

HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON

HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON

by Crockett Johnson

Themes: Creative Thinking/Problem-Solving

Grade Level: PreK – 1

Running time: 8 minutes

SUMMARY

HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON concerns a little boy who literally "colors his world" by using a crayon to draw whatever he happens to need. The story begins with the little boy, Harold, wanting to take a walk in the moonlight. Because there isn't a moon, Harold decides to draw one, as well as a path to follow on his walk. When Harold realizes that the straight path is getting him nowhere, he decides to draw a short cut. As the story moves along, Harold and his crayon move along too. Harold draws what he desires, finds himself in difficulty, and draws his way out of his dilemmas.

This is a wonderful exploration of the powers of the imagination. It also serves as an example for children about how problems can be solved through perseverance and creative thinking.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will explore the world of imagination
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques
- Children will appreciate the importance of patience and perseverance

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON with children. Then ask:

- If you had a magic purple crayon, what would you draw?
- What could you draw to make your neighborhood a better place? Your city? Your state? The world?

Draw a simple shape on individual pieces of construction paper and distribute them to children. Have children draw a picture on their paper, somehow incorporating the shape you have already drawn.

Take a walk outdoors with children. Encourage them to look carefully at the trees, plants, rocks, and other objects you come across as you enjoy the outdoors. Help children to notice the different shapes of these objects. For example, point out the straight lines that form the trunk of a tree, the circular shape of rocks, the triangular and zig-zag shapes of flower blossoms.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Encourage children to think about the different things Harold drew to get himself out of each dilemma he encountered. Then offer some situations to the class:

- Harold is flying a kite. The kite gets stuck in a tree. What can Harold draw?
 - Harold is taking a walk. It starts to rain. Harold is getting soaked. What can Harold draw?
 - Harold finds a cat on his lawn. He doesn't know whom the cat belongs to. What can Harold draw?
- As children discuss these different situations, help them recognize that there are many different ways people can solve problems.

Attach a long sheet of kraft paper from one end of a classroom wall to the opposite end. Be sure to hang the paper at children's eye level. Give a child a crayon and have the child press the point of the crayon against one end of the paper. As the child moves along, have him/her move the crayon along the paper in any fashion he/she pleases. Talk with children about what this crayon marking looks like (mountain range, river, highway, etc.) Give the next child a crayon, asking him/her to add appropriate details to the drawing. Continue by

giving each child in the group an opportunity to add something to the drawing. Later, have children dictate a story based on the drawing. Print children's stories exactly as dictated. Display the story, along with the drawing, on a classroom wall.

Other videos and films about imagination available from Weston Woods include:

THE AMAZING BONE by William Steig

GRANPA by John Birmingham

HAROLD'S FAIRY TALE by Crockett Johnson

MORRIS'S DISAPPEARING BAG by Rosemary Wells

A PICTURE FOR HAROLD'S ROOM by Crockett Johnson

THE TRIP by Ezra Jack Keats

WHAT'S UNDER MY BED? by James Stevenson

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE by Maurice Sendak

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A PICTURE FOR HAROLD'S ROOM

A Picture for Harold's Room
by Crockett Johnson (Harper)
Themes: Fantasy and Imagination
Level: Grades K-1
Length: 6 minutes, animated

Summary

A PICTURE FOR HAROLD'S ROOM, the film, is true to the book, A Picture For Harold's Room, by Crockett Johnson. The story begins with a little boy named Harold drawing a picture on his wall. He draws a town in the moonlight, with a road to get to the town. Harold's imagination takes him into the picture he has drawn, and Harold soon discovers that he is larger than the entire town!
As he walks along, Harold draws the sea, mountains, airplanes and railroad tracks.
Eventually, when he discovers that he is smaller than the flowers and birds he has drawn, Harold recalls the tall mountains and enormous sea. He wonders how he will ever get home again!
Harold solves his problem by crossing out his drawings, realizing that they are only pictures. To reassure himself that he is neither big nor small, but just the right size, he looks at himself in his full-length bedroom mirror. The story ends with Harold still longing for a picture for his room, and once again, he begins to draw....

Objectives

- Children will consider how it feels to be a child in the big, adult world
- Children will explore the world of the imagination.
- Children will investigate problem-solving techniques

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book A Picture for Harold's Room with children. Then ask:
Why did Harold begin to draw a picture with his purple crayon?
What did he draw first?

What did he draw in the sky to make the town look pretty?
How did Harold feel when he stepped into the town?
What did Harold draw in the sea?
How did Harold get out of the sea?
What did Harold draw once he was on land again?
What did Harold draw in the low place in the mountains?
Why did Harold add flowers and birds in the tracks?
What happened when Harold drew the daisy?
What was Harold worried about?
How did Harold solve his problem about getting home?
What did Harold do before he went to bed at night?

Supply children with purple crayons and long sheets of craft paper. Have children draw on the paper, thinking about what they might add to the drawings as they go along. Later, have children imagine that they could actually walk into, and be part of a scene they created. Ask: How would you feel if you could really be a part of your picture? What would you like most about this? What might you worry about? Explain to children that the film they are about to see, A PICTURE FOR HAROLD'S ROOM, involves a boy named Harold who draws pictures with a purple crayon. Have children pay close attention to the film to see just what kinds of adventures Harold has when he becomes part of his own pictures!

Take a walk outdoors with children. Have children identify the things they are smaller than and larger than. Ask: How would you feel if you were as tall as the trees? If your head touched the clouds? If you were smaller than the blades of grass? If you were shorter than the flowers? What things could you do if you were this large (small)? Explain to children that the film they are about to see concerns a boy, who, at one point in the story, feels larger than the buildings and mountains around him, and later in the story, feels smaller than the birds and flowers.

After Viewing Activities

Provide pieces of colored construction paper cut to a variety of shapes and sizes, glue, and pieces of manila construction paper. Have children use the art materials to create some of the environments Harold created, including mountain ranges, the ocean, railroad tracks running across flat lands, etc. Later, have children describe their creations to their classmates. As children

talk, ask them to consider how they would feel, and what they would do, if they were larger than some of the objects in their environments.

Have children pick wildflowers or draw and cut them out from construction paper. Then ask children to discuss what it might be like to be smaller than the flowers. Help children create "If I Were Smaller Than a Flower" stories by printing their ideas as they dictate them. Display children's stories, along with the flowers, on a classroom wall.

Talk with children about what they like, and do not like, about being smaller than the adults around them. Then ask: What would you like to tell adults about being small? What do you want to do when you grow up? How will being big help you do this? Later, take a walk around your school's neighborhood. As you pass shops, homes, fields, etc. ask children to describe what they would do in these different places if they were adults. Emphasize to children that there are many things they can enjoy now (such as hiding behind rocks during hide-and-seek games), that adults cannot enjoy simply because of their size!

Other book based films and videos concerning early childhood issues are available from Weston Woods. These include:

CAPS FOR SALE by Esphyr Slobodkina
THE CATERPILLAR AND THE POLLIWOG by Jack Kent
CHANGES, CHANGES by Pat Hutchins
CORDUROY by Don Freeman
CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE by H.A. Rey
DANNY AND THE DINOSAUR by Syd Hoff
DRUMMER HOFF written by Barbara Emberley and illustrated by Ed Emberley
EACH PEACH PEAR PLUM by Janet and Allen Ahlberg
HAROLD AND THE PURPLE CRAYON by Crockett Johnson
HAROLD'S FAIRY TALE by Crockett Johnson
MAKE WAY FOR DUCKLINGS by Robert McCloskey
THE NAPPING HOUSE written by Audrey Wood and illustrated by Don Wood
PICNIC by Emily Arnold McCully

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