideas above for packing, and with a grown-up's help, pack backpacks for each of you and go on a camping trip or a hike.

CHAP. 14

Check for Understanding

1. What happens on their hike?
2. Does Victor like the mountains? How do you know? Find your answer in the story and share it.
3. What does Victor say they look like when they are hiking?
4. Describe three or more things about the mountain hut.
5. What is Victor's big problem in the hut?
6. Why does Victor refer to his toes as thumbs?

Know More

1. What does foe mean?
2. Read about deer and how they live.

Keep Thinking

1. When people think someone is a certain way, it can be hard for him or her to show new emotions or attitudes. How does Victor struggle with this?
2. Can you think of a time when you had a similar challenge?
3. How can we have courage to show improved behavior to those who know us and our old habits?
4. How does Victor struggle with his sense of dignity and becoming more mature?
5. Can you think of ways you do, too?

Have Fun

1. If you live in an area with snow, plan something fun to do to enjoy your next snowfall.
2. Use a shoebox or other display to create a diorama of the snow scene in the forest with Victor and his classmates hiking like elves. Add in the mountain hut. Cotton, chenille wire, gold glitter, craft sticks, markers, paint, paint brushes, glue, tape, scraps of fabric, scissors, rolled newspaper are suggested supplies for this craft.

CHAP. 15

Check for Understanding

1. How do they make "ghetto boots"?
2. What special bird do they see?

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3. How will they have a scavenger hunt?
4. What can the compass do? What is its special capability?
5. What is the name for the lines that run north and south on their navigation maps?
6. What degrees is it straight south?
7. What is a pace, when measuring distances while hiking?

Know More

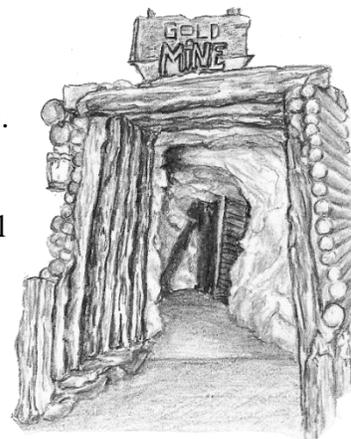
1. Study the word orienteering and apply it in your own sentences.
2. Find another set of instructions for navigating with a compass, maps, and pacing, such as a Scouts Handbook or online source, to strengthen your understanding and to share your knowledge with others.
3. Read about GPS.
4. Read about eagles.

Keep Thinking

1. People can get uncomfortable in new situations because they prefer experiences that are familiar, comfortable, and somewhat predictable. However, in life we can't always prepare for the unexpected, even when we try. When these situations occur, some people step out and embrace the mysteries of life with courage and faith. Think about how you would like to develop this skill. Praying to God and trusting Him should be a major part of this, as well as learning to be very watchful in new situations. Having an awesome sense of respect for life's mysteries can enrich your life, knowing that we will never know everything, but relax... because our loving, all powerful God does!
2. Why is it important to "take stock" and "notice landmarks" before beginning a journey? How is this also important when starting a long-term plan or project?

Have Fun

1. Practice using a compass. Reread the tips in this chapter. (Chapter 16 has some, too.)
2. Create your own scavenger hunt to practice using a compass. (See Have Fun in Chapter 16 for more on this.)
3. Draw different types of eagles based on your research. Label them and list several key features by each one.



When will Victor find this?

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CHAP. 16

Check for Understanding

1. What five steps does Gustavo give to work the compass?
2. Find the paragraph and read aloud what they do after they get their bearing.
3. What was their first code?
4. What is Victor's opinion about the hunt?
5. Who got to the hut first?
6. What did Carlos do to Victor?

Know More

1. Look up the phrase *esprit de corps*.
2. What characteristics make for a good team? List at least five.

Keep Thinking

1. Encourage having these characteristics in a group you are in, even if it is a temporary work group.
2. Pray regularly for your team or work group.

Have Fun

1. Measure the length of your own pace.
2. Organize a team to complete the scavenger hunt you designed, or design more than one and create a competition.

CHAP. 17

Check for Understanding

1. Locate in this chapter where Victor describes the Silk Road. Read it aloud.
2. Find the paragraph where Joe describes uncharted waters. Reread it. What character traits does Joe say are important when sailing in unfamiliar waters?
3. Whom do the students say can guide them when they feel lost?
4. What does Victor discover is large, brown, and fiery?
5. Who encouraged Carlos when he was tired of hiking?
6. When in his dorm room, what does Victor volunteer to do?
7. How does Joe describe eating family style?
8. What was the prize for winning the scavenger hunt?

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Know More

1. Read about Genghis Khan and the Silk Road.

Keep Thinking

1. How do you usually feel when you are in an unfamiliar situation? What or who helps you manage or enjoy it?
2. How do you like to eat meals with your family? Are there some improvements you would like to suggest? How can you volunteer more at home to help your family?

Have Fun

1. Imagine you are back in time traveling on the Silk Road. Picture whom and what you might see. What unusual and typical sounds and smells might there be? What might you touch? What might you eat?
2. Now imagine your mission, your traveling companions, and what possible dangers you might encounter. Write and illustrate a story which includes maps and share it with others.

CHAP. 18

Check for Understanding

1. What is the Native American tradition for sand painting?
2. Who wrote the poem *A Psalm of Life*?
3. Why does the poet think it is so important to learn to labor and to wait?
4. What happens to Carlos and Victor in the sand painting class?
5. What does Mrs. Rodriguez tell Carlos?
6. Who was J.J. Brown?
7. At the end of this chapter, the students are told to bundle up with all their clothes. Why do you think they are told this?

Know More

1. Research Bible verses that give promises of God's healing and write them down. Memorize your three favorites.
2. To remind yourself, review and list some good strategies when dealing with a bully. Consider strategies when you might be alone with a bully and when you might be in a group.
3. Look up the definitions for the following words in Longfellow's poem: psalm, sublime, solemn, main, forlorn, fate, achieving, pursuing, labor. Then reread the poem for better understanding and talk about it with someone.
4. In your Bible read Psalm 62:5, Psalm 27:14 and Psalm 46:10 to learn more about waiting on the LORD. God can have you bless others in amazing ways, in your lifetime and for

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future generations, too. It's believed that Scottish Samuel Rutherford (born 1600) was rescued from a deep village well by an angel when he was five years old. He became a famous leader, pastor, and author. His book *Lex Rex* inspired John Locke, who then influenced America's founding fathers in the late 1700s in how to form the US government!

Keep Thinking

1. How do you pray for healing?
2. Can you think how you would like to leave footprints on the sands of time?
3. What can happen to people who want to be rich more than anything else? What warnings or advice might you give such people? What can you tell them about "fool's gold?" What's more important than money? What is in life that money cannot buy?

Have Fun

1. Make a sand painting.
2. Especially if sifting is new to you, try sifting flour with a kitchen sifter.
3. Sharing jokes can make everyone happy. Share the jokes in this chapter. Then find some new jokes and share them today.

CHAP. 19

Check for Understanding

1. Describe the plan and goal for the night walk.
2. Why were the stars brighter in the mountains than in Denver?
3. How does Polaris, the North Star, help them to navigate?
4. How did they find the North Star in the sky?

Know More

1. Learn about famous constellations.
2. Learn how the change in seasons changes what constellations show in the sky.

Keep Thinking

1. Write a summary of Chapters 1-19, by writing 1-2 sentences for each chapter. Write about your favorite chapter and tell why you chose that one. (Save these to use again for chapter 46, the end of the book.)

Have Fun

1. Try to see constellations with a telescope, perhaps in an observatory, or with binoculars, or on the Internet.
2. Identify the bright stars you see easily in the night sky.

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CHAP. 20

Check for Understanding

1. Does Victor take the challenge?
2. Is Victor afraid at first?
3. What was Victor's big surprise on the trail?
4. What does Victor say the buck's eyes seem to say to Victor?
5. Does anyone else see this?

Know More

1. Discover at least five animals that live in the Rocky Mountains near Denver, including some who are active outside during the winter.

Keep Thinking

1. When Victor was afraid on the night walk, what qualities of character did he need to continue to the finish?
2. List some of your fears. Are there times you give up because of discouragement? Remember, encourage means to take heart. Enthusiasm means to be filled with God, inspired, lifted up spiritually. Let God lift you out of any of your fears or discouragements through prayer. Know He loves you and you can count your blessings. Look for reasons to thank God and do so in prayer. Look for God's love everywhere you go -- in a person's smile and maybe in a snorting buck on a mountaintop! Memorize 2 Timothy 1:7, found in the New Testament of the Bible.

Have Fun

1. Draw a map of the night walk.
2. Draw a picture of the buck in the snow under the bright night sky. Use the book cover as a guide to help you add in night colors.

CHAP. 21

Check for Understanding

1. Was Mrs. Rodriguez proud of her class with their night walk challenge? Find words in the story to support your answer.
2. What did Lisa suggest the class do for their fifth-grade continuation celebration?
3. How did Victor support this idea and why?
4. What do they plan to sell in order to raise money for costumes?
5. What does Mrs. Rodriguez tell Jaquon when he asks, "Does this mean we aren't going to Disneyland?"

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6. What does Victor say needs to be kept alive?

Know More

1. Learn about different Mexican folkloric dances and costumes.
2. Interview people you know who are from a different country. Ask how their experience has been in adjusting to a new culture. Sometimes people experience “culture shock” and “culture fatigue” when trying to get used to new cultural ways. Maybe they can share some of their surprises and difficulties to help you better understand their challenges.

Keep Thinking

1. Why do you think some classmates and newcomers were mean to each other? What fears might they have had? How can those fears be dealt with respectfully? Can you think of other situations like this with newcomers, such as a classmate who joins your class after the school year has begun? What can be done to help everyone involved?
2. In Romans 15:13 in the New Testament of the Bible we read “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit).” God offers us so much love in our lives that we can seek His guidance and trust in Him. He wants us to have powerful hope for our lives. Keep praying to God for your hopes and dreams to be nurtured by Him so that you may rejoice in seeing your hopes and dreams fulfilled.

Have Fun

1. Learn about cultural traditions in your family, that were taught by your grandparents or further back. If your family is not already practicing these, choose one to try with your family, maybe a special recipe or craft, maybe the telling and retelling of good stories of family members aloud to each other, and perhaps writing a poem or song of these memories to share with your family.
2. As a family, consider inviting someone from your church or community who is new to our country to join all of you in an outing, such as a hike with a picnic.

CHAP. 22

Check for Understanding

1. What did Victor decide after his mom got upset?
2. Why did Victor’s papá go back to Mexico?
3. What was a man roasting, to sell at a roadside stand?
4. What were Grandma’s first impressions of Papá? Find the answer in the text and name at least three.
5. What did Grandpa give Victor? Why?

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Know More

1. Ask your parents about their happy memories of each other when they first met. (Victor wasn't able to ask his parents, but instead asked his grandparents. Perhaps this is a good option for you, too.)
2. Ask people what it was like when the Internet and email first began, or ask what it was like before smart phones.
3. Learn the names and see examples of different chili peppers.

Keep Thinking

1. How is Victor trying to deal with the loss of his Papá?
2. What kind of influence did Victor's grandparents have on him?

Have Fun

1. If you have grandparents, find a way to thank them for their love. If your grandparents have gone to heaven, ask your parents to help you learn more about them. Maybe share special photos, homemade items, and other things and memories that they treasured.

CHAP. 23

Check for Understanding

1. What does Gustavo say about the history of Spanish explorers in Mexico?
2. What are some special foods the children plan to have at Thanksgiving?
3. What does Barbara like about Thanksgiving?
4. What is Victor hurrying to do after school?
5. Is Victor able to accomplish his plan of action? Describe what he does.

Know More

1. Read about Spanish explorers in Mexico.

Keep Thinking

1. What do you like about holidays, such as Thanksgiving?
2. When have you been persistent to try to achieve a dream or goal? “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” is a popular expression about the importance of persistence and not giving up during hard times. How is Victor being persistent?

Have Fun

1. Make fried ice cream, with a grown-up's help.

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Fried Ice Cream and Caramel Sauce

Here's a delicious dessert that will require working with a grown-up's help, especially when frying. It's so yummy, but also requires patience since the ice cream needs time to freeze and refreeze. Either prep it one day and fry it the next, or start it at least 6-7 hours before eating.

Please note: Before cooking, always read a recipe through so you can anticipate what ingredients and supplies you will need and so you make sure you understand all the steps and timing needed. Reading a recipe is a type of functional reading...reading that helps us learn how to do things...a very important type of reading to practice. Have fun! Enjoy!

(Recipe inspired by recipes from Darlene Brenden, Jeri Zieman, and Villa Cocina.)

Ingredients:

1 quart Vanilla ice cream



*Going around
the neighborhood
Yum!*

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3 cups	Crushed cornflakes cereal
Or	
2 cups	Crushed cornflakes cereal and sweetened shredded coconut,
of each	that is finely chopped
1 tsp.	Cinnamon
3	Egg whites, eggs, or
¼ cup	Heavy whipping cream with 2 tsp. vanilla
2 cups	Canola or other preferred oil, enough for partial emerging and stirring 1-2 balls at a time
Optional	Toppings: whipped cream, slices of banana, strawberries, cherries, chocolate or caramel sauce, colored sprinkles
For	
Caramel	
Sauce:	
1 cup	Sugar
½ cup	Butter, cubed
½ cup	Evaporated milk

Directions:

- Step 1. Scoop ice cream into eight balls. (Tips: Dip ice cream scoop into hot water first. Also, really pack each ball while scooping.) Place on no-stick pan or pan lined with parchment paper and freeze until firm. (At least one hour, up to three is good.) Exercise patience, so they don't melt when fried! :)
- Step 2. Put cornflakes in sealable plastic bag and crush to smaller flakes but not powder. (Use three or two cups depending if you will add coconut flakes.)
- Step 3. Combine cornflakes and cinnamon in a bowl. (Optional—Add sweetened coconut flakes.)
- Step 4. In another bowl, beat egg whites till foamy. (Can also use whole eggs or whipped cream with vanilla flavoring.)

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- Step 5. Roll ice cream balls in your preferred liquid coating. Then dip balls in cornflakes. Cover ice cream completely. Repeat if needed or desired, but be quick. (Some cooks freeze the balls before re-dipping.)
- Step 6. Freeze again until firm—about three hours.

Read and follow these cautions before frying with hot oil:

Work carefully with an adult. Have lid for fryer or heavy saucepan. Kitchen should have fire extinguisher. (Note: Never use water to put out a fire caused by cooking oil. Put lid on fryer or pot to reduce fire. Baking soda puts out oil fires too.) When the hot oil is not needed, cover the pot and put away from heat source.

- Step 7. In deep fryer or heavy saucepan, heat oil to 375 degrees Fahrenheit (190 degrees Celsius)
Use slotted spoon to fry one or two balls at a time for about 10-30 seconds, until golden. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately.
- Top with optional toppings. Drizzle sauce.

For Caramel Sauce:

- Step 1. Heat sugar in heavy saucepan at medium heat till partially melted and golden, stirring occasionally.
- Step 2. Add butter.
- Step 3. Slowly add milk and stir for about eight minutes or until the sauce is thick and golden. Keep warm.

CHAP. 24

Check for Understanding

1. Who phoned on Thanksgiving?
2. Why can't the caller come back soon?
3. For whom did Victor pray?
4. What do Sylvia and Victor share in common?

Keep Thinking

1. Prayer means talking to God, to praise and thank Him for His awesome, loving kindness, and to confess wrongs (thoughts, words, and wrongdoings), and to ask Him for His help. Praying can give us peace and fill us with spiritual wisdom. Write a prayer to God that

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includes (1) praise (joyful acknowledgement of Him as all Holy and our Loving Creator/Protector), (2) thanks, (3) confession, and (4) requests for help. Make your thoughts specific. (God loves to hear details from us. He wants us to seek Him in all parts of our lives. He wants each of us to have a special, personal relationship with Him. You can trust Him with your details!) You can end your prayer thanking God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2. Read your prayer aloud in a private place. This can give you peace and joy.
3. What does this mean to you: “The best way to make a friend is to be a friend?” Can being kind to others help us forget our own loneliness? How does Victor do this with Sylvia? Is he getting braver? What are the risks of being braver?

Have Fun

1. Make sopaipillas with a grown-up’s help. You can eat them with honey or cinnamon and powdered sugar.

Sopaipillas

This is a simple dough recipe. Be sure to have help with a grown-up when frying. Please see **cautions about frying with oil** in Fried Ice Cream recipe. When you get familiar with working with dough, you can develop a natural sense for the measurements based on the feel and look of the dough as you work with it. To start, best to use the measurements here. Note: Dough can be made the day before and stored in the fridge, (or well wrapped and kept in the freezer for 1-2 months.)

Sopaipillas are fried till puffy and have a hollow center. They are usually dusted with sugar or drizzled with honey. A little cinnamon is good too. Yum!

(Recipe adapted from Simply Mamá Cooks on YouTube.com)

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups	All-purpose flour (loosely packed)
½ tsp.	Salt
1 tsp.	Baking powder
½ cup	Hot water
1 Tbs.	Oil or shortening
toppings	Powdered sugar, or sugar (can mix in a little cinnamon), honey, Maybe chocolate or caramel syrup
To float	Oil, in large skillet, an inch or so deep to float sopaipillas

Directions:

- Step 1. In a bowl, mix flour, salt, and baking powder.

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- Step 2. In a separate bowl mix hot water and oil, then add little by little to the flour mixture, while working the dough with your hands, until the dough becomes a ball.
- Step 3. Dust a counter top with flour and knead the dough there for about five minutes until the dough sort of springs back and has a somewhat smooth surface. (note: Kneading is working the dough with your hands in a pressing motion, while you move and fold the dough when it gets stretched out.)
- Step 4. Divide the dough in half and roll into two balls. Put the balls in a bowl, cover with a damp cloth to allow the dough to “rest” for twenty minutes. This helps the dough to puff up with frying.
- Step 6. Using a rolling pin (dusted with flour), roll each dough ball into a circle. Dough should be like a thick tortilla, about ¼ inch thick. (If you don’t have a rolling pin, a bottle or jar might do the job.)
- Step 7. Using a pizza cutter or knife, dip in flour and then cut the circle into fourths. Let them rest before frying, to help get the puff when frying.
- Step 8. With a grown-up’s help, heat oil to 350 degrees Fahrenheit in a heavy skillet. (Note: Oil should be medium heat so it doesn’t get too dark when frying. Some cooks use oil at 375 degrees Fahrenheit.)
(Follow safety precautions...lid, baking soda, and place to set skillet away from stove when done.)
- Step 9. With a grownup’s help, fry in the skillet, three at a time, and turn and flip using a slotted spoon. They should float on the oil. This takes about one minute, till light golden brown.
- Step 10. Cover with powdered sugar or sugar (can have a little cinnamon added into the sugar), or drizzle with honey. Can also poke a hole and squirt some honey inside. Chocolate or caramel sauce is an option, but not as traditional.
- Serve warm. Yum! Can keep at 200 degrees Fahrenheit in the oven for up to one hour, if needed... but don’t let them dry out.

CHAP. 25

Check for Understanding

1. Where did Victor visit?
2. Who are the teens being encouraged to learn more about?
3. What free book does Victor get?
4. Find in the text and read again why daily Bible reading is good.
5. Did Victor like the prayer? Find the prayer and read it aloud.
6. What special words does the man tell Victor?

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Know More

1. Read the book of Mark, (sixteen chapters), which is the second Gospel in the New Testament. You could read one chapter a day for sixteen days. Consider reading it with a buddy and talk about your understandings. Ask a grown-up who studies the Bible to help you with any questions you may have.
2. Pray about important things you have learned, such as God's loving promises.
3. Memorize favorite verses such as Mark 12:30-31, (the Greatest Commandment), Psalm 23, and Deuteronomy 31:8. Think how these words guide and strengthen you.
4. Set aside time every day to make Bible reading, memorizing, and prayer a regular part of your life. You might wear a special hat to signal to others in your family that this is your special devotion time. Maybe you can have a special place. Some people even use a closet or make a little tent with a big scarf or sheet.

Keep Thinking

1. When we memorize key Bible verses, they can help us whenever we need them for encouragement and direction! If you don't have a Bible, you can oftentimes buy one at a second-hand bookstore, or go on line to download a Bible from biblica.com, the website for the International Bible Society. The American Bible Society Ministry's website bibles.com sells low-cost Bibles such as the Catholic New Testament and the Extreme Faith Bible (contemporary English version) for youth. Bible.is is a free app for an audio Bible available in many languages from FaithComesByHearing.com. The Gideon Bible app from Gideon's International also is free.
2. The street evangelists say Jesus can help us know more about God's love and how to really change ourselves for the better. What would you like to learn about Jesus?

Have Fun

1. Do you know--the National Bible Bee (<https://biblebee.org>) for children offers summer Bible memory programs and competitions even on the national level. Read their site.
2. If you are going to middle school soon, find out what clubs and sports are there, along with any other special programs that might interest you. If you have homeschooling, you may want to check if you can participate in local clubs and sports through your area schools.

CHAP. 26

Check for Understanding

1. What does Victor's class plan to perform for their continuation ceremony?
2. What are they looking at on the Internet?
3. What is a moño?
4. What trouble does Carlos cause in the computer lab?

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5. What happens to Victor when he tries to make things better and he challenges Carlos?
6. How is Victor's relationship with his mom now?

Keep Thinking

1. Think about a time you suffered when doing what was right. Did you feel like a stung hero? Perhaps you were made fun of or mistreated. It takes *discipline* and courage to stand up for what is right. Like exercise, the more you do it, the stronger and better you will get at it. Remember to pray for strength and guidance first.

Have Fun

1. Find a picture of a Mexican couple wearing traditional clothing and create your own drawing. Add in color.

CHAP. 27

Check for Understanding

1. What did Jaquon bring for a Christmas present?
2. What did Victor bring?
3. Who helps Jaquon and Victor?
4. Describe how they play the game of gift giving.
5. Are Victor and Jaquon happy with their presents?
6. What do they get?
7. How does one say Merry Christmas in Spanish?

Know More

1. Read Acts 20:35 in the New Testament.

Keep Thinking

1. How do you feel when you get presents?
2. How do you feel when you give presents?
3. Why do you think Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive?

Have Fun

1. Together with your family, friends, or classmates, think of a way you can give presents or other charity to those who have less or need cheering up. Perhaps you can give stuffed animals to your local fire department to give to families whose houses catch on fire, or to children in a local hospital. Perhaps you can donate items you have outgrown that are still in good condition. Maybe you can visit a nursing home and sing to the patients. Pray to God for ways you can be a blessing to others.

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CHAP. 28

Check for Understanding

1. Where did Victor and his family go on Christmas Eve?
2. Who arrives unexpectedly?
3. What does Victor imagine doing with the Holy water to rejoice?
4. How does Victor's entire family feel now?
5. What are some foods they ate at home after church/Mass?
6. Is Papá's father in Mexico better?
7. What does "Que sueñes con los angelitos" mean?
8. What special gift does Victor get?

Know More

1. Read Psalm 23 in the Old Testament of the Bible. "I shall not want" means I shall not be lacking. God knows what's best for us. Think of God as a loving Shepherd and you as a sheep in His flock. Make a list of all the promises God offers us in this Psalm. Think what they mean to you personally.

Keep Thinking

1. Will you put your trust in God all your life? "He leadeth me beside the still waters." (Psalm 23:2b) Imagine seeing a beautiful heaven in the reflection of a calm lake and be happy knowing God loves you.

Have Fun

1. Use clear plastic sheets and markers for plastic surfaces to draw a picture of each way God promises to bless us, as you listed them when reading the 23rd Psalm. Tape these images in a window to remind you of God's love and look at them as you recite and memorize this beautiful psalm written by King David.
2. If you don't have the materials for the "stained glass" project above, consider drawing a series of scenes, much like a cartoon strip, with one box for each scene, or perhaps you can create a power point on your computer, using the steps mentioned above.
3. Make chocolate banana empanadas with a grown-up's help. See recipe below. Or make tamales or Mexican-style hot chocolate. You might like the tips and recipes on mexicanplease.com/easy-tamales-recipe and Isabeleats.com/Mexican-hot-chocolate/ Both these sites offer many delicious Mexican recipes.

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**BANANA NUTELLA EMPANADAS
(EMPANADAS DE PLATANOS Y CHOCOLATE)**

Victor and his family enjoyed chocolate banana empanadas at Christmas! This version has a Nutella twist, but regular chocolate chips could be used instead. (Nutella can be a bit messy.) Because children often enjoy working with dough, optional empanada dough and pie crust recipes follow.

(Inspired by recipe from Molly53, food.com)

Ingredients:

One large	Banana sliced and diced
One cup or 3/4 th cup	Nutella chocolate hazelnut spread or about half-cup chocolate chips
Two	Refrigerated 9-in. pie shells or homemade empanada or pie dough
One Tbs.	Water
Two tsp.	Sugar
One	Egg, beaten and add a tsp. of water to make an egg wash
Optional	Ice cream or whipped cream

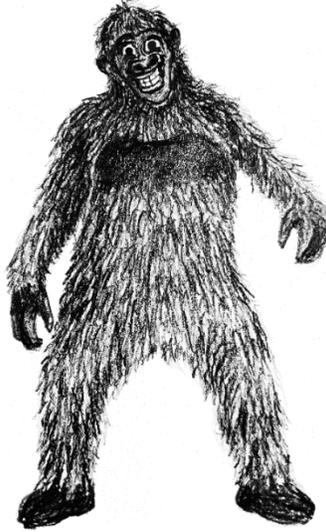
Directions:

- Step 1. In small bowl, mix banana and Nutella until thick and stiff. Keep banana as small chunks. (Skip this step if using chocolate chips.)
- Step 2. Dust countertop and rolling pin with flour, to avoid dough from sticking. Divide dough in half.
- Step 3. Roll out each half to a 14 x 8-inch rectangle, 1/4-inch thick, or slightly thinner.
- Step 4. Using square or round 3-inch cookie cutter, (or somewhat wider), cut out 8 pieces per half. (A small plate or bowl flipped over can be used in place of a cookie cutter.) Dusting cutter with flour can help avoid sticking. Place on baking sheet lined with foil.
- Step 5. Place 1 heaping teaspoon Nutella-banana mixture on each dough cutout. Be careful not to add more or will seep out after dough is folded over.
- If using chocolate chips instead, place small amount of banana chunks and about 4-5 chocolate chips in the center of each circle or square.
- Step 6. Brush outer perimeter with egg wash. Fold dough over to make a closed pocket. (Fold one corner over on square shapes to make a triangle.) Pinch gently.
- Step 7. Press edges together (crimp) with fork, or seal with a pattern of folding and twisting little bits by hand (flute), to form a pretty edging.
- Step 8. Brush with egg wash and sprinkle with sugar. (Some cooks chill 30 minutes before baking.)

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- Step 9. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. With a fork, prick a few small holes in each empanada to allow for steam to escape.
- Step 10. Bake empanadas until golden, about 15-20 minutes.

Serve warm with ice cream or whipped cream, if desired.



Stay alert for a chip-stealing gorilla! 😊

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Empanada Dough

Masa Harina is a special kind of cornmeal very popular in Mexican recipes.

This recipe makes 14 3-inch size circles. I suggest increasing everything by 1/3rd. Your children/students could do the math! (ans. key: 2 cups flour, one 1/3rd masa harina, one 1/3rd tsp. baking powder, one 1/3rd salt, 2/3rd cup butter.)

(Adapted from Tyler Florence's post on Food Network.)

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups	All-purpose flour
1 cup	Masa Harina (extra fine cornmeal) (In the U.S. bag is labeled: Masa Harina.)
1 tsp.	Baking powder
1 tsp.	Salt
½ cup (1 stick)	Unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, masa harina, baking powder, and salt. Stir in the melted butter. Gradually add 1/2 cup to 3/4 cup of water, working it in with your hands. Be very careful not to add too much water. Dough should be easy to handle and not sticky, but a dough that will roll out smoothly.
 2. Form into a ball, wrap in plastic, and chill for 30 minutes.
 3. Lightly flour your rolling pin and counter. Divide the dough in half so it will be easier to work with. (If you only used ½ cup water and if the dough seems too dry, you can add a little more water at this stage.) Roll it out to ¼ to 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 4-inch cookie or biscuit cutter, cut out circles of dough; repeat with the other half.
-
-

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Basic Pie Crust Dough

This is enough for two 9-inch pie crusts, for the banana Nutella empanada dessert.

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups	Flour
1/2 tsp	Salt
1 tsp	Sugar
3/4 cup	butter or other shortening, not oleo
6-7 Tbs.	cold water

Directions:

- Step 1. Mix dry ingredients.
- Step 2. Using two dull knives or pastry cutter, cut the butter into the dry mix, until the butter is pea size.
- Step 3. Add the water little by little. Mix lightly with a fork and use only enough water so the dough will hold together when pressed gently into balls.
- Step 4. Form into two balls, wrap and put in fridge for one hour before rolling on lightly floured surface.

CHAP. 29

Check for Understanding

1. What does Victor ask his papá to do?
2. Who dances together first?
3. Who is Victor's dance partner?
4. After lots of practice, how did Victor do? How do you know?
5. What is the sad news?
6. What does Papá promise?
7. How does Victor feel once his papá is gone?

Know More

1. Watch a video of Mexican folkloric dances. Many of these dance styles were influenced by Spanish and other European folk dances. Consider learning about the history of the Mexican folkloric dancing.
2. Learning dance steps/routines, or making a project, or performing on a musical instrument requires concentration and practice to improve your skills. These activities

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also can help you learn how to memorize. Choose something you want to learn to do well. Find out what is required and begin. Remember to give careful thought to your “steps” and practice. Over time, notice your progress and be glad.

CHAP. 30

Check for Understanding

1. What does the poster say?
2. Whose picture is on the poster?
3. What is the meaning of the message on the poster?
4. Mrs. Rodriguez compares the poster to the night walk. What does Yuliana say to that? Find her exact words and read them aloud.
5. What words of encouragement does Mrs. Rodriguez say to Yuliana?
6. When Victor wonders how he is to be brave and strong and pass on confidence, now that his papá is gone, what does he realize he needs to do?

Know More

1. Research what it means to be a genius.
2. In 1915, famous scientist George Washington Carver prayed and then worked in his laboratory to invent new ways to use peanuts. He wanted to help local farmers in Alabama. In just two days, he came up with 20 different uses for peanuts. Do you think he would have been able to bless the world with so many discoveries if he had not first prayed to God? He often credited God for helping him, including on those two days in his lab. Read A Pocketful of Goobers by Barbara Mitchell to learn more about this brilliant man who walked humbly with God.

Keep Thinking

1. Bible scripture teaches that even the wise should be humble. What do you think this means, and how can this help us?

Have Fun

1. Sketch scenes of times when God helped you to be brave and strong and even able to pass on confidence, and add in scenes when you pray about your future that God will help you to be brave and strong.
2. Create a poster that says—With God, Be Brave! Be Strong! and add in some of your favorite scenes you drew. Find an inspiring place to hang your poster. Take a screen shot or photo and share it with others to encourage them... and pass on confidence!
3. You are most welcome to share your screenshot or photo of your poster with me, the author! 😊

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CHAP. 31

Check for Understanding

1. What new unit will they start in PE?
2. Are the children eager to do this? How do you know?
3. What motivational words are on the walls in the gym?
4. What is the plan for choosing partners?
5. Who does Victor want to ask?
6. What trick do the girls do?

Keep Thinking

1. What are your favorite sports?
2. Do you like playing on teams? Do you prefer sports that are done with only one other person? Or do you prefer physical activities on your own?
3. Do you like being part of competitions?
4. What do you like or dislike about them?
5. Sometimes it's hard for boys and girls when teams are formed or partners are grouped. Do you think "cooperate" and "challenge yourself" are encouraging words to remember at such times? How so?

CHAP. 32

Check for Understanding

1. Who competes with Victor to ask Sylvia to be his partner?
2. What mean trick does he do to Victor?
3. What does Victor do next?
4. How does Victor feel now?
5. Who chooses Victor?
6. Does he accept?
7. Isobel is new to the United States. Find the sentence where Victor compares this to his situation.

Keep Thinking

1. Have you ever been the victim of bad sportsmanship?
2. How did you handle it?
3. How might you prepare yourself if you were to experience a similar problem?
4. Remember, sometimes God changes our plans for even better plans. Can you think of times when this has happened to you or someone you know? God will protect and guide you, and He wants you to pray to Him often.

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Have Fun

1. Do you know a family who is new to the United States? How might you and your family or class be able to help them? Consider inviting them to your church.
2. Ask your parents or other adult relatives if they remember times God changed their plans for the better. Celebrate these memories with prayers of thanks and praise to God.

CHAP. 33

Check for Understanding

1. Who will sew the costumes?
2. Read aloud the paragraph that tells how they will get money for the costumes.
3. Is Victor starting to feel better about being in a new school? What sentence tells you that?
4. Which classmate dances first?
5. How did two dancers tie the long, red ribbon?
6. What instruments does Jaquon play?

Know More

1. Research mariachi bands and the guitarrón. Write a paragraph describing what you learned.
2. Costumes can represent one's region or town. What is unique or special about your geographical region or town/city that helps represent your area to others?

Keep Thinking

1. Folk dancing is done worldwide. Research folk dances in Mexico and another country of your choice. You might want to focus on the dances, costumes, or music. Compare and contrast: Tell how they are similar and different and make a chart or write a short report to show this information. If you write a report, make it like a “soft” magazine article. These are called “human interest stories”—and are different from “hard” news stories that are written objectively with the writer’s opinions kept out. Try to begin with a true story that you read about in your research. Include a few sentences that you can quote from your research. Otherwise, be sure to write your article using your own words. You might add in some of your opinions and questions, to keep your writing interesting. It is good when readers can “hear your voice,” for this style of writing, so add some

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pizzazz and personality. Add in a headline and subtitles. If possible, add in pictures. Your name should be written as the byline.

Have Fun

1. Watch a video, such as on Youtube.com, of the dance La Bamba, and see how dancers tie the list ón (ribbon) into a bow with dance steps.
2. Listen to the song “La Bamba.” The traditional song inspired Ritchie Valen’s rock and roll version in 1958. Listen to both and even the version by Los Lobos for the movie *La Bamba*, which is perhaps the most famous version now. Find and read the Spanish lyrics and an English translation.

CHAP. 34

Check for Understanding

1. What does Victor ask Isobel’s father?
2. Who also walks with them sometimes?
3. What is Carlos’s secret?
4. Whom does Carlos threaten if that secret is shared?
5. Read aloud the sentence that tells what is in the breakfast burritos.
6. How many breakfast burritos did Mr. Jose buy?
7. To whom did Victor give his candied apple?

Know More

1. Many times it is important to give people proper eye contact to show respect and sincerity. Victor does this when he knows Isobel’s father is judging Victor’s character. Sometimes in Asian cultures, direct eye contact is not considered polite. Nonverbal “body language” can be different worldwide. What are examples of good manners that you do, such as offer your seat to an older person or not interrupt adults when they are speaking?

Keep Thinking

1. Do you think Victor’s new secret trouble with Carlos will influence Victor’s behavior? Sometimes when people are troubled, they might need compassion and patience from others while they try to carry their challenging burdens. Can you think of times when you have noticed this?

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Have Fun

1. Make breakfast burritos and/or candied apples, with a grown-up. Candied/Candy Apple recipes can be found easily in cookbooks and on the Internet, but be careful because the liquid coating requires very high temperature.

Breakfast Burritos

Victor and his friends sold breakfast burritos filled with scrambled eggs, corn, black beans, peppers, garlic, onions, hot sauce, spicy sausage meat, and cheese. You can modify this recipe as your taste's desire.

Ingredients:

4	Flour tortillas (burrito size, 10 inches)
About 2 cups	Quesadilla cheese, or cheddar, or Monterrey Jack, shredded
¼ cup	Green pepper, chopped
¼ cup	Onion, chopped
For pans	Olive oil
4	Eggs, scrambled
¾ cup	Beans (pinto or black) (drained and soft)
¾ cup	Corn (drained)
1 clove	Garlic, minced
To taste	Hot sauce and/or salsa
½ lb.	Spicy sausage (such as Chorizo or Italian) not in casings
To taste	Salt and pepper

Directions:

- Step 1. Oil pan with about 1 Tbs. oil and fry onions, green peppers and garlic till tender. Make room for eggs and stir till cooked. Add salt and pepper, hot sauce, and/or salsa.
- Step 2. Make space in skillet to add in beans, and mash with fork or masher. Add in corn. Mix with eggs. (Cover and keep warm.)
- Step 3. Coat second pan with oil and cook sausage. Stir frequently till browned, about five minutes.
- Step 4. Assemble the burritos: Spoon 1/4th of the egg and bean mixture on each tortilla, followed by 1/4th of the sausage, and about 1/2 cup cheese (or less). Fold in the sides of the tortilla over the filling and roll, tucking in the edges as you go.
- Step 5. Coat the pan with oil and set over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add the burritos, seam side down. Cook, covered, until the bottom of the burritos is golden

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brown, about 3 minutes. Flip the burritos over and continue cooking, covered, until golden, a few minutes more. Serve warm.

CHAP. 35

Check for Understanding

1. What is the name of Mexico's national dance?
2. On whose feet did Carlos stomp?
3. What does Yuliana do in response?
4. Did anybody see Isobel give Victor a quick hug?
5. Who was unusually late to return home for supper?

Know More

1. Read about St. Valentine.
2. Watch a video of the Mexican Hat Dance. Find out why it was chosen to be the national dance. In the United States, we also have a famous song about a hat: "My Hat, it has Three Corners." Find out why this hat was important during the American Revolutionary War.

Have Fun

1. Design your own Valentine cards. Share ideas for fun comments to add in. Since you have been learning Spanish while reading, you might want to add in some new Spanish words, too.
2. In Mexico it is traditional to honor one's family on Valentine's Day. Consider making special cards or doing nice things for your family for this special holiday.

CHAP. 36

Check for Understanding

1. Where is Grandpa?
2. What does Victor tell his brothers and sister that Grandpa would want them to do?
3. After supper, what does Victor do to help his baby sister stop fussing?
4. Does Victor sound like a kind and responsible older brother?
5. When Victor stares at the Last Supper painting of Jesus with his disciples, what did Victor wonder about?

Know More

1. Read in the New Testament in Luke 22:19-20. Learn more about the Last Supper from your church and parents. Jesus wants us to have great faith in Him and also care deeply about others.

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Keep Thinking

1. How does Victor try to be a better person?
2. What new responsibilities do you have that you didn't have a few years ago? What are you doing to get good at these? What other responsibilities are you looking forward to having? Share these thoughts with your parents/guardian.
3. We aren't born brave, but instead we learn how to be brave. God is ready to help us. Remember to pray to God to strengthen you and teach you how to be brave during times of troubles or difficulties.

CHAP. 37

Check for Understanding

1. What happened to Grandpa?
2. Who started this Denver hospital and when?
3. What does Grandpa tell Victor to do until Grandpa gets better?
4. What does Victor wonder for the bazillionth time?

Know More

1. Do you have an interest in medical care? Read about the life of a famous doctor or nurse, such as John Flynn (worked in Australian outback), Mother Teresa (served in India), or a current charity such as Mercy Ships (hospital ships that go to poor countries to help improve people's health).

Keep Thinking

1. How has Victor changed since the start of the school year?
2. Do you notice how you change during a school year, too? How would you like to change?
3. Do you have younger siblings? If yes, how do you try to help them? If you have older siblings, how would you like them to help you sometimes?

Have Fun

1. Write a letter or draw pictures to share with your siblings to show them how you would like to treat them and how you would like them to treat you.
2. Share these first with your parents and with their advice, find good ways to share them with your siblings.

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3. Write about this experience and add in some more drawings to make a little book with all your work on this project. Make a cover. Consider having all your siblings contribute to this book in their own way, too.
4. Celebrate this project with your family by sharing your book and having a game night and/or some party food.

CHAP. 38

Check for Understanding

1. What is Victor and his classmates getting ready for now?
2. Who shared his work to be filmed for TV?
3. Why does Grandpa use a cane?
4. How does Victor feel about his family seeing him on TV?
5. What does Victor give Isobel when she is cold?
6. Who moved in next door?

Know More

1. Reviewing school lessons each day helps improve learning. Reviewing and memorizing important information is essential for good test taking. What else have you learned about being a good test taker? Share your strategies with someone else and try to learn some new ones.

Keep Thinking

1. Isobel knows the tradition of teenage boys giving their jackets to teenage girls whom they like, as a sign of devotion and protection. She teases Victor that his jacket is very special for her to have. Have you ever gotten a gift from someone that also reassures you? It could be from a family member or friend. Write 1-2 paragraphs describing this gift and how it is special to you.

Have Fun

1. Consider sharing what you have written with the person who gave you the gift.

CHAP. 39

Check for Understanding

1. What is Victor and his class learning to make?
2. Find the list of supplies for this project and read it aloud.
3. What did Mrs. Sanchez do before she was a teacher?

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4. Gustavo's father had been a migrant farmer. What are three things you can describe of his experience?
5. Where did Marco Polo learn of piñatas?
6. Back in history, the Spaniards made seven-pointed piñatas. What did these represent?
7. What does sharing the candy from the broken piñata represent?
8. What will the boys and girls put inside the piñatas besides candy?
9. What sad news does Victor learn?

Know More

1. Tell others what you have learned about the history of piñatas.
2. Learn about migrant farming.

Keep Thinking

1. What do the "Seven Deadly Sins" teach us to stay away from?
2. Sin is anything we do, say, or think that separates or distances us from God's love. In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, sin also means missing the mark, like a bull's-eye on a target. The Catholic Church also teaches the Seven Holy Virtues, which are opposite of the Seven Deadly Sins:

Sin

Craving (a person or thing)
Gluttony (overindulgence)
Greed
Sloth (laziness)
Wrath (anger)
Envy (jealousy)
Pride (vanity)

Virtue

Chastity (purity)
Moderation (self-restraint)
Generosity (vigilance)
Zeal (integrity)
Meekness (composure)
Charity (giving)
Humility (humbleness)

Since sin distances us from experiencing God's love, ask God to help you develop more virtues. You will experience a more joyful life and better sense of God's love and protection.

Have Fun

1. Learn how to make a piñata. If possible, make it with family or friends. Fill it with candy and celebrate opening it with others, by taking turns being blindfolded and whacking it with a big stick till the candy spills out and you all can share. Remind each other what the game represents.

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CHAP. 40

Check for Understanding

1. What did Isobel take to Mexico?
2. What “lifts Victor’s spirits” (makes him feel better) when he visits the middle school?
3. With Isobel gone, what is Victor’s new assignment in PE?
4. Who called Victor on his birthday?
5. What does Victor decide when he thinks about Jesus suffering for us?
6. What did the priest say on Easter?
7. Did Victor say yes to Pedro’s invitation for the Cinco de Mayo parade?

Know More

1. Research how a trumpet works.
2. Learn about Christian observances/special services for Holy Week and Easter (Resurrection Sunday). If you have been to these, tell others about them, and invite them to go to church/Mass with you.

Keep Thinking

1. Has a good friend of yours ever moved away? What advice would you give to someone who has this experience and is feeling left behind?
2. Do you know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior? If not yet, ask a Christian to tell you why He is our “Good News.” If you have asked Jesus into your heart, pray every day to Him and trust in Him.

Have Fun

1. If someone has gone with you to church/Mass, celebrate afterwards with a snack and a game, and ask your friend about this experience, and if he or she would like to go again. Pray for your friend.
2. If you know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, or if you have just asked Him into your heart to be your Rescuer and King forever, write Him a thank you letter and celebrate this most wonderful friendship by doing something very special. Talk to a teacher or parent to help you with this. Try to make it a day you can always remember with joy!

CHAP. 41

Check for Understanding

1. Whom did Victor see on TV?
2. What was he doing while Victor saw him?

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3. What is Victor worried about?
4. Whom does Victor decide to see?
5. Whom did Victor see on the sidewalk?
6. Then what happened?

Know More

1. Learn how the Denver community celebrates Cinco de Mayo in downtown Denver. See videos on Youtube.com of parades, dancing, and other outdoor festivities.

Keep Thinking

1. Before making important decisions, it is best to pray, to help you seek God’s loving and wise guidance. Practice making this a habit so even if you are caught in the emotions of a crisis or are confused, you will remember to pray. Trust that God wants the best to happen. Try to be patient and ready to follow what you learn in prayer.
2. What do you think will happen to Victor and Carlos?

CHAP. 42

Check for Understanding

1. Did the man get Carlos?
2. Why does Victor try to keep Carlos from being kidnapped?
3. How did the kidnapper threaten Victor?
4. Where do they stop to eat?
5. Why does Victor say it was like a restaurant theme park?
6. What does Victor secretly call the kidnapper?
7. How was the “gorilla” an answer to prayer?

Know More

1. Read Aesop’s fable “The Lion and the Mouse.” How does the tiny mouse outsmart the large lion?

Keep Thinking

1. Victor is now a victim. How do you think he can outsmart his kidnapper?
2. Victor prays for help, remains alert, and trusts God for an answer to his prayer. Can you think of times when you or someone you know has done this and been blessed?

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Have Fun

1. View high dive videos and learn about safety rules and skills needed for diving as well as swimming. Also, watch some swimming and diving instruction videos or read about them.
2. Try to make arrangements for you to improve in your swimming and diving skills.
3. Draw a map of your own imaginary theme park and share it with others.

CHAP. 43

Check for Understanding

1. What was the second place Victor and Carlos hid inside?
2. Who got hit with the piñata stick?
3. When Victor and Carlos escape to the lower level, where do they go first?
4. Why do tigers have stripes?
5. Whom does Victor picture when Victor hides under the black costume bag?
6. What does the black costume bag remind you of from the story and why?
7. Who comes on the stage when Victor is hiding there?
8. How is Victor brave and strong now?

Know More

1. In the Bible, David, a shepherd boy in his teens, volunteered to fight the enormous and sinful Goliath, a seasoned warrior. David knew his strength came from the LORD God Almighty, so he only used stones for weaponry. God gave David victory. Read about this in the Old Testament 1 Samuel 17:32, 41-47. Think about how you can see God with you and strengthening you despite insurmountable odds sometimes.

Keep Thinking

1. Victor isn't safe in the bad guy's hideout, and he couldn't hide in the fantasy of the puppet theater, but when he prayed and looked up at the waterfall, and headed toward it, his situation improved. How is all of this symbolic?
2. God doesn't want us to escape from our problems by turning to wrong ways or bad places. "Escaping" into too much fantasy and entertainment can also block us from growing as God wants us to. Jesus said He is the Living Water, and whoever believes in Him will neither hunger nor thirst. Jesus is talking about spiritual thirst. Water is the best thirst quencher when we are thirsty; Jesus is the best source when we are spiritually "thirsty." What does this mean to you?
3. In Psalm 23 in the Old Testament we read, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

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This is poetic, symbolic writing by King David. (Jesus was born into the Davidic, royal line.) How do these verses apply to Victor? When our cup “runneth over” we have blessings from Jesus beyond our wildest dreams.

4. By being brave and coming out from under the black costume bag, Victor became a hero. He caught the villain and in doing so, saved himself and others from being hurt by the villain. Heroes are brave and think of others. They are noble and have a sense of humility. Who are the true heroes in your life?

CHAP. 44

Check for Understanding

1. Besides realizing his mistakes, what else does Victor do to try to make things better?
2. Reread how Grandma described Victor at the end of chapter one. What does she say about Victor now?
3. Whom does Victor say helped them?
4. What does Victor mostly want in middle school?
5. How does Victor feel now?
6. Where will the fifth graders celebrate after their school dance performance?
7. Who does Victor get along with now?

Keep Thinking

1. Often if we do something wrong, it hurts other people. Too often it’s those we love, such as family members. What are some things you can try to do to make things better with people important in your life?

Have Fun

1. Victor says he mostly wanted friends in middle school. Since Jesus can be our best friend as well as Savior and Lord, enjoy some songs on Youtube.com – 1). I Have a Friend in Jesus/Cross Culture Peru Music Videos, to enjoy Spanish and English from Lifetree Kids 2). My Best Friend (Lyric Video) – Hillsong Kids 3). Jesus is My Best Friend Kids Praise and Worship Bible Song (Good for families with younger children too) 4). Jesus What a Friend – Motions (Very energetic style) 5). (Gospel song style) The Sing Team Kids//What a Friend We Have in Jesus//Official Lyric Video

CHAP. 45

Check for Understanding

1. Who arrived in time for the big celebration?
2. What does Victor promise?

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3. When Victor realizes why Isobel kept his jacket, what does he decide to do?
4. How does Victor feel now?
5. What does Victor suddenly do when he was in the band?
6. As Victor and his Grandma walked arm in arm toward the dancers, what did everyone do?

Know More

1. Victor's black jacket (and later the black costume bag) reveal a lot about Victor and how he changes. Think back about the scenes with his jacket. Make a timeline and label important aspects of Victor's character each time. Then describe how he has become wiser and braver through his challenges. (Hint: Look in chapters 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 26, 30, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 43.) This can be a good project to do with a partner.

Keep Thinking

1. Life may not always go the way we hope, but one way to be happy in life is to put more love and caring into what we do. Sometimes this takes extra courage. Even though Victor misses Isobel, what does he do at the very end of this chapter that brings joy to a lot of people?

Have Fun

1. Watch on Youtube.com videos of Casa Bonita and see some high dive performances.

CHAP. 46

Check for Understanding

1. Where does Victor go with Papá and why?
2. Victor's Mexican grandfather says "Veré Gloria pronto." What does this mean?
3. What does Victor's abuelo tell Victor and his papá to do?
4. When Victor and his papá stand side by side at Abuelo's graveside, Victor thinks—We stood shoulder to shoulder—man to man. What did Victor accomplish in his fifth-grade year that made him feel this way?

Know More

1. Write a 1-2 sentence summary for each chapter 20-46.

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Keep Thinking

1. Reread your 1-2 sentence summaries for chapters 1-46, (Chap. 1-19 saved from before.)
As you do, think about how Victor grew more to be the man he hopes to become, by being brave and strong and trusting in and thanking God every day.
2. Think about how you want to grow in your faith, trust, and gratitude so you, too, can be brave and strong for the LORD. What challenges and personal goals do you have? Begin praying about them and see where God leads you.

Have Fun

1. Write a song, poem, or essay about your favorite parts of this book and how it inspires you for your life, too. Share with others and save this as a keepsake memory.
2. If you have read this book with others, divide up favorite scenes from the book so you each draw or write about them. Display them on a bulletin board or other way to mount them in their chronological order. Contributors can take turns presenting their parts to make a group performance. Consider filming your display and your presentation to share with others.
3. With a grown-up's help you can create crossword puzzles from sites such as crosswordhobbyist.com and select some of the check for understanding questions that have short answers. Share these with others who have read this book with you.

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Answer Key for “Check for Understanding” Questions

CHAP 1

1. Victor’s father left for Mexico several months ago and Victor does not know when he will return. He misses him and wants to discover how to get him back. Victor also misses his old school and does not want to start the last year of grade school in a new school.
2. When times are difficult Victor has a gift for cheering people up and bringing joy to the situation.

CHAP 2

1. Answers may vary. The mystical vaquero pays for Victor’s tacos...He is a type and shadow of rescuer, Jesus, our Savior, who paid for our sins.
2. Yes. He thinks well of little Miguel, when he tries to comfort their baby sister, Luisa. Victor helps Miguel and Luisa at the breakfast table. Victor also watches over his brother, Tony, when they walk to school, and tries to encourage him.
3. Carlos, but Victor doesn’t know his name yet so secretly he calls him Pinhead.
4. Victor is angry. He wants to fight back when they are outside the school. Then in the classroom, Victor wants to escape.
5. Gustavo, the Brain

CHAP 3

1. His mother
2. Yes. He is so motivated that he gets a piece of paper from the trash and works with a stubby pencil in order to draw. Then, he hopes his mom will sleep long enough for him to finish this drawing. He’s excited to get colored pencils and adds color to his drawing. All of this indicates that Victor likes to draw.
3. No. We know from the first chapter that she is impatient and gets upset. In this chapter, Mom is too tired and worried to look at Victor’s school work that he brings home for her to review. Mom laughs in a way that doesn’t really sound happy. Victor is hoping she will get nice again, which implies she is not very nice to him at this time because she is troubled.
4. She is not really paying much attention to him because she is too caught up in her own problems. She is not really encouraging him as he tries to transition to a new school. Sometimes she is too upset to show him motherly love, such as when she gives him a “bone-chilling stare.”

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CHAP 4

1. No. He has “why-did-everything-have-to-change moods.” He wants to escape. He does not want to cooperate.
2. Victor remembers that he had a great team at his old school. He also remembers there was a band and he played the saxophone there.
3. Akeem, who is also new to this school
4. He stands up to him. “Akeem stood up and looked Carlos dead on. ‘Hey, man, leave us alone.’”

CHAP 5

1. Denver Center for the Performing Arts
2. Yes. He is very impressed.
3. The trip helps him to feel better.
4. He is very sad to be returning to school.
5. Yes. Gustavo, the Brain
6. Pedro and Carlos
7. Victor is interested in escaping from his troubles. He doesn’t really know how to solve them, but he needs a break from the stress.

CHAP 6

1. Victor doesn’t want his mom to find out he wasn’t “blazing” towards the honor roll.
2. Victor’s entire family attends the parent-teacher meeting, except for his papá. Mrs. Rodriguez tells Victor’s family that Victor is reading above grade level, but he needs to listen harder in math and write more in his reading response notebook.
3. Victor remembers that when his papá was at Victor’s conference last year, Papá was very proud of him. He said Victor even helps him with reading. Victor wonders if his papá is glad to be free of reading English or does he miss Victor’s help?

CHAP 7

1. No, Victor does not want to write about his hopes for the school year because he misses his old school and his papá very much. Writing about a personal topic makes him focus too much on his feelings and he is grieving.
2. Instead of writing, Victor grabs his jacket, plunks it over his head, and puts his head down on his desk.
3. Victor tells her that he misses his old school and his papá.
4. Mrs. Rodriguez is kind to Victor and tries to cheer him up. She shows she is interested in him and wants the best for him. She even gives him grapes from her arbor.

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CHAP 8

1. They discuss how to celebrate the end of their school year -- when they will finish grade school.
2. They hope to go somewhere special, maybe even Disneyland.
3. They come up with fundraising ideas.

CHAP 9

1. Victor secretly draws an alien in Carlos's notebook and then jams a stick in the water fountain so Carlos would get wet when he tries to get a drink from the fountain.
2. They have a very hard time reading together. Carlos doesn't read very well and he uses his bully tactics to try to cover up this fact.
3. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*
4. He tricks Victor so Victor gets wet at the water fountain. Carlos slugs Victor and Carlos is sent to the principal's office.
5. Yes. He reads well. He hopes to read the library book, and he says books help him forget about his problems.

CHAP 10

1. They have a car wash.
2. A man who only wants a free car wash and a man Victor suspects is a criminal.
3. She dumps a bucket of water on him.
4. Mrs. Rodriguez scolds Barbara and Pedro and tells them not to cause trouble.

CHAP 11

1. Victor is the only one who sees Carlos steal something from a customer's car.
2. Victor tells Carlos to put it back. Other classmates get involved with fighting and Carlos keeps what he stole and runs off. Victor, Pedro, and Yuliana chase him.
3. The owner of the car catches up to Carlos first.
4. The man bullies Carlos and gets back what was his.
5. Carlos has hot, angry tears, he pounds the ground with his fists, and yells. Soon after, he takes off for home.
6. Victor wanted to help rescue Carlos, but he also wonders why Carlos brings on his problems.
7. Victor compares bullies to a story of fish being eaten by bigger and bigger fish.
8. Victor decides to pursue getting his papá back and having a good year in fifth grade.

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9. Yes. The troubles with the car wash show Victor that dreams can be hard to keep alive. Just like rescuing fizz from an overflowing pop bottle, Victor turns a bad situation into a motivation to do better with his life.

CHAP 12

1. They will have class parties and a schoolwide costume parade.
2. They steal other classmates' party food.
3. Victor gives his cupcake to Gloria.
4. Victor leaves his black jacket because he is challenging himself to do better and have a good year, rather than give up and try to escape.
5. Victor imagines Papá giving him a thumbs up because he confronts Roberto for stealing, and then moves on.

CHAP 13

1. The class is going to their Outdoor Education program in the Rocky Mountains.
2. Victor's mother and grandmother don't want him to be in the mountains and away from his family for two nights because they want to protect him.
3. Victor and some of his classmates do not have snow boots.
4. *Cinderella*

CHAP 14

1. They have a snowball fight and see two deer.
2. Victor likes the mountains. He says, "This place is fantastic. I wanted to hoot and holler and leap for joy...Everywhere looked like a winter wonderland."
2. Victor says their trail wove up and down through the forest, making them look like little elves marching to the North Pole.
3. The mountain hut looks like an elf's house in the forest. Inside are two small rooms. In the center of the first room is a wood burning stove with a fire inside, and there are benches around the stove. The back room has hot bricks that were warmed by the fire and are available for drying socks and sneakers.
4. Victor's feet are wet and so cold that they sting with pain. He doesn't want to take off his sneakers and socks to dry them by the fire because he thinks his socks must smell bad.
5. Eduardo accidentally called his toes, thumbs, since he is new to learning English. Victor then, in good humor, refers to his toes as thumbs too.

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CHAP 15

1. They put on their toasty warm socks and then a plastic grocery bag on each foot, along with a rubber band to hold each bag in place before putting on their sneakers.
2. They see a golden eagle.
3. They will use compasses, maps, and pacing to navigate to checkpoints.
4. It is magnetically sensitive and points to magnetic north.
5. Meridian line
6. 180 degrees
7. It is the distance between the first step forward with one foot, followed by a step forward with the opposite foot and then completed by another step forward of the first foot.

CHAP. 16

1. “Place your compass on your map with the direction of travel arrow pointing to where we are heading...Use the edge of your compass to line up from where we are now to where we are going next. Turn your housing till the lines inside don’t cross any of the vertical lines on the map. Now, hold your compass flat on your map and turn yourselves till the red part of the needle points to north.”
2. “Now we can follow our direction arrow. Let’s watch for landmarks on our map, too. We are going to count each time we put down our left foot until we count to twenty. We’ve got to keep our compasses flat, with the red needle always pointing to the north on the compass. Then we walk in the direction of sixty degrees. Get it?”
3. E
4. “I liked the thrill of the hunt and working my compass, but I was glad we weren’t alone in the forest.”
5. Victor’s group, which included Sylvia, Roberto, and Gustavo.
6. He accused Victor of influencing his group to cheat and he shoved Victor in a pile of snow.

CHAP. 17

1. “I’ve read about that road. It connected China and the Middle East to Europe. That’s how lots of neat stuff like spices, silk, and gold went to Europe.”
2. Paragraph beginning with: “I am really proud of all of you...” He says to be extra brave and watchful.
3. They say their parents, teachers, and God.
4. The lodge
5. Gustavo

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6. He volunteers to help set up dinner in the dining room.
7. Sharing food from serving bowls at the table and separate tables for each group.
8. Double helping of dessert, which was brownies with ice cream and sprinkles on top

CHAP. 18

1. To use sand painting as a prayer practice for healing
2. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
3. It is important to work hard and accomplish much – which may bless and encourage others... We need to work at reaching our goals, and we may need to wait for our efforts to help others too. In Holy Scripture we are told to wait upon the LORD and be encouraged.
4. Carlos marks up Victor's painting and blames Victor for messing with Carlos's painting.
5. She says, "Blaming with no evidence is never good." She says she is sorry his work is damaged and for him to try to fix it with more sand and glue.
6. J.J. Brown helped discover the "world's richest gold strike."
7. Allow readers to make their predictions.

CHAP. 19

1. Hike up an old road and a steep trail to its highest point, with no flashlights but learning landmarks and using the stars to navigate. Hike back one at a time, as a challenge.
2. The many lights of Denver at night make it hard to see the stars in the night sky.
3. Polaris indicates the direction north, and then they can determine east, south, and west from there.
4. They first looked for the constellation called the Big Dipper (which looks like a pot or ladle) and then they followed the top star on the edge of the pot, (opposite the handle), until they saw a bright star, the North Star (Polaris).

CHAP. 20

1. Yes.
2. Yes.
3. He saw a buck with antlers. This encounter inspired Victor.
4. "Come on, Victor! Be like me. Be brave. Be strong."
5. No, it is special to Victor.

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CHAP. 21

1. Yes. “Mrs. Rodriguez’s eyes shone. ‘You all did a great job at Outdoor Ed. ... I am super proud of all of you... You all stood tall and faced the unknown. No one let fear be the boss... you all were BRAVE.’”
2. She suggests having a Mexican folkloric dance celebration.
3. He bravely speaks up to say such a performance would please their families. He is braver now since his encounter with the buck on the night walk, and he also knows his grandparents love to watch traditional Mexican dancing. Plus, Victor’s papá is very good at these dances, and Victor misses everything about his papá.
4. Breakfast burritos and candied apples
5. She says, “...maybe our new dream...is one we can reach with success.” She also says they won’t have to have too many fundraisers.
6. Hope

CHAP. 22

1. “Sometimes wanting to know stuff hurts other people. I should have left her alone.”
2. Papá needed to see his papá and help with the family’s shoe store.
3. Chili peppers
4. He worked hard and knew how to have fun. He was very respectful.
5. Grandpa gave Victor a business card for his Papá’s family’s business in Mexico so Victor could send an email to his Papá.

CHAP. 23

1. Gustavo says some came for gold and others taught about Jesus. Some settled in Mexico and got married. He went on to say, most people in Mexico are part Native American and part Spanish.
2. Turkey stuffed with jalapeños and cornbread, deep fried turkey, Spanish rice, spinach dip with chips, fried vanilla ice cream on pumpkin pie.
3. Barbara likes Thanksgiving for the food, cooking, fixing the table, and togetherness.
4. Victor is hurrying to the public library in order to send an email to his papá.
5. Yes, together with an understanding librarian, he sets up an email account and tries his best to write an email to his papá in Spanish even though he has never written in Spanish before. He sends the email and prays.

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CHAP. 24

1. Papá
2. He cannot come back soon because his papá is very sick.
3. Victor prayed for his abuelo in Mexico.
4. They each have a parent in Mexico whom they miss very much.

CHAP. 25

1. Victor visited the middle school nearby.
2. Jesus
3. He gets a Bible.
4. “Reading your Bible every day can help you learn (about) God’s awesome love and power for you. It can strengthen your daily walk with Him.”
5. Yes. “Father God, we ask now that you touch the hearts of all those here. Bless them. Help them to know You and your love for them. Guide them and protect them. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”
6. “...keep being brave and strong.”

CHAP. 26

1. Mexican Folkloric dances
2. Costumes
3. Special neckerchief
4. Disrespect and stealing
5. He gets “framed” – made to look bad.
6. She smiles when Victor tells her of the celebration plans and encourages him to get Grandma’s help with sewing his costume and making breakfast burritos. They give each other a hug.

CHAP. 27

1. He brought an empty shoebox wrapped in aluminum foil.
2. Victor brought gum, small football, and packs of cards.
3. Miss Clark helps them.
4. They have a circle for boys and a circle for girls and play the game like “Hot Potato;” three times they pass the presents clockwise and stop when the music stops. On the third

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time they keep the present, unless it's their own and then they trade with the person on their right.

5. Yes.
6. Victor gets a book – The World's Funniest Jokes for Kids, and Jaquon gets a model racing car.
7. Feliz Navidad

CHAP. 28

1. They went to church/Mass.
2. Papá!
3. He imagines rubbing it all over his head to celebrate what God has done.
4. They all are very happy.
5. They ate fruit salad, tamales, tortillas, fish, hot chocolate, and chocolate banana empanadas.
6. No.
7. May you dream with little angels.
8. Victor gets beautiful, black leather shoes from Papá's family's shop in Mexico.

CHAP. 29

1. To teach him how to dance like a man in his new shoes
2. Mom and Papá
3. Grandma
4. Victor did well. The family clapped and cheered, "Bravo! Bravo!"
5. Papá has to go back to Mexico.
6. The next time we are all together, we will dance with joy.
7. Victor is very sad and troubled.

CHAP. 30

1. As a child, he was no Einstein. Confidence. Pass it on.
2. Albert Einstein.
3. To have faith in each other, to grow and do well, to take on challenges, and be encouraging.
4. When we build up our confidence, we feel great and willing to try more awesome things...It's hard to be full of confidence when my Mom tells me I was a mistake."
5. "Yuliana, God doesn't make mistakes. You are beautiful and you were meant to be."

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6. Victor realizes he needs to trust God.

CHAP. 31

1. Folkloric dancing
2. No. They didn't rush to line up for PE as they normally do.
3. COOPERATE and CHALLENGE YOURSELF
4. Boys will go first, but girls can say yes or no thank you.
5. Sylvia
6. They all turned at once, to say no thank you.

CHAP. 32

1. Roberto
2. He trips Victor.
3. He quits. He retreats to the starting line.
4. Angry
5. Isobel
6. Yes.
7. Moving to a new country had to be tougher than moving to a new school.

CHAP. 33

1. Some of their moms and grandmas.
2. The paragraph that begins with "I wondered if we had enough money..." and ends with "...apple sales will help."
3. Yes. "Maybe I belonged in this school after all."
4. Lisa
5. With their feet
6. Maracas and guitarrón

CHAP. 34

1. Permission to walk with her Isobel and from school, along with his brother Tony.
2. Grandma
3. His dad is in prison.
4. Victor

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5. “Wrapped inside each tortilla were scrambled eggs seasoned with corn, black beans, peppers, garlic, onions, and hot sauce, and then smothered with spicy sausage meat and melted cheese.”
6. Three
7. Tony

CHAP. 35

1. Mexican Hat Dance – Jarabe Tapatío
2. Yuliana’s feet
3. She hollered and whopped Carlos in the arm.
4. No.
5. Grandpa

CHAP. 36

1. Grandpa is in the hospital.
2. Pray for him.
3. Since she loves kittens, he plays with her and acts like a kitten. He gives her a strong hug as he puts her in her crib. He tells her that now it’s time to see more kittens in dreamland.
4. Yes
5. What did Grandpa think about when he often stared at this painting.

CHAP. 37

1. A truck hit him while he was driving a delivery truck. He broke his arm and hit his head.
2. Nuns from Kansas a few years before Colorado became a state.
3. Do a good job being the man of the house.
4. When will he see Papá.

CHAP. 38

1. State testing
2. Dominic
3. To keep his balance when he gets dizzy from headaches
4. He feels good to be making his family happy.
5. His black jacket
6. Carlos

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CHAP. 39

1. Piñatas
2. ...balloons, newspapers, flour, bowls, paint, brushes, string, glue, tissue paper, shiny paper, thin cardboard, and yes, bags and bags of candy.
3. Migrant farming
4. They picked fruits and vegetables in Texas, and then all up the Midwest on into Michigan. They harvested apples, plums, and vegetables, even after the school year started. It was hard for his father and sisters and brothers when they had to start school one or two months late.
5. In China
6. Seven Deadly Sins; wrong ways that lead to selfishness and not caring
7. God's love and charity
8. Encouraging notes
9. Isobel is going back to Mexico.

CHAP. 40

1. Victor's black jacket
2. Remembering that God is always with him
3. He plays a toy trumpet in the guys-who-have-no-partners' mariachi band.
4. Papá called.
5. He would work on being strong and grateful.
6. Our priest told us to be glad for the hope that good will win out over bad, because Jesus came alive, many saw Him, and then Jesus went to heaven to help us as our Savior.
7. No.

CHAP. 41

1. Pedro
2. He was waving from his uncle's lowrider car in the Cinco de Mayo parade.
3. He might never see Isobel again.
4. Pedro
5. Carlos
6. The driver of the red Mustang pulls up in his car and gets out. Carlos begins to run.

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CHAP. 42

1. Yes.
2. He has chosen to be brave, and deep inside he doesn't want to see this man hurt Carlos again, as he did in the alley.
3. If Victor doesn't want his family to get hurt, he should do what the kidnapper tells him to do.
4. Casa Bonita
5. Mexican and jungle decorations, shows to see, exciting places such as a gold mine, arcade, lots of dining, etc.
6. Tío Malo (Bad Uncle)
7. The "gorilla" caused a distraction, which made it possible for Victor and Carlos to escape.

CHAP. 43

1. The puppet house
2. Tío Malo
3. The gold mine
4. So they won't be spotted.
5. The buck
6. Victor's black jacket, because he often hid under it to escape trouble.
7. Tío Malo
8. He knocks the kidnapper off balance so the kidnapper falls into the lagoon and gets caught.

CHAP. 44

1. He apologizes and he hugs his family.
2. "Ah, Victor, you always know how to save the day!"
3. God
4. Friends
5. Incredibly grateful to be safe and back with his family
6. They will go to Casa Bonita.
7. Pedro, Carlos, and Roberto

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CHAP. 45

1. Papá
2. He promises to never leave the family like that again.
3. He decides to ask her aunt how he can contact Isobel.
4. Brave and strong
5. He finds Grandma in the audience and asks her to be his dance partner.
6. Everyone clapped and cheered.

CHAP. 46

1. They go to Mexico to see his other grandfather.
2. I will be seeing Glory soon...His time on earth is soon to end and he looks to going to heaven.
3. Be good to others.
4. Victor helped get his papá back with the family. He learned how to make friends at his new school. He not only learned to stand up to a class bully, he tried to rescue him from a kidnapper. He captured the kidnapper. He learned to be brave and strong. He grew in his faith in God and learned to trust Him and thank Him.

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SPANISH PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

These are approximate sounds to guide the English speaker. Spanish is the language of many countries and there can be some special sounds in a particular country. When learning how to correctly pronounce another language it is very good to learn from native speakers. Websites also offer good audio guides, such as www.LetsSpeakSpanish.com. Sounds not listed here that are also in English can be considered similar to the English sounds.

b	Generally softer than the English b, especially if between vowels or followed by l or r	beso doble
d	Softer than English d. Th sound (this) if between vowels	día, cada
g	If before e or i has strong h sound as in Ha!	urgente
h	Silent except after c	hijo, chico
j	H sound in house	bajo
ll	Y sound (yet)	lleno
ñ	Nya sound (onion)	año, mañana
qu	K (kit) Always followed by a silent u	quince
r	Trilled/rolled especially at start of word or after n, l, or s	río
rr	Strongly trilled	arriba, perro
v	Sounds like a soft b, unless emphasis (stressed) at the beginning of a word	viejo, viva
x	Ks (taxi) note: México is x like strong h since former spelling was	Méjico
z	S (sit)	zumo
a	Ah (father, cart) fairly short sound	gracias, casa
e	Eh (feather, pet)	perro, mesa
i	Ee (feet, bee)	sí, inteligente

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o	Oh (rope, toe, know)	ropa, dos ojos
u	Oo (loop, rule, blue)	una, luna
y	Ee (feet) if alone or at end of a word	y, muy
ai/ay	igh	baile
au	ou (round)	pausa
ei/ey	Ey in they	reina
eu	E and o in <u>get to</u>	deuda
ie	Y and e in <u>yesterday</u>	pie
ue	W and e in <u>when</u>	puede

The next to last syllable is stressed (emphasized) in words ending with vowel, n, or s (example: cuantos). Last syllable is stressed in words ending in consonant (except n or s) (example: señor).



*Spanish language and culture born in Spain
 and enriched in Mexico*

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