Classroom Guide

Title: **Stellaluna**
Author: **Janell Cannon**
Illustrator: **Janell Cannon**

Theme: Although the night is a time of rest for many animals, it is also a vital, active time for other animals — and some people.

Program Summary: This is the charming story of a baby bat who falls head first into a bird's nest and is raised in a most peculiar way by a family of birds until she is reunited with her mother. LeVar discovers a mysterious and fascinating world of nocturnal animals. Viewers see bats in their natural habitats and visit with a bat expert. Then, at the New York University Sleep Disorders Center, viewers learn about the world of slumber and dreams, and follow a young girl as she takes part in a sleep study.

Topics for Discussion:

Before viewing the program, brainstorm what the students know about bats. Retain their ideas on a chart so that as they acquire more information, they can cross off some of the myths and misconceptions.

Have the class generate a list of animals that people are often afraid of. Discuss reasons why people are afraid of them.

Discuss what it means to be a friend. How could Stellaluna be friends with the birds when they were so different from her? In what ways did Stellaluna and the birds show their friendship?

Discuss with the students what they feel is necessary for a "good night's sleep." What bedtime routines do they have? Do they have to fall asleep a special way? Do they sleep with a stuffed animal, special blanket or pillow?

The name "Stellaluna" means "beautiful moon." Discuss why it is an appropriate name for Stellaluna and why her mother might have chosen that name for her.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Have the students compare and contrast bats and birds, using a Venn diagram to record their information.

Have students illustrate the story of Stellaluna's life on a timeline.

Have students plot areas where bats live on a map of the world.

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Adapt the story of *Stellaluna* into a play for the children to perform.
Have the class collect "bat facts" from books they have read or heard about bats, and write them on cutouts of bats. Hang these in the classroom, upside down. Make sure the children record their bat facts upside down on the cutouts. The information in the back of the book *Stellaluna* will be helpful with this activity.

Brainstorm a list of nocturnal animals. Have students research the activities of these animals and collect the information into their own class-made book.

Not all people work during the daytime. Have the class identify some occupations in which work is often done at night. Invite a parent or caregiver who works at night to come in and talk about the advantages and disadvantages of a different daily schedule.

Have students share a dream they have had and then have them draw pictures of their dreams. Discuss the difference between nightmares and dreams.

Book Review:

Sleep is for Everyone by Paul Showers, illus. by Wendy Watson

Supplementary Booklist:

Shadows of the Night: The Hidden World of the Little Brown Bat by Barbara Bash

Zipping, Zapping, Zooming Bats by Ann Earle, illus. by Henry Cole

Related Themes:

- nocturnal animals
- migration and hibernation
- fears
- occupations

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #26 — Animal Café

About the Author/Illustrator: Janell Cannon worked in the public library system for many years, designing reading programs for children. Because of her love for animals, she has often focused her programs on information about animals that are not popular

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with people. Her interest in these animals led her to write this book about bats. *Stellaluna* was her first book for children.

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