

# SumoKitty

DAVID BIEDRZYCKI

978-1-58089-682-5

Activity Guide

# Discussion Questions

1. This story starts out with three wise sayings. What are they? Which one do you like best? Why do you think the author chose them?
2. If you could write a wise saying, what would it be? What would it mean? How would people use it?
3. Who do you think is the hero in this story? Why? Can more than one character be a story's hero?
4. What are sumo wrestlers called in Japan? What do they wear? Do you have special clothes that you wear for sports or other activities?
5. (Turn to pages 22–23). What are some fun things the rikishi and SumoKitty are doing here? What are fun things you do with your friends and family?
6. What is SumoKitty's job at the heya? Do you have jobs to do at home or school?
7. What do rikishi eat? Have you ever eaten something similar?
8. Sumo is a popular sport in Japan. What are some popular sports in your school, hometown, state, and/or country? How are those sports like or unlike sumo?
9. Why does Okamisan throw SumoKitty out of the heya?
10. What does Kuma say to SumoKitty after he's thrown out?
11. Kuma is a role model for SumoKitty. What is a role model? Do you have a role model? What are some things you've learned from that person?
12. What is Kuma scared of? What scares you? What are some things you can do when you get scared?
13. What are some things that SumoKitty does to get stronger in this book? What are things that you do to get stronger?
14. (Turn to pages 44–45) What do you see happening in this spread? How is it like or unlike what happens at the end of other sports matches?
15. When Kuma wins the match, Okamisan hangs his yokozuna picture on the wall. What are some ways that we celebrate victories and honor people's achievements?



# Sumo Yoga!

Sumo is a Japanese wrestling sport. Sumo wrestlers train for many years to be strong, fast, and flexible enough to win. Yoga is a kind of spiritual and athletic practice from India which involves stretching and meditation. Sumo wrestlers often incorporate yoga in their training to improve their balance, flexibility, focus, and body awareness. Here are some yoga asana (poses) to help you become strong, fast, and flexible like a sumo wrestler!

**1. Mountain Pose:** Stand tall with both your feet planted firmly on the ground and your arms loose and heavy at your sides. Look straight ahead. Take a few deep breaths. Be as still as possible, like a mountain.

**2. Tree Pose:** From mountain pose, put your hands together in front of you. Stand on one leg, bend your knee, and put the sole of your foot on your inner thigh. Sway gently like a tree to strengthen your leg and waist muscles and practice your balance.

**3. Butterfly Pose:** Sit on your butt with a tall spine and bend your legs, placing the soles of your feet together. Gently bounce your knees up and down like the wings of a butterfly. This is good for your core and leg muscles.



*Cat Pose*

**4. Cat Pose:** On all fours, arch your back and tuck your chin into your chest. Alternate between cat pose and cow pose (all fours with a flat back and your head up) a few times to loosen up your back muscles. Alternate between cat pose and extended cat pose (with one arm stretched out in front of you and the opposite leg stretched out behind you) to practice your balance. Breathe steadily through each pose.



*Tree Pose*

**5. Extended Child Pose:** Sit on your heels and slowly bring your forehead down to rest on your knees. Place the palms of your hands flat on the floor out in front of you and take a few deep breaths.



*Extended Child Pose*

# It's a Sumo Party!

## ACTIVITIES

**Pin the Topknot on the Kitty:** Use the attached poster for a fun variation on "Pin the Tail on the Donkey."

**Kitty-oke:** Set up a soundtrack of cat and/or sports-themed songs and a mic for the musically inclined to sing along. Possible songs include "Eye of the Tiger," "What's New Pussycat," "Stray Cat Strut," "Pussycat, Pussycat," "Three Little Kittens," and "Hey Diddle Diddle."

**In My Chankonabe:** A sumo twist on the classic memory game "I Packed My Bag." Chankonabe is a traditional stew made for wrestlers which contains many different ingredients. How many foods can you fit into your chankonabe? All the players sit in a circle. The first player holds a bowl and says, "I'm making a bowl of chankonabe! In my chankonabe there is [tuna, for example]." They pass it to the second player, who says, "I'm making a bowl of chankonabe! In my chankonabe there is [tuna] and [rice]." The stranger the ingredients, the tastier the stew—don't worry about whether your favorite foods usually go in a stewpot. As the bowl goes around the circle, the memory challenge grows!

## SNACKS

**Japanese Sweets:** Explore the aisles of your local Asian grocery, or hit up online vendors for Pocky and melon candy.

**Mouse Onigiri:** Young onigiri chefs, be sure to get an adult's help when cooking rice and slicing ingredients!

Ingredients:

Sushi rice

Dried nori, cut into ½" x 3" strips, plus a little extra for decorating

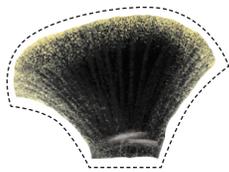
Salt

Pickled or fresh carrot, cut into strips

(Optional filling: 1 can tuna, 1 tbsp mayonnaise, ½ tsp rice vinegar, ¼ tsp mustard, ¼ tsp sugar, ½ tsp soy sauce)

1. Cook rice according to directions. Optionally, prepare filling while rice is cooking: whisk together all ingredients except tuna, then mix in tuna with a fork and chill. Prepare your workspace: a plate for shaped onigiri, a bowl of water, and a small dish of salt.
2. Fluff rice with a spoon and let cool just enough to handle. Moisten your hands with water and salt them to make handling the rice easier. Scoop up a few tablespoons of warm rice, roll into a ball between your palms, and pinch one end to form a teardrop shape. Stick a strip of dried nori to the bottom and set aside. Repeat until rice is used up, rinsing and resalting your hands as needed. If using filling, make an indent in the ball with your thumb, spoon in about 1 tsp of filling, and pinch shut to form a teardrop shape.
3. Decorate! Poke a strip of carrot into the round end of the teardrop for the mouse's tail. Cut nori into little circles and thin slivers to make ears and whiskers. Use extra carrot bits to add eyes and nose.
4. Eat right away! Extras will keep under plastic wrap in the fridge for 1 to 2 days.

# Pin the Topknot on the Kitty!

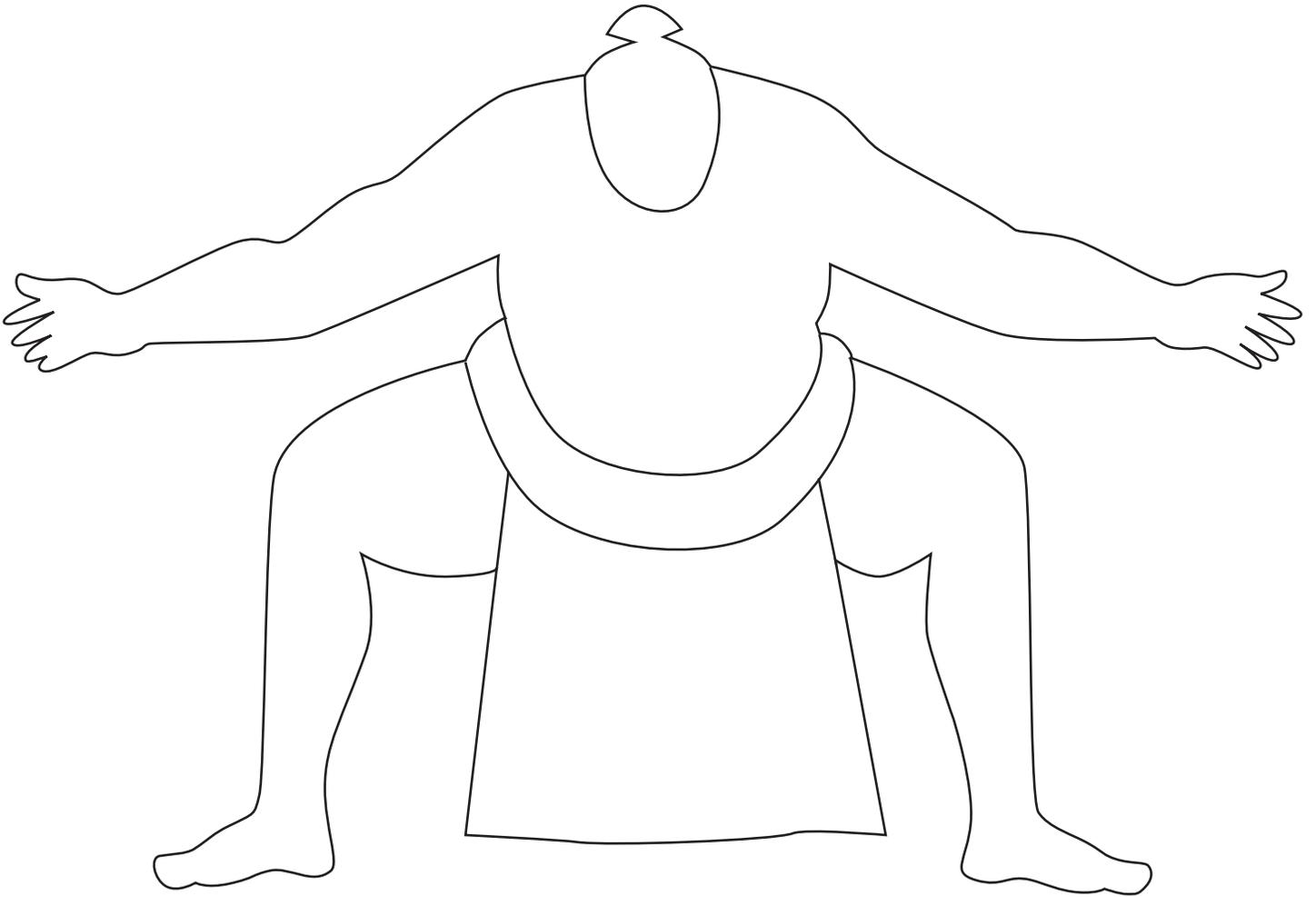


# A Scavenger Hunt of a Thousand Miles

Can your kids find all the mice? Print out the provided mouse graphics, hide the mice around the building or classroom, and offer prizes to the person or team that finds the most mice. If you'd like, print out the provided paw print graphics and offer a special prize to anyone who finds one. Feel free to scale up or down to accommodate different group and location sizes.



# My Kesho-Mawashi



Sumo wrestlers, especially the higher-ranked ozeki and yokozuna, wear a ceremonial mawashi, or keshō-mawashi, before their match. They are allowed to design it any way they want. Some do traditional designs; others put their favorite comic book or anime heroes on them. The decoration usually tells people something about that wrestler.

What does your keshō-mawashi look like?

# Sumo Word Search

T E P P O E S U M O R D  
S Q Y I M A W A S H I O  
U X O R M H W A I V K H  
K F K O U E N A H O I Y  
I H O J G Y O J I X S O  
D M Z H O A G I A I H H  
A R U N Z Y L X D S I O  
S Y N O O H G N I J H D  
H B A S H O L N K C K O  
I O G A B U R I Y O R I  
Y H E O K A M I S A N T  
S I A I H C A T T R I T

BASHO

DOHYO

GABURIYORI

GYOJI

HEYA

MAWASHI

OKAMISAN

RIKISHI

SUMO

TEPPO

TSUKIDASHI

YOKOZUNA

# Find the Mice!

The mice are back! Can you help SumoKitty throw them out of the heya once and for all?

