

The Little Engine That Could

By Watty Piper

A little train learns that when he believes in himself he can do anything.

BEFORE READING:

- Show the children the front of the book. Ask them to guess what the book is about.
- Ask them where they think the train is going.
- Ask them to count the apples on the cover.

WHILE READING:

- Stop at any time if there is something you or the children would like to talk about.
- Ask them questions so that they can connect what is happening in the book to things they already know about. Try some of these ideas:
 - ⇒ Tell me about a time when you saw a train.
 - ⇒ What would you want the train to bring you?
 - ⇒ When have you been helpful?
 - ⇒ When have you felt sad? How did you feel better?

AFTER READING:

Spend some time talking about the story. Ask the children things like:

- ⇒ What happened to the happy little train at the beginning of the story?
- ⇒ Why was the train sad?
- ⇒ Which train was helpful?
- ⇒ What does the Little Blue Engine say while she pulls the train?

Read this book several times to the children. Hearing the same story again and again helps them learn new words and understand the ideas they hear better. Each day, pick a different activity to do with the children after reading “The Little Engine That Could”.

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MATH AND SCIENCE

Either play outside, or bring some dirt or sand inside. Mix it with water to form mountains. Add more water slowly and ask the children to guess what will happen. Dump a lot of water on top. Talk about what you see and feel.

READING READINESS

Ask the children to draw a picture of them being helpful. When they are done, ask them to tell you the story about their picture. Write the words on their paper, saying them out loud as you go.

MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Latch on to each other at the waist and take turns being in front. Move up and down and side to side whispering “Chugga chugga chugga chugga CHOO CHOO!” and do this in a pattern like a circle or a figure 8.

MOTOR SKILLS

Get a box, some newspaper, scissors and tape. Teach the children how to wrap a present. Let them do the cutting, folding and taping. Find some ribbon or string, wrap it round the gift and have the children tie it in a bow. If they need help, show them how to tie.

THINKING SKILLS

Put a secret object into a paper bag or pillow case so the children can't see it. Give them three clues and see if they can figure out what is inside. If not, let them feel the object with their hands and guess again.

ART

Cut out circles and squares of different sizes from scrap or tissue paper. Help the children arrange them on a large sheet of paper to make a train. Glue them together. Draw in a conductor, an engineer or passengers if you would like.

PRETEND PLAY

Pretend that you are the little engine that could. Help each other get up from the floor into a standing position. Chant, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can” as you work.

