

# Beyond the Book Activities

## *The Little Engine That Could*

### By Watty Piper

**Parents/Caregivers: Why do books matter? It all comes down to ABCs.**

- **A child deserves to be prepared:** Educators emphasize that reading with your preschool child is one of the most important activities to prepare them for kindergarten.
- **Books are essential:** Studies by the National Assessment of Educational Progress organization have consistently found that the more reading material available in the home, the better students' reading levels are likely to be.
- **Cost of children not being prepared:** According to the Wilder Research, in Minnesota, the cost of children entering kindergarten unprepared is approximately \$113 million annually to school systems due to increased:
  - Student aid
  - Special education and grade repetition
  - Teacher related costs
  - Impact on school safety due to delinquent behavior

Utilize the following activities to take you and your child(ren) beyond the book you just read.

These activities were developed through the cooperation of United Way Success By 6, Marshall Lyon County Public Library and Marshall ECCE Little Cubs.

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## Supplies Needed

### **Activity 1**

- Blue and white paper
- Glue

### **Activity 3**

- Box
- Small, random objects
- Notecards

### **Activity 4**

- Box of familiar toys

### **Activity 5**

- Crayons
- Scissors
- White paper
- Red paint

**\*Read book before getting ready for each activity.**

## **Activity 1: I Think I Can**

**Supplies you'll need:** White paper, blue paper and glue

**Directions:** Using the stencils provided, trace the engine, caboose and boxcar on paper. Look at the last page of the book, the text reads: "The last little engine was blue; and he knew just what to do. I think I can, I think I can, I think I can."

- Have your child cut out the engine, caboose and boxcar.
- Have your child tear blue construction paper into small pieces.
- Let your child glue the blue pieces of paper onto the engine, boxcar and caboose.

## **Activity 2: Numbers**

**Directions:**

- Take a picture walk through the book and ask your child to search for numbers.  
Examples:
  - The little red engine was number 7.
  - The little fireman on the ladder of the toy fire truck was number 1.
  - The passenger engine was number 6.
- Alternative Option: Pick different items throughout the book to count. Examples:
  - Page 1 - How many ducks are flying away?
  - Page 7 – How many peppermint drops are there?
- Think of your own questions, or have your child come up with some.

## **Activity 3: Loading Boxcars**

**Supplies you'll need:** Box, number cards 1-10 (notecards with numbers written on them work great) and small toys that will fit into your box

**Directions:**

- Review the number cards with your child.
- Place a box (boxcar) on the table.
- Spread the items on the table near the box (boxcar).
- Explain to your child that they are going to help load the boxcar for the little engine to carry.
- Invite your child to pick a number card. Have him identify the number and place that many objects in the boxcar. Example: "I have number 3. 1, 2, 3 things in the boxcar."

## **Activity 4: What is in the Boxcar?**

**Supplies you'll need:** Box of toys

**Directions:** For this activity, you can use the same box that was used during activity #3.

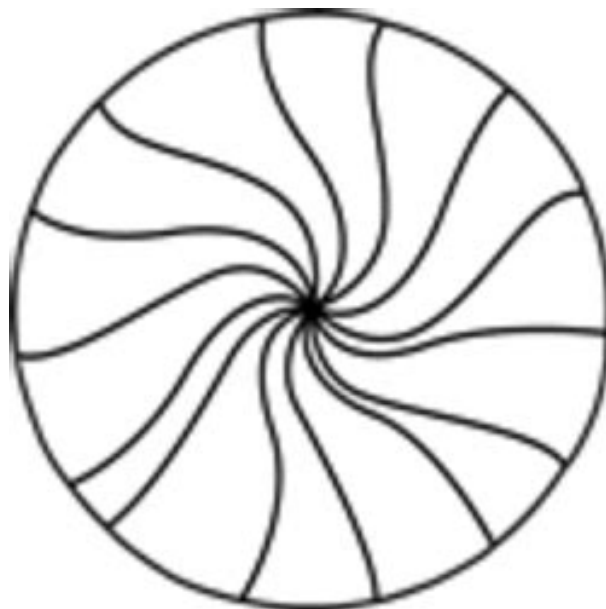
- Secretly place a common object in the “boxcar.”
- Have your child ask yes/no questions until they are able to identify the object. For example, place a ball in the boxcar. “Is it food?” asked Joe, “No,” said the parent. “Is it red?” asked Maria. “Yes,” said the parent. “Is it a toy?” asked Tyshawn. “Yes”, said the parent. “Is it a ball?” asked Grace. “Yes, it is a red ball!” said the parent.
- Once your child has correctly guessed the object in the box, have them close their eyes, place a different item in the box, and play again.

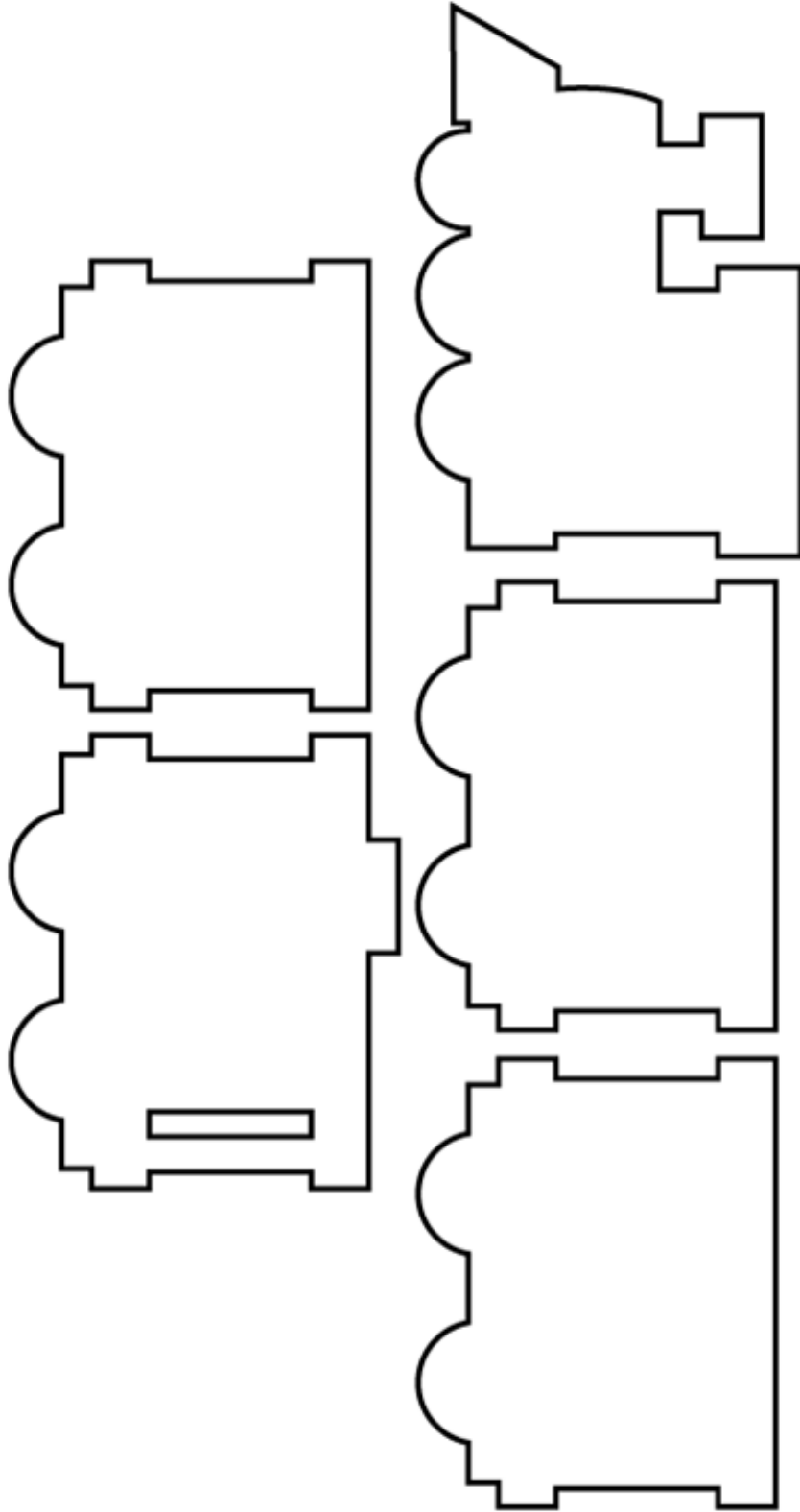
## **Activity 5: Peppermint Drops**

**Supplies:** Crayons, scissors, water paper and red paint

**Directions:**

- Show your child the picture in the book of the peppermint drops the little train was carrying.
- Give your child a piece of paper and have them draw a circle on it. OPTIONAL: Use template provided below.
- Have your child make lines within their circle to divide it into 8 pieces (like a pie chart).
- Invite your child to color their large circle like a peppermint, coloring every other triangle red and leaving the rest white.
- When the “peppermint” is dry, have your child cut out their peppermint candy.





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