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# FLORENCE AND ERIC TAKE THE CAKE

Author: Jocelyn Wild  
Publisher: Dial Books

## THEME:

Sometimes your eyes can fool you, and things are not what they seem to be.

## PROGRAM SUMMARY:

This story is about a brother and sister lamb who accidentally cause a major mix-up between a delicious cake and a beautiful hat.

This spirited book sets the stage for LeVar to take a trip to the MovieLand Wax Museum where he learns how wax figures are made. Viewers also see how some talented bakers are able to make a cake look like a basketball, a cheeseburger, a sports car or just about anything.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

In the program, LeVar asks young people what their dream cake would look like. Pose the same question to the students. Does their dream cake have any special ingredients?

This program deals with the concept of “mistaken identity.” The wax figures are designed to look like the persons they are depicting, and the cake and the hat looked exactly alike. Invite students to share any experiences they have had with mistaken identity.

Ask students to share stories of baking triumphs and disasters of their own or of a family member.

## CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Invite someone into the classroom who knows how to decorate cakes. (This person need not be a professional. Inquire within families of the students or school personnel.) Have her/him demonstrate how to do lettering and how to make various decorations.

Have students try their hand at cake decorating. Borrow several sets of plastic cake decorating tips that fit on cylindrical tubes. Use an inexpensive frosting mix to make frosting. Have them make their creations on waxed paper, and allow the frosting to set a bit for firmness. Have the decorations for a snack and discuss the difficulty of writing and making the designs. (Parent volunteers would be a welcome addition to this activity!)

Take a field trip to a bakery to see how professional bakers make the cakes. Compare the types of machinery they use to the appliances that are used for home cake baking.

Make a pictograph of the students’ favorite kinds of cake. Use cake cutouts colored by the students for the graph.

Give students a sheet that contains an outline of an undecorated cake. Have them design their own birthday cake.

Enlist the aid of parent volunteers and bake cupcakes in the classroom. Discuss the recipe with the students, emphasizing the importance of reading the measurements carefully and following the directions for preparation. Frost the finished cupcakes and provide all sorts of toppings for decorating.

Have students write cake recipes. Look at some cookbooks ahead of time, noticing how ingredients, directions for mixing, baking time and temperature are included in the recipe. Bind the recipes into a cake cookbook for the classroom library.

Give each student a lump of clay and partner her/him with another student. Have them study the features of their partner and sculpt their partner’s head.

The title of the story contains the idiomatic expression, “take the cake.” Discuss the meaning of the expression with the students and compare it to its literal meaning. See what other idiomatic expressions that students know (e.g., “you crack me up,” “go fly a kite,” “fly off the handle,” “let the cat out of the bag,” “your eyes are bigger than your stomach,” and others.) Have students divide pieces of paper in half. On one side, have them draw the literal meaning of an idiomatic expression; on the other side, have them draw what the expression usually means to us. There are other expressions that involve cake, such as “that’s a piece of cake” and “it was a cakewalk.” Determine if students have heard these expressions and what they mean.

There are several uses of humor in the story, besides the play on words in the title and the obvious joke of confusing the hat with the cake. Obtain a copy of the book and read the story to the class. What other absurdities or humorous elements can they find in the story? Possibilities include the names of the sheep in the Knitting Circle, the fact that the sheep are knitting sweaters for orphan lambs, the “Baa Baa of Seville” (which will require some explanation), Muriel dresses in “two shakes” (of a lamb’s tail?), etc.

## RELATED THEMES:

kitchen chemistry  
sheep

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**RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:**

Program #76 — Opt: An Illusionary Tale  
Program #49 — Brush

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Jocelyn Wild was born in India and studied at London University. *Florence and Eric Take the Cake* is the first book she has both written and illustrated. She previously collaborated on several books with her husband Robin. She makes her home in England.

**BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:**

UNCLE NACHO'S HAT  
adapted by Harriet Rohmer, illus. by Veg Reisberg (Children's Book Press)

THE GARDEN OF ABDUL GASAZI  
by Chris Van Allsburg (Houghton Mifflin)

MY FIRST COOK BOOK  
by Angela Wilkes (Random House)

**SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:**

DON'T WAKE MAMA!  
by Eileen Christelow (Clarion)

CAKE DECORATING  
by Jenny Harris & Sara Carter (Price Stern Sloan)

JAKE BAKED THE CAKE  
by B. G. Hennessy, illus. by Mary Morgan (Viking)

DON'T FORGET  
by Patricia Lakin, illus. by Ted Rand (Tambourine)

LOVE FROM AUNT BETTY  
by Nancy Winslow Parker (Dodd, Mead)

THUNDER CAKE  
by Patricia Polacco (Philomel)

BENNY BAKES A CAKE  
by Eve Rice (Greenwillow)

MR. PUTTER AND TABBY BAKE THE CAKE  
by Cynthia Rylant, illus. by Arthur Howard (Harcourt Brace)

HATTIE BAKED A WEDDING CAKE  
by Toby Speed, illus. by Cathi Hepworth (Putnam)

BUNNY CAKES  
by Rosemary Wells (Dial)

THE HIGH RISE GLORIOUS SKITTLE SKAT ROARIOUS SKY PIE ANGEL  
FOOD CAKE  
by Nancy Willard, illus. by Richard Jesse Watson (Harcourt Brace)

