

Maybelle the Cable Car

Book by Virginia Lee Burton

Unit study by Melissa Crabtree

Printables by Michelle Snyder

Bible/Character

Cheerfulness

Maybelle is always cheerful and polite. There are times she is suffering, but she chooses to not complain. Read Philippians 2:14-16a with your child and talk about their level of cheerfulness. Is it more fun to be around cheerful people or grumbling ones? Is your child's attitude typically a cheerful one? Remind them that the Holy Spirit wants to help them have a cheerful spirit if it is something that is hard for them.

Boasting/Pride

Big Bill, the bus is jealous of Maybelle and all of the attention she gets. He is boastful and wants to prove that he is better than she is, and when he tries, he is unsuccessful. Read Proverbs 16:18 with your child and explain that this is a perfect example of this. In the end, Big Bill is humbled and chooses to be happy for Maybelle and her continuing presence in San Francisco.

Math

Tally Marks

When the town fathers are counting the votes, they do so using tally marks on a blackboard. Tally marks are a way to note something being counted. One writes four vertical lines and the fifth line is a diagonal mark across all four lines, making a group of five. Then one can count by fives as opposed to counting each individual line by ones. Find some opportunities for your child to make tally marks this week... number of birds you see, number of people in your house, number of spoons in your drawer, number of days until vacation, etc.

Counting by Fives

On the page with the tally marks, there are three blackboards with marks on them. Practice counting by fives (after you explain the concept of tally marks).

Ratio

Maybelle wins the election by a ratio of three to one. A **ratio** is a way of noting one amount in relation to another. It is written with a colon separating the two numbers, 3:1. Have your student note some ratios this week... number of girls to boys in his Sunday school class, number of cats to dogs, number of adults to children, etc.

Language Arts

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is when the word written actually imitates the sound it is describing. Some examples are crash, BOOM, cling-clang, ding-dong, meow, splash. Maybelle's bell is a great example of onomatopoeia. Typically, it is a cheerful ting-ting-ting! Have your student point out all the times he sees onomatopoeia when you read Maybelle today! (Notice also that on the day the Big Bill yells angrily at Maybelle and tells her the town fathers want to eliminate the cable cars, her bell sang her heart's sad song: dong ding dong.)

Personification

Personification is when an author ascribes attributes typical of a person to an inanimate object. This is a great way of bringing a story to life. Maybelle and Big Bill clearly have been given a heart and feelings, not to mention the fact that they speak! The sun and moon have happy faces on them in the illustrations, and if you look carefully at the front of the buses and Maybelle, they definitely have a "face" look on them.

Setting

Maybelle was set in San Francisco, in 1947, though the book does not state the year. It is a true story that is [well documented](#).

If your child is interested, check out a book or two on San Francisco, its major earthquake and subsequent fire, and the character the cable cars have brought to the town. If you are near San Francisco, take a ride on a cable car!

For further study:

Compare/Contrast

Have your older student research and compare and contrast cable cars, trolleys, and buses. How they run (gasoline, electricity), are they attached anywhere (electric wire, underground), their brake system, size, etc.

Science

How Stuff Works

A cable car is pulled along by its heavy, underground cable that is in constant motion. The cable is gripped by a vise-like part that is controlled by the grip lever in the front of the car. (This is the gripman's job.) There are three separate braking parts for each cable car, the main track brakes, the front wheel brakes and the rear wheel brakes. All are controlled by their own levers or cranks.

Friction

A cable car's main brake system is basically a piece of wood pushed down hard on the track, creating friction. Friction is the rubbing of one object or surface against another. To illustrate friction, go to a place that has a slide. Send your child down the slide with his knees bent and his feet flat on the surface of the slide. Have him go down three times: once with his rubber soled shoes on, once with his socks on, and once barefoot. What happened? Which way did he go fastest? Which way did he go the slowest?

Social Studies

Civics, Election

Vocabulary:

Citizen – a resident of a city or town, one who holds the right to cast a vote, once they are 18.

City Father – the city officials, like a council member

Committee – a group of people who come together for one express purpose, in Maybelle, the purpose is to keep the cable cars running

Democracy – a government in which the citizens are allowed to participate in the decision making process by voting

Election - the decision making process where citizens vote on a concept or person

Petition – A formal written document that presents a request

Polls – the place where one goes to vote

Vote – to go and formally express your preference (by casting a ballot) on a matter up for decision

Hold a mock election in your house to help your student understand how it works. You could vote on: Friday night dinner, a movie for movie night, a special night of bedtime, who does a certain chore for a week, etc. (It is important to explain to your child that while our country's government holds elections in order to make decisions, houses do not run this way!)

Art

Detail in Illustrations

Virginia Lee Burton's illustrations always have incredible detail in them. In Maybelle, she draws very specific pictures that explain the workings of a cable car. If you can get copies, look also at *Katy and the Big Snow* and *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel*. These specific details are included in those illustrations as well.

Resources

Book List

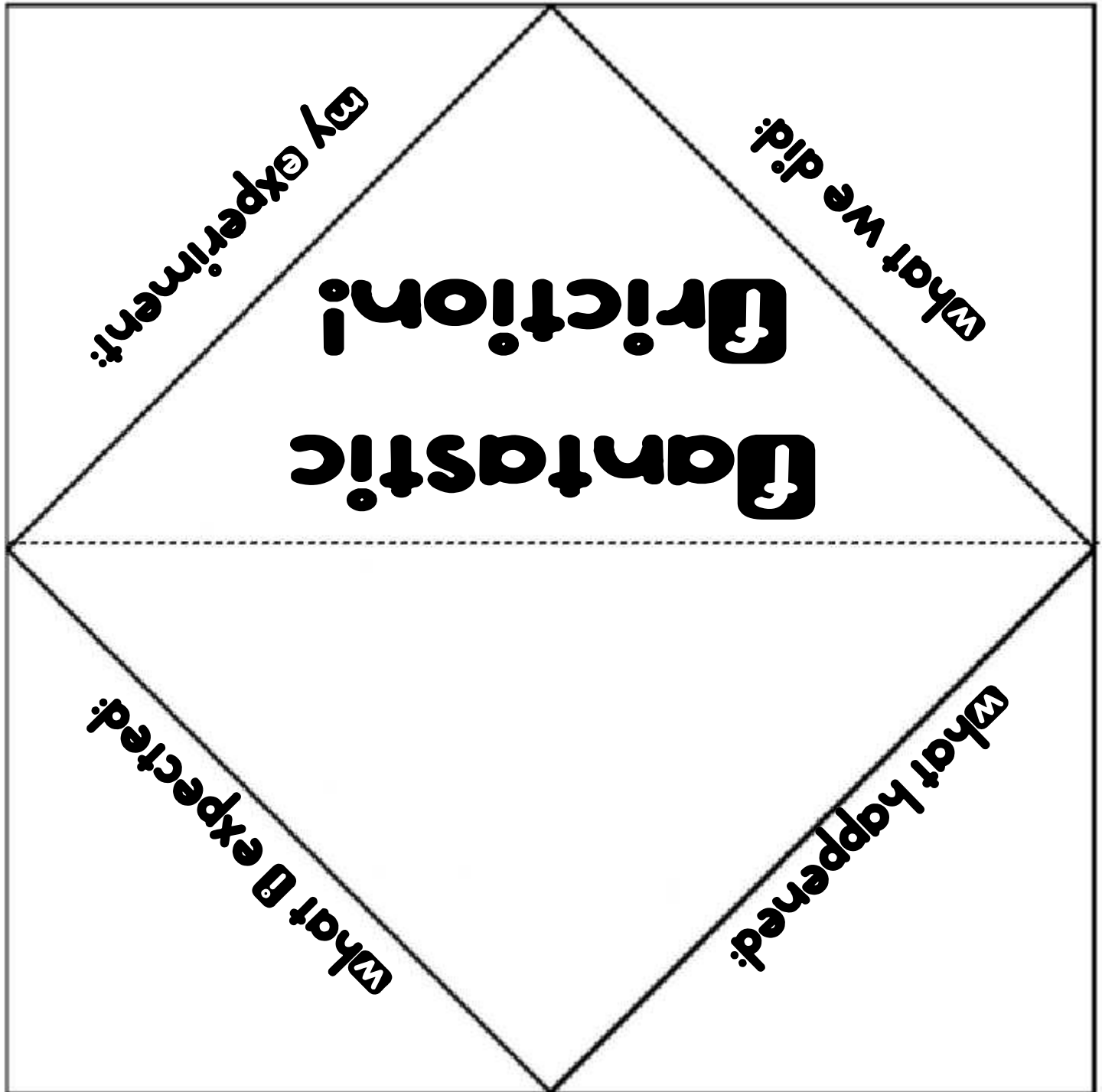
Cable Car Carnival by Lucius Beebe and Charles Clegg

Anatomy of the San Francisco Cable Car by Frank Parker

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Cut out book. Fold each triangle flap under. Fold book in half on dotted line. When you open the book, there should be four flaps to lift and record information. If you take a picture of your experiment, you can glue that inside.



Cut out pieces. Stack together and staple at the top.

Cable Cars



The Cable

The Gripman

The Breaks

Where

Is



San Francisco?

Cut book out as one piece. Fold in half.

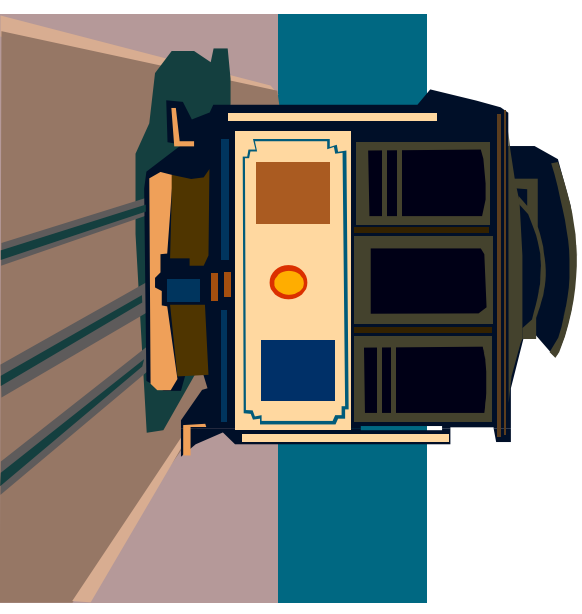


Mark San Francisco on the map and cut the map out. Paste it inside the file folder book on the previous page.

Directions for vocabulary book on next page.

Cut out book as one piece. Fold left side under. Fold right side under (it is the cover). Unfold book. Cut dotted lines to form five flaps. Refold.

New Words



Ask family and friends what their favorite things are. Mark them in the boxes and then declare a winner! Cut the strips along the solid outer lines. If there is a rectangle piece in the right corner of the strip, cut it off as indicated ("remove this area"). Stack your strips in order with cover on top and staple as indicated. Use the voting graphs to chart your initial research.

Let's Vote!



pizza toppings

REMOVE THIS AREA (Cut away so you have just a tab left)



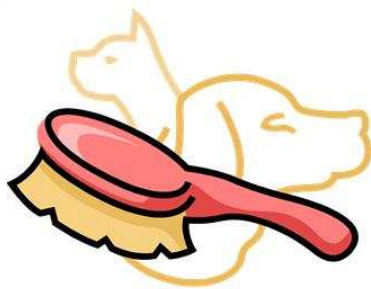
Pepperoni	Supreme	Cheese	Winner:

vehicles

REMOVE THIS AREA



Car	Van	Tractor	Winner:

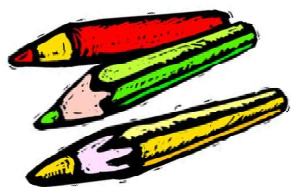


pets

Cats	Dogs	Winner:

colors

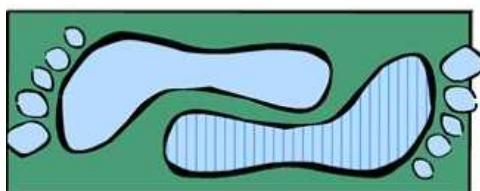
REMOVE THIS AREA



Red	Blue	pink	Green	Yellow	Winner:

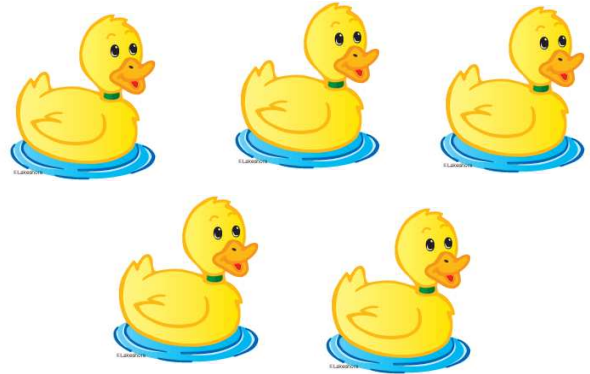
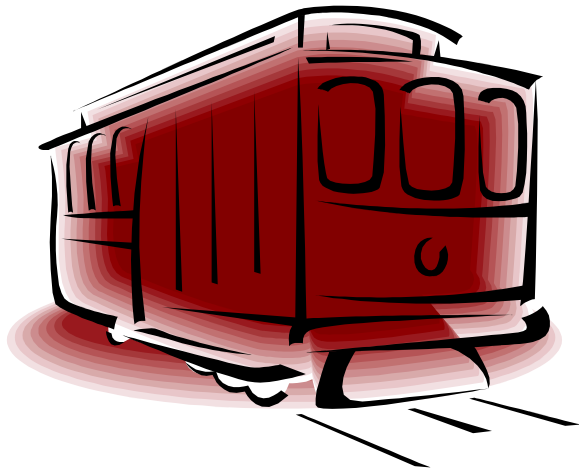
footwear

REMOVE

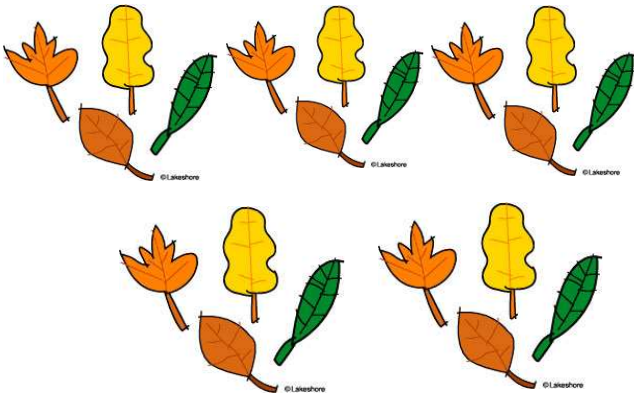


Flip Flops	Slippers	Bare Feet	Boots	Winner:

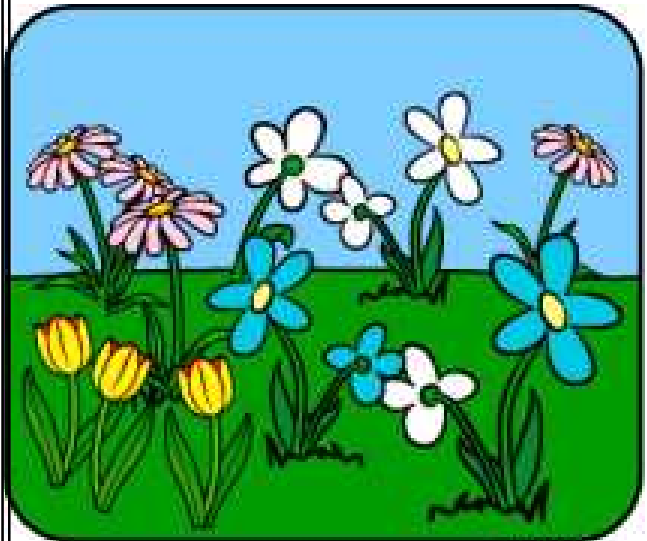
Tally Marks



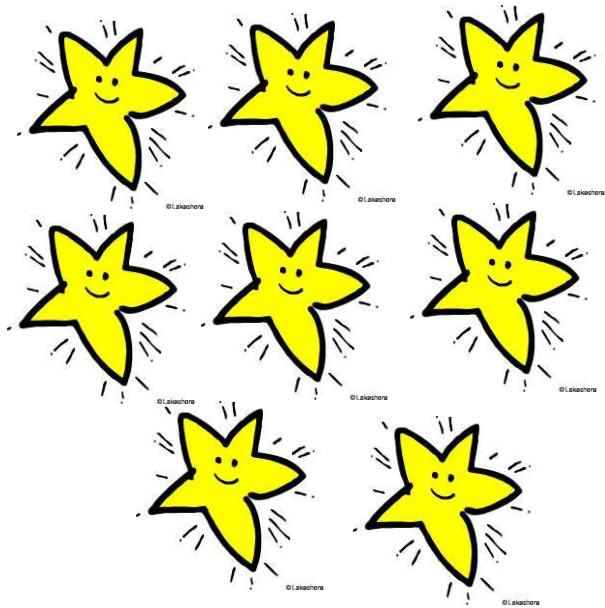
Tally these ducks



Tally these leaves



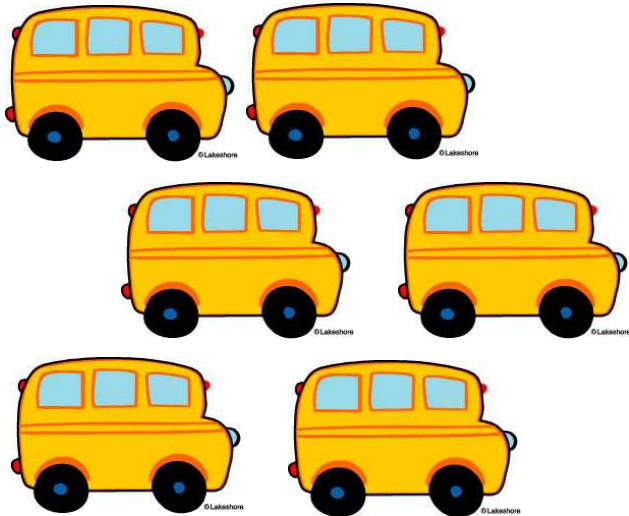
Tally these flowers



Tally these stars



Tally these candies



Tally these buses



Tally these kids