

# 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.

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