

The Little Engine That Could

by Watty Piper

The timeless and inspirational story of a little engine, his unselfish attitude and how the power of positive thinking can help even the smallest object accomplish a big task.



Read

Before:

Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow that with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *What is something that you have had to practice and practice to get better at?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration.

- I wonder how that clown got all the way on top of the little engine?

During:

Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions, and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out "rare words" (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words in *The Little Engine That Could*

- rumbled: to make a deep sound, to move noisily
- bobbed: a woman's short haircut
- merrily: full of or showing lively cheerfulness or enjoyment
- engine: machine for powering equipment
- passenger: somebody traveling in a train car
- berths: the bed on a ship or train
- parlor: a living room for entertaining guests
- roundhouse: a building for locomotives
- freight engine: a railroad locomotive
- indignantly: angry or annoyed at the unfairness of something
- rusty: corroded and discolored
- weary: tired, especially in having run out of strength or endurance
- steadily: stable, staying the same

After:

Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Who can make the same sounds like the little train?
- What sorts of things was the little train hauling?
- Why did the little train stop at the base of the mountain?
- Why didn't the shiny new engine stop to help? The passenger engine?
- When the strong engine came by, why did the toys think the strong engine could help?
- Who can describe what the old engine looked like? Why couldn't he help?
- What engine stopped and decided to help the little engine?
- Why did the toys need to get over the mountain?
- What did the Little Engine That Could say as he started to haul the toys over the mountain?
- Did the Little Engine That Could make it over the mountain? Can you describe how every toy and animal felt?



Do

Paper Train

You will need: construction paper (any color), white typing paper, two black paper circles (per child), crayons/markers and glue

After reading the story, ask the children what is something that they would like to accomplish. What is something they can't do and would like to learn how to do? For example, riding a bike, swinging independently, swimming or tying their shoes, etc. Give each child a piece of white paper and some crayons/markers and have them draw a picture of themselves doing whatever they thought of. As they draw and color, ask the children about their illustration. Then write it (in their exact words) on the paper using the prompt "I think I can ..."

After they finish their pictures, have the children glue their drawings in the center of the construction paper. Add the two black circles to the bottom of the construction paper, to create the train wheels.

If desired, display the train cars down the hallway or in the classroom, forming a complete train.