

HERCULES

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By Hardie Gramatky

Themes: Machines/Heroes/Heroines

Grade Level: K-2

Running time: 11 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

This is the story of a horse drawn fire engine that finds a resting place in a museum. The story explains why the engine was honored.

The firefighters who operate the horse drawn engine are very proud of the engine, named Hercules, and the three horses that pull it. However, as time passes, the automobile is invented and it is not long before the modern fire engine, complete with a fine working motor, is ready to replace Hercules.

One day a fire occurs at the City Hall. All of the modern fire engines, for one reason or another, are unable to get to the fire. The fire fighters who have remained loyal to Hercules set the horses into motion, put out the fire and rescue the people. It is Hercules, not the new-fangled engines, that saves the day.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about ways of moving people and things from place to place before the invention of the internal combustion engine.
- Children will explore concepts of loyalty and determination.
- Children will try to understand what it feels like to grow old.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, *HERCULES*, with children. Then ask:

- What do you think are the things that make Hercules special?
- Is Hercules like a person you know - maybe an older person?
- How is this older person more useful than anyone else?

Talk with children about different means of transportation. Then ask:

- How do you think people and things were moved place to place before cars, trains, airplanes, etc., were invented?

Talk with children about the ways animals were used to pull farm machinery and carriages. Provide photographs and illustrations of horse drawn carriages, plows and other machinery that children can explore.

Plan a field trip to a nearby fire station. Encourage children to ask questions as they explore the fire engines, fire fighting equipment, fire station, etc. If possible, plan to have a fire fighter discuss fire safety rules with children.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Supply children with art materials that they can use to create their own vehicles. When children have finished ask:

- What do you call your vehicle?
- How does it move from place to place?
- Where does it carry its passengers/baggage?
- How fast can it travel?
- What does the vehicle look like inside?
- What makes your vehicle different from others?

Visit a museum with children. Encourage children to compare old-fashioned and modern

day services. Later, ask children:

- What kinds of things did we see that were used long ago?
- What do we use today?
- What was good about the old fashioned things?
- Why do you think new things were needed?
- How are the new things improvements over what we had before?

Talk with children about the loyalty the fire fighters showed to Hercules and their determination to use Hercules to put out the city hall fire. Encourage children to talk about ways their own feelings of determination may have helped them to achieve something. You can offer a little help by asking:

- What kinds of things can you do now that you couldn't do a short time ago?
- How did you learn to do these things?
- What might have happened if you had given up trying?

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