THE REMARKABLE RIDERLESS RUNAWAY TRICYCLE

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by Bruce McMillan
Themes: Fantasy, Neighborhoods, Humor
Grade Level: K–3 (ages 4-9)
Running Time: 11 minutes

SUMMARY
In this story, a tricycle gets kidnapped by a garbage truck but finds its way home. As the story opens, a boy is riding the tricycle down the sidewalk. Distracted by a kite he finds in the trash, the boy leaves his tricycle next to the trash pile. The poor tricycle gets collected in the garbage and taken to the dump, where it narrowly escapes the jaws of a huge crane. Just in time, the tricycle makes its break and heads out the gate. The garbage men jump in their truck and give chase. The truck chases the trike through and around a series of amusing obstacles. More people join the chase of the runaway vehicle: a jogger, the police and a man driving a street sweeper. The smart little trike evades all its pursuers, makes a flying leap over a roadblock and finds its way back to its owner.

OBJECTIVES
- Children will watch and listen to a fictional story about an object that comes alive.
- Children will follow a narrative made up of a sequence of causes and effects.
- Children will identify characters, settings, and actions in a story.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES
Introduce the title of the program and ask children to guess what will happen in the story. Ask children if a tricycle can really move without a rider. Since it cannot, children should reason that this story tells about have imaginary events. What things might an imaginary tricycle be able to do? Encourage children to share their ideas and to watch carefully to see if their ideas appear in the story. Explain that the story is told with pictures and music, not with words, so they should pay close attention to everything they see.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES
Ask children to think back over the story and to remember events that showed the tricycle was thinking for itself. List these events in a column down the center of the chalkboard. Ask why each event happened (what was the cause?) and what happened because of each event (what was the effect?) Add the answers in columns to the left and right of the original list. Challenge students to use this information as well as their memories to recall the order of events in the story. Check their answers by replaying the program, fast-forwarding from scene to scene.

Encourage storytelling and communications skills by asking children to imagine their own tricycles, bicycles, skates, toy trucks or other wheeled vehicles coming to life on their own. Children can tell their stories in the form of poems, plays, comic strips or even home videos.

Play a map game by enlarging a map of your school and neighborhood. Ask children to pretend they are tricycles running around loose. Trace each tricycle's route around the map and have children describe where they are going, using street names and names of directions.

Children can learn about and experiment with stop-camera animation as part of a science or art project. This is a good team project. Each team needs a real or toy tricycle and a camera. A digital camera with movie capability is especially fun to use and saves the cost of film processing. Instant cameras are another low-cost alternative. Demonstrate how to take a still picture, move the tricycle forward, take another still picture, move the tricycle again, take another picture and so forth. Draw attention to how the pedals move in each picture. Then develop or display the pictures in order. Children can make flip books from a stack of developed pictures and flip the pages to show movement. With a digital camera, show children the movie version of their stills.

In science class, use a toy tricycle or other toy vehicle to demonstrate gravity, friction, resistance, speed and other basic physical science concepts. Cover a sloping, flat surface with various textures (sandpaper, waxed paper, paper towel, washcloth, and a piece of corduroy, for example) and ask children to predict the speeds at which the toys will roll down the ramps. Have them time the vehicle's descent to see if their predictions were correct.

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THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD, by Watty Piper
MOUSE AROUND, by Pat Schories
TRASHY TOWN, by Andrea Zimmerman and David Clemesha, illustrated by Dan Yaccarino