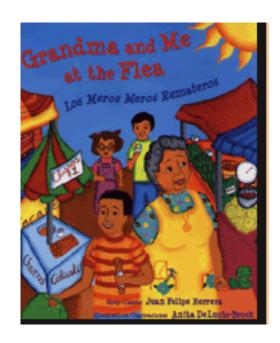
READING COMMUNITIES: CBP TEACHER'S GUIDES

Grandma and Me at the Flea/ Los Meros Meros Remateros

Written by **Juan Felipe Herrera** Illustrated by **Anita De Lucio-Brock**



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros celebrates the creativity, generosity of spirit, and strength of California's Mexican American community. When young Juanito spends the day with his grandmother at the remate, or local flea market, he learns how the various members of his community support one another. With his friends, Juanito visits booths selling crafts such as Mexican wool blankets, leather boots, and decorated belts, and necessities such as vegetables and hardware. At each booth, items are exchanged and gifts are given as community members care for each other in the thriving local economy of the Sunday flea market.

Author Juan Felipe Herrera and artist Anita De Lucio-Brock offer vivid testimony to the resourcefulness of a community that has transplanted itself from the pueblos and cities of Mexico to the fields and towns of California's Central Valley. The community may be short on brandnew material goods, but, in letting nothing go to waste, it proves that through reusing and recycling with a little ingenuity, the old can indeed be new again. Juan Felipe's words reflect the everyday joys of community and culture. Anita's artistic style, based heavily on the folk art techniques of Mexican *artesanía*, and her use of details specific to Mexican American culture and experience bring the story to life.

As students share in Juanito's explorations, they too will learn about the strength of family bonds, the importance of communal effort, and the value of remembering lessons passed down between generations of community. The discoveries made in reading *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros* provide students with entry points into studies of their own communities, Mexican American culture, and the various values of things both old and new.

COMMUNITY: Mexican American

THEMATIC UNITS

- Community Structure: community helpers; vocations and occupations; collectivity and community-building
- Local Economies: flea markets; barter; exchange of goods and services
- Mexican American Communities: popular culture; art; crafts; traditional knowledge

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Juan Felipe Herrera is the author of several books for children, including *Calling the Doves*, winner of the Ezra Jack Keats Award for New Writing, and *The Upside Down Boy*. He has also written several volumes of poetry for adults. In addition to being a renowned poet, Juan Felipe Herrera is also a dedicated educator. He is a popular professor at California State University at Fresno, in the Chicano Studies Department. He also shares his many talents with young students, adult learners, and other teachers through Children's Book Press—sponsored workshops. In his writing workshops, Juan Felipe's philosophy is that the best poetry comes from the magic of everyday life.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



Anita De Lucio-Brock began her career as an artist while pursuing her masters degree in Public Health at UC Berkeley. A self-taught artist, Anita began painting wooden boxes and objects with Mexican folk art motifs and techniques. She still paints on wood as well as on canvas, and in addition to painting, she also creates altars for *el Día de los Muertos* (Mexican Day of the Dead). *Grandma and Me at the Fle / Los Meros Meros Remateros* is the first book she has illustrated for children.

GETTING THE CLASSROOM READY

We 'roff to the Flea



Poster board; markers; "saleable" items such as school supplies, used but clean clothing, toys, books

To introduce your students to the flea market, create a model market in your classroom. Designate an area in your classroom as a *remate*, or flea market. Make signs on poster board to announce the flea market and put them up a few days before you begin working with the book.

The day of the reading, set up a mini-flea market in your classroom. Set up a few tables as booths, with signs indicating what can be bought or sold there, for example, "Books" or "Toys" or "Hardware." You can use supplies already on hand—safety scissors, boxes of crayons, books from your reading corner—as stand-ins for the flea market "merchandise."

Leave the flea market set up in a corner for students to explore during center time, and for other activities in this guide.

GETTING READY FOR READING

What Would You Give for a ...?

Students play a circle game where they "buy" or "trade" items in a flea market.



30 minutes



small group and/or whole class



blackboard and chalk

- 1. Ask students if they have ever been to or seen a flea market. What do people do there? What kinds of things are bought and sold there?
- 2. Ask students if they know the difference between buying/selling and bartering/trading. Guide them through understanding key points: "to sell" means to exchange something for money, at a fixed price; "to barter" is to trade goods or services for other goods, without exchanging money.
- 3. Brainstorm potential items to trade or sell (i.e. baseball cards, books, hair clips, sneakers, tapes) and make a word web on the blackboard based on their ideas of what kinds of things can be bought or sold at a flea market.



- 4. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group an object from the word web. The students must then sell or trade the item in turn around the circle—each student offering a dollar amount, or something they would be willing to trade in exchange for that object. You may wish to model the interaction, extolling the virtues and value of the item: "Marco, I'm selling baseball hats. They're brand new, I have all different colors, they're a new design. How much would you give me for one of them?" Go back and forth until you reach an agreement on a purchase or an exchange.
- 5. Encourage students to haggle if they don't feel that the amount or item they are offered is sufficient. When the exchange is completed, the item is then "sold" or "traded" to the next player. Make sure all students have had a turn buying/selling or trading the object.

EXPLORING THE BOOK

Diving In



30 minutes



small or large groups

Introduce the book to students in a small or large group. The focus of this first reading should be reading for pleasure — encouraging students to enjoy the beauty of the book and the story it tells. In order to foster this enjoyment, try some of the following activities:

- Before reading, discuss the cover, the title, and the illustrations. Ask students what story
 they think the book tells. List these predictions on flipchart paper. Revisit the list after
 reading, to check the accuracy of their predictions.
- Encourage students to further explore the book actively by taking a "picture walk" thorough the book, thinking about the story as it is told through the illustrations.
- Read the book aloud to the group or have students read the book on their own, in pairs, or in small groups.

FIRST TIME AROUND: VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Meaning in Context

Students practice strategies to understand the meanings of new words in Spanish and English.



30 minutes



whole class

CA Reading Standard 1.0: Use sentence and word context, as well as the dictionary, to learn the meaning of unknown words.



Flipchart or easel and markers

- 1. Ask students what English or Spanish words they didn't know when they first looked at or listened to the book. Ask how they were able to figure out what those words mean. Use a flipchart to list strategies they brainstorm, including:
 - looking at the pictures
 - looking at the word in context
 - using the dictionary
 - asking a friend
 - asking a heritage Spanish speaker or consulting a Spanish-English dictionary (in the case of defining unfamiliar words in Spanish)
- 2. Apply these strategies to the non-English words in the English text. Point out that, in the English text, some words are in italics—these words are in Spanish. For your reference, in the English text the words that appear in italics are:
 - p.5– nopalitos, burritos, vámonos, Los Meros Meros Remateros
 - p.6–rebozo, rematero
 - p.9–churro, fotonovelas, pelón
 - p.11–zarape, sobadora
 - p.12–chile rayado

- p.15–gracias
- p.19– rematero/a, pasilla, mole, colorado, piquín
- p.20–tamales, quinceañera
- p.23–telenovelas
- p.25-la reuma
- p.27–mariachis, esperanza
- 3. In primarily Spanish speaking classrooms, point out the words that may be new to your students:
 - *p.5*–rete amigos
 - p.14–alquiler
 - p.19– frigüey, jaqueca
 - p.20-espuelas
 - p.25–la reuma
 - p.26-drive-in, acordeón
 - p.30–centellea
- 4. After students read the book individually, ask them what new words they found and what strategies they used to figure them out. Add any new strategies to the flipchart and post the list in your classroom.

Other Vocabulary Activities:

- Action Words: Point out that Juanito doesn't just walk around the remate. Ask students to find words in the story that describe action—the active verbs that make the story move from one scene to another (for example, jump, scream, float, run, bounce, skip, race). On the board, write a few sentences describing what the characters in the book do, such as "Juanito walks to the cowboy hat vendor," "Floribey goes to buy a new comic book," and "Grandma moves around the flea market looking for bargains." Have students rewrite each sentence, substituting other action words for the verbs to make the sentences more lively and interesting. Compare the action verbs they choose for each character. How does Grandma move as compared to the children? How would each of the vendors move?
- *Metaphor:* Have students turn to page 5, and ask them what it means when clothing is wrapped "into tight burritos." Explain that when you make a comparison between two things and you don't use the words *like* or *as*, you are using a *metaphor*. Have students find other examples of metaphor in the text ("peacocks have rainbows in their feathers" on page 11). Make a short list of words on the blackboard: sun, bridge, grapes, basketball, and so on. Have students write metaphors for two things on the list (for example, "The grapes were shiny purple gems" or "The bridge is a necklace of lights.")

SECOND TIME AROUND: READING COMPREHENSION

The Flea in a Nutshell

Students retell and summarize the events of the story as they trace Juanito's path around the flea market.



ongoing



whole class

CA Reading Standard 2.0: Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources).



Flipchart and paper; magic markers; flea market worksheets (at the end of this document)

- 1. Using the accompanying worksheet, have students map the story by tracing Juanito's path through the flea market. In each item, students fill in the blanks, telling what booth, what characters are there, and what is sold or exchanged. Then students draw Juanito's path as he bounces from the different booths to Grandma and back again.
- 2. Have students retell the major events of the book, based on the information on their worksheets.
- 3. Ask students to return to the predictions they made about the book to see if they were accurate. Were they right about what was going to happen in the story?
- 4. Using what they know, ask each student to "nutshell" *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros*. How would students describe the book to a friend in one sentence?

AFTERWORDS: LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Thinking Through the Themes

Students learn to recognize the difference between plot and theme, and discuss the themes developed in the story.



30 minutes



small group

CA Reading Standard 3.0: Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, and characters).

- 1. Refer students back to the worksheet in which they have mapped out Juanito's path through the flea market. Ask if they know what the "plot" of a story is. On the board, write a working definition of *plot*: "The *plot* is the series of events in a story, play, movie, or other similar work."
- 2. Ask students what lessons Juanito learned during the day. What lessons did they learn from the story? Record their comments on the board.
- 3. Ask if students know what the "themes" of a story are. Below the definition of *plot*, add a definition of *theme*: "A *theme* is an idea or lesson found in a story, play, movie, or other similar work."
- 4. Ask students if the "lessons" they listed are themes. If they aren't, how could they be themes? Have them identify a list of themes for the book.
- 5. Continue the discussion of themes by asking students to find the qualities that *Abuela* says belong to a real flea marketeer, and write them on the board. Ask students whether they think that *Abuela* and the other flea market people have these qualities. Why do they think so? Does the author believe that these qualities are only necessary in the flea market? Where else are they important? How can being a good flea marketeer be a theme of this book (being a good person, a good community member)?

LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing a New Episode

Students write a new episode at the flea market that imitates other episodes in the book. They use the writing process to develop and publish their stories



3 hours (can be over several classes)



individual, partner, and whole class

CA Writing Standard 1.0: Students progress through the stages of the writing process.



paper and pens or pencils

Plan

- Have a discussion with your class about the episodic nature of the story (if appropriate, refer them to their worksheets following Juanito's route through the flea market). Ask students what elements the episodes have in common. List these elements on the blackboard.
- Have pairs of students brainstorm other booths that the children could visit, and other gifts that the vendors might send to Grandmother. After they have brainstormed together, have each student outline an additional episode that mirrors the structure of the book. Episodes should include the name of the booth, what is given and received, and what character is at the booth. Remind the students that they want the readers to know what makes the vendor special: Why is this person interesting to Juanito?

Draft

Tell students to use their outlines to write new episodes. Remind them to use exciting
language, such as action words and metaphors. Have them refer back to the book for
examples of these techniques, or highlight the techniques that your class has been studying.

Revise

• Once they have completed their drafts, ask students to share their writing with their original partners. Remind students that at this stage in the writing process, they should focus on the clarity of the writing and the impact of specific words or events, rather than on spelling or grammar.

• Encourage students to revise their episodes according to their partner's feedback. Tell them to reread their drafts to themselves and then to read them out loud to see if there are other changes they wish to make.

Edit

Ask students to edit their second drafts for publication, checking spelling and punctuation.
 Read through the drafts and mark errors. Encourage students to use a word wall, a dictionary, or other classroom reference tools as they correct their episodes.

Publish

• Collect student episodes and bind them into a book to accompany *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros* in your classroom's library.

SOCIAL STUDIES

My, Your, Our Community

Students explore the concept of community—its characteristics, commonalities, and differences— and how people help each other within various communities.



1 hour



small groups and whole class

CA History / Social Science Standard 3.4: Students discuss the importance of public virtue and the role of citizens, including how to participate in a classroom, community, and civic life.



blackboard and chalk; paper and pens

- 1. Establish a working definition of *community* with your class by asking students what they think this word means, based on the book and their own experience.
- 2. Ask students to list the names of different kinds of communities on the blackboard. Some examples might be their school, family, neighborhood, religious group, sports team, country, native language, and so on.
- 3. Divide the class into small groups and assign each group one of the communities listed on the blackboard. Have each group brainstorm a list of the different ways people help each other in this community.
- 4. Have groups come together and share what they've come up with. Discuss what different communities have in common and how people help each other in each community.
- 5. As a class, ask students how your classroom is like a community. What are ways you all help each other? What else do you have in common with other communities? Ask students to come up with a list of characteristics of your classroom community, which you can display.
- 6. To extend this activity, have a discussion about different community helpers teachers, nurses, firefighters, coaches, clergy, and so forth. Ask one of these community helpers to come to class for an interview. Beforehand, have your class prepare a list of questions to ask this person about how he or she helps and is helped byother people in their community.

OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

• *México Lindo / Beautiful Mexico*: The members of the flea market community come from all over Mexico—on page 6, Grandma mentions Oaxaca, and on page 25, the jewelry-man mentions Michoacán. Tell students that Mexico is made up of states, similar to those in the United States, but it is also different in some ways. Use this discussion as a springboard for a research project in which students, in small groups, research the states of Mexico and their differing geography, ethnic makeup, economies, regional culture/food/music, and so on.

ART

Flea Market Folk Art

Students learn about the characteristics of Mexican folk art, and apply them to their own original artwork.



2 hours



individual and whole class

CA Visual Art Standard 2.0: Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original artworks.



Books with Mexican folk art illustrations and books on flea markets (see <u>Resources</u> for suggestions); paper and crayons (or markers, oil pastels, colored pencils, etc.)

- 1. Bring in a book about flea markets. Discuss how the subject matter is similar to *Grandma* and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros while the art styles are very different.
- 2. Explain that art is a form of personal expression. Different artists see things in different ways, and they use different styles to communicate different information, moods, and situations. Use *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros* as an example of one form of artistic expression; explain that the artist chose to work in a Mexican *folklórico* (folk art) style.
- 3. Bring a book with Mexican *arte folklórico* or *artesanía* illustrations to class (see Resource section for some good examples). Compare the art style in *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros* with the art in one of these books (i.e., subject matter, use of color, perspective, cultural motifs).
- 4. Brainstorm a list of characteristics of the *folklórico* style.
- 5. Have students illustrate their new episodes of the flea market in the *folklórico* style, referring them back to the list of characteristics they brainstormed.
- 6. Bind the illustrations into the volume with their new episodes.

OTHER ART ACTIVITIES

• Unexpected Elements in Art: Point out the "sharp mountains of the M" on page 25, and the people made from sockets on pages 14-15. Students can either make a landscape using elements of other letters (for example., Vs can be birds, Os can be clouds), or create pictures using objects as people (for example, pencil or scissor people). Students can frame the pictures in cardboard and offer them for sale at a remate booth (see Getting the Classroom Ready).

MATH

The Price Is Right

Students practice addition, subtraction, and estimation by buying multiple items, calculating change, and "discounting" goods at the flea market.



45 minutes



pairs

CA Math Standard 2.0: Students calculate and solve problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.



Blackboard and chalk; paper and pencils

- 1. Write a list of flea market items on the board, assigning a dollar value to each one. Items could include: toys (\$1), boots (\$20), books (\$2), fruit (\$.50).
- 2. Have students pair up and decide who will be vendor and who will be customer.
- 3. Tell customers to imagine that they have \$10 to spend. They must find three combinations of objects that don't exceed their \$10 limit. Discuss strategies they can use to estimate the total cost.
- 4. Once the customer has made his or her choice, the vendor must check the total by adding up the price of the purchases.
- 5. Have students switch roles in their pairs and repeat the exercise.
- 6. To extend the activity, apply the same rules as in the exercise above, but determine a discount for the entire flea market; for example a half-price day, a 10% off day, or a two-for-one day. Have students calculate what the new prices will be with the discount.

SCIENCE

Old Can Be New Again: Recycling

Students will learn about the different ways materials and goods can be recycled instead of being thrown away.



1.5 hours



small groups



Recyclable objects such as an empty cardboard egg carton, a soda bottle, a milk jug, a soda can, a coffee can, or a torn shirt.

- 1. On page 6, Juanito asks Grandma whether old clothes can be new. Have students find instances in the text (pages 6–7, 22–23, 28–29) where used objects are bought, sold, traded, and used again instead of being discarded. Explain that when you "recycle" something, you use it more than once, or you adapt it to a new use or function.
- 2. Break class into small groups. Give each group an object that could be considered trash and thrown away: an empty milk jug, an egg carton, a coffee can, a torn shirt.
- 3. Tell students it is their job to figure out how to recycle their object. Students must brainstorm a short list of new uses for these old objects. Emphasize that their list should be inventive, and should include something they can realistically make and use in the classroom. For example, an egg carton could be used to hold different colors of paint, old bottles and jars can be used to plant seedlings or hold flowers, and so on.
- 4. After each group generates its list, bring the class together and have them share their lists. Tell each group to choose one idea from its list to make. Have students figure out what materials they will need, if any, other than what you have available in your classroom.
- 5. Have each small group work together to create its "new" object out of the old.

OTHER SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

• Alternative Medicine: On page 19, Abuela sends some healing herbs for Señora Vela's headache. Ask students to think of other places in the text where there are other remedies for ailments. They might mention a rub from a sobadora for sore muscles on page 10-11, and a bracelet for reuma on page 25. Use this discussion as an introduction to units on the folk medicine or herbal remedies of different cultures, or to researching home remedies used by their families.

• Where Does It All Go? It's often a mystery to students what happens to our trash and recyclables after we put them out on the sidewalk. Divide your class in half. Have half the class research and chart what happens to consumer goods that are recycled, and the other half research what happens to trash after it is discarded. Have both sides compare what they find. Bring in someone from your local recycling center or conservation corps to describe how paper, cans, bottles, and jars help create new paper, cans, bottles, jars, and so forth. (See Resources section for titles relating to recycling.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR BILINGUAL CLASSROOMS

- Ask students who are "experts"—who have been to a *remate*—if they would like to share their knowledge and experience as they relate to details in the book. Explore both the similarities and differences between your students' experiences and that of the characters in the book.
- In "Writing a New Episode," depending on your classroom makeup and proficiency levels in both languages, have students collaborate on translating each other's pieces into each other's native language to create bilingual episodes. Bind them both into a book that includes an illustration and both versions of their new episode.
- Partner heritage speakers of Spanish and English whenever possible.

RESOURCES

Related Titles from Children's Book Press

By the same author:

Calling the Doves / El Canto de Las Palomas. Story by Juan Felipe Herrera and pictures by Elly Simmons.

The Upside Down Boy/ El Niño de Cabeza. Story by Juan Felipe Herrera and illustrations by Elizabeth Gómez.

Featuring Mexican Folk Art:

Family Pictures / Cuadernos de Familia. Art and words by Carmen Lomas Garza.

In My Family / En Mi Familia. Art and words by Carmen Lomas Garza.

Books from Other Publishers

Books About Flea Markets:

Bunting, Eve. Market Day. HarperCollins, 1996.

Ehlert, Lois. Market Day. Harcourt, 2000.

Lewin, Ted. Market. Lothrop Lee & Shepard, 1996.

Tabor, Nancy Maria Grande. / A Taste of the Mexican Market / El Gusto del Mercado Mexicano. Scott Foresman. 1996.

Books about recycling:

Gibbons, Gail. Recycle! Little Brown & Co., 1996.

Showers, Paul. Where Does the Garbage Go? Scott Foresman, 1994.

Heilman, Joan Rattner. Tons of Trash: Why You Should Recycle and What Happens When You Do. Avon, 1992.

Web sites:

- http://nmaa-ryder.si.edu/webzine/ Featuring the Smithsonian American Art Museum's collection of art by Latino artists, *¡del Corazón!* is an interactive, educational webzine for teachers and students.
- http://www.thebrogan.org/folkart/ The page for the museum exhibit, *Hecho A Mano: Mexican Folk Art* has useful information about types of Mexican folk art, resources for teachers, and activity suggestions.
- http://www.moifa.org/past/RecycledReSeen/RRtempindex.html The online exhibit, Recycled, Reseen: Folk Art from the Global Scrap Heap features pictures of outstanding folk art made from reused materials.
- http://www.cln.org/themes/recycle.html The *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle Theme Page* provides links to a wide range of lesson plans appropriate for elementary grades.

TIPS FROM THE PROS

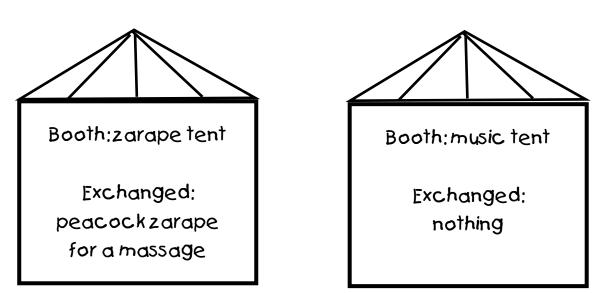
Please share your own ideas for how to use *Grandma and Me at the Flea / Los Meros Meros Remateros* in the classroom. We'll be pleased to post your work on the web site for other teachers to use. Email us your lesson plans at communityprograms@cbookpress.org.

Welcome to the Flea Market!

You'll find eleven booths, stands, or tents in this story. Something different is sold at each booth. And at almost every one, Juanito delivers something from Grandma to the vendor, and the vendor gives Juanito something in exchange.

In this mapping activity you will follow Juanito's path through the flea market. Fill in each box on the other side of this worksheet with the name of a different booth. Also write in what Juanito drops off there, and what each vendor gives Juanito. If a vendor gives Juanito a gift to bring back to Grandma for a favor she did a long time ago, include that favor in the box.

Here are two examples:



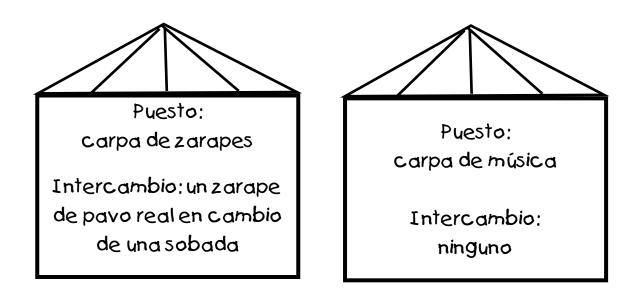
Then, when you have filled in all the booths, start at Grandma's booth and pencil in Juanito's path through the flea market as he runs, bounces, and leaps from booth to booth. Return to Grandma's booth at the end.

¡Bienvenidos al remate!

En este cuento, hay once puestos y carpas de venta. En cada uno , se vende algo distinto. Y en casi todos, Juanito le entrega algo al vendedor de parte de su abuelita y el vendedor a su vez le da algo a Juanito.

En esta actividad de mapa, vas a trazar el camino que sigue Juanito en el remate. Empieza por escribir el nombre del puesto en el cuadrado. Escribe también lo que Juanito deja allí y lo que el vendedor / la vendedora le da a Juanito de vuelta. Si esta persona le regala algo a Abuelita por haberle hecho algún favor en el pasado, escribe en el cuadrado cuál fue el favor.

Dos ejemplos:



Entonces, cuando hayas completado los cuadrados, empieza en el puesto de Abuela y marca el camino de Juanito al ir corriendo y brincando por el remate. Vuelve al puesto de la abuela al final.

Teacher's Key to the Flea Market Worksheet:

The booths Juanito visits, in order (and including whatever is exhanged) are:

- 1. Churro stand: churro
- 2. Zarape tent: zarape with peacock, for massage
- 3. Vegetable tent: vegetables
- 4. Hardware tent: letter for landlord
- 5. Cowboy boot booth: nothing given or taken!
- 6. Chile tent: three sacks of chiles for healing herbs
- 7. Belt booth: tamale recipe for belt
- 8. Toy tent: nothing given or taken!
- 9. Jewelry booth: bracelet and watch for help at post office
- 10. Music tent: nothing given or taken!
- 11. Grandma's booth (old clothes): books of poems, *rebozo*, and spools of thread for flowerpot.

