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
Harold is an adorably curious four year old with his purple crayon, who has the power to create a world of his own simply by drawing it. Harold wants to go for a walk in the moonlight, but there is no moon, so he draws one. He has nowhere to walk, so he draws a path. He has many adventures looking for his room, and in the end he draws his own house and bed and goes to sleep. Genres: Family Fantasy.