Belling the Cat

Grade 3

Name _____ Date _____

Remember: A **fable** is a short story, often with animals that talk and act like people. It ends with a **moral**, a lesson about how to live.

Find the moral: What mistake did a character make, or what wise thing did they do? What should we learn from it?

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A family of mice lived inside the walls of an old farmhouse. Life would have been perfect except for one thing: the farmhouse cat. She crept so quietly that the mice never heard her coming.

One night, the mice held a meeting to solve the problem. Many ideas were shared, but none seemed good enough.

Then a young mouse stood up. "I have it!" he squeaked. "We tie a bell around the cat's neck. Whenever she moves, the bell will ring, and we will have time to run and hide."

The mice cheered and clapped. What a clever plan! They danced around the room.

When the cheering stopped, a wise old mouse spoke from the corner. "It is a fine idea," she said. "Now tell me, who will tie the bell on the cat?"

The room went silent. One mouse looked at the floor. Another suddenly remembered he had to go home. Not one of them stepped forward.

Moral: *It is easy to suggest a plan. The hard part is carrying it out.*

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1. Check your understanding

Circle the best answer.

1. What was the mice's problem?

(a) The cat crept up on them without a sound.
(b) They had no food.
(c) Their home was cold.

2. What did the young mouse suggest?

(a) Moving away
(b) Tying a bell around the cat's neck
(c) Getting a dog

3. What question did the old mouse ask?

(a) Where will we get a bell?
(b) What time is it?
(c) Who will tie the bell on the cat?

4. Why did the room go silent?

(a) No one was brave enough to do it.
(b) Everyone was asleep.
(c) The cat came in.

2. Write your answer

Answer in complete sentences. Use details from the text.

1. **Why do you think the mice cheered so loudly at first?**

2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**

Answer Key

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3. What question did the old mouse ask?

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- **c** **Who will tie the bell on the cat?**

4. Why did the room go silent?

- **a** **No one was brave enough to do it.**
- **b** Everyone was asleep.
- **c** The cat came in.

2. Write your answer

Sample answers. Students' wording will vary.

1. **Why do you think the mice cheered so loudly at first?**
   They thought their problem was solved and didn't think about the dangerous part of the plan.
2. **In your own words, what is the moral of this fable?**
   It is easy to suggest a plan. The hard part is carrying it out.