

# SAMMY SNAIL'S WILD RIDE

(Ages 3 to 8)

“Eight---nine---ten---ready or not, here I come!” yells Sammy Snail to his friends who are playing hide-and-seek with him. Sammy loves being with his friends, but because he is so slow they sometimes get tired of waiting for him. In fact, Cathy Cricket has just about fallen asleep in her hiding place in the clover before Sammy even finds one of his friends.

Soon Larry Lizard is bored and suggests, “Hey everybody, let’s go down the street to the playground and see if the kids left any delicious crumbs for us to find. They always have such good snacks with them.”

Everyone thinks this is a great idea, and Larry leads the way. Amos, Amy and Annabel Ant scoot past Sammy saying, “Hurry up Sammy, or all the good crumbs will be gone!” Gary Grasshopper jumps over Sammy and hollers, “Come on slow poke, get a move on!”

Sammy is going as fast as he can, but Willy Worm inches around him saying, “Can’t you go any faster? Move over and let me pass!” Even a few leaves blow past him on the gentle breeze, and he watches them scurry down the street after his friends.

Poor Sammy, he wants to go faster, but just can’t manage it. Snails are very slow moving creatures. He feels left out and sad that some of his friends are calling him names. He stops and hangs his head, feeling sorry for himself.

“Why can’t I move faster like all of my friends?” he asks himself. He is tired of being this slow and the last one to ever get to the playground, or anywhere else. We all know that feeling sorry for ourselves never does any good, but when you are “different” than the others or the “slow poke” as they call him sometimes, it is hard not to feel that way. Finally Stewart Squirrel

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dashes past him but stops and turns around to ask, "What's wrong Sammy? Why are you so down in the dumps today?"

"Well, all my friends are probably already at the playground, and I am not even half way there yet. I'm just too slow and always miss out on half of the fun. And I'm tired of being called names." Just then, one big tear slips down Sammy's cheek, and Stewart knows he has to do something to cheer him up.

"Hey Sammy, I have an idea! I think I can find a way to help you go a lot faster!"

"You CAN?" asks Sammy, clapping his hands in excitement.

"I think so; see that skateboard over there on the porch? Those people moved away and left it there, so let's see if we can use it to help you go faster."

Sammy thinks this is a great idea and waits until Stewart runs over and brings the skateboard back saying, "Now we need something to help hold you onto the board so you don't fall off." They look around and find a short piece of string lying on the sidewalk that came off of some child's balloon, and they use it to secure Sammy to his new ride. Now that Sammy is ready, Stewart gives him a big shove and off he goes, down the sidewalk toward the playground!

Sammy is having so much fun and going so fast that he passes Willy Worm and soon goes whizzing by the ants! He laughs and waves and thinks this is the greatest day ever! His friends are amazed by his clever transportation and clap and cheer as Sammy goes flying past. However, at the same time, they are a bit jealous that he is going faster than they are!

"Who ever thought a snail would beat us to the playground?" asks Willy.

"It's the first time Sammy is going to get there before the rest of us!" cries Amy Ant.

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All the other ants are surprised to see him flying by, and they begin to hurry along as fast as they can run, trying to keep up to him. Gary Grasshopper hears the skate board coming and hops out of the way just in time to avoid being run over by Sammy's new wheels!

"This is the most fun I've ever had! Now I know what it's like to go fast like my friends. In fact, I'm going faster than any of them! I'll never be the last one to reach the playground ever again!" Sammy is laughing and waving, looking back at his friends when he hears Cathy Cricket yell, "Look out Sammy, the sidewalk ends soon!"

Turning forward, he sees that he is coming to a crossroad and has no idea how to stop! His friends all holler for him to jump off but he is tied on with the string! Sammy struggles to loosen the string but it holds tight as he and the skateboard drop down from the sidewalk, right into the street and intersection! A car is coming, and the driver doesn't see Sammy. Its tire smacks the edge of the skateboard and knocks it flying in one direction and poor Sammy in another. The old balloon string snaps and Sammy is airborne! Up, up into the air Sammy goes and lands with a soft thud in the hedge row that surrounds the playground. He is dazed and confused and so frightened that he begins to cry. Slowly he realizes that he isn't hurt because the hedge branches and leaves caught him and broke his fall.

All of Sammy's friends run to the hedge row to see if he is hurt. Larry Lizard hurries up the branches to help him down to where the ants, grasshopper, cricket, squirrel and worm are waiting. All of them are relieved to see that he isn't hurt, and they begin to apologize for calling him names and not waiting for him. Even though Sammy is frightened and has a few bruises, he is thrilled that everyone is so concerned about him, and he is happy to be safe on the ground and surrounded by his friends again.

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Stewart picks him up and says, "Oh Sammy, I'm so sorry that my idea turned out to be such a dangerous ride for you. I should have known that snails are supposed to be on the ground and slow moving. Let me carry you back home so your parents can take a good look at you and make sure that you are alright."

All of his friends walk back together, talking about how brave Sammy is and how sorry they are for teasing him about being different.

"I would never have had the courage to ride on that skateboard!" says Amos Ant.

"I would never be brave enough to do what you did Sammy!" Willy Worm says.

Not one of them would have been daring enough to ride on that skateboard like Sammy did! They decided right then and there that Sammy was the bravest one of all. Sammy is so proud that his friends think he is the bravest one that it doesn't matter anymore if he is slow. He has learned that going fast is not good for snails, and besides, he is now known for his bravery, which makes him feel very special.

Sammy and his friends return home and explain what happened to Mr. and Mrs. Snail. After his parents make sure that Sammy isn't hurt, they sit everyone down for a yummy snack and a serious talk. They explain that God has made each of them differently and that all of them are individuals who have their own size, shape, speed, talents, and so forth. Mr. Snail says, "If all of us were the same, or did the same things, life would be pretty boring. Each of us is special in our own way, so we can learn from one another."

When they finish their snack, Sammy asks permission to go out to play again. This time the friends all agree to stay together in a group, even if they decide to go back to the playground. It took quite a scare for them to realize that it is better to be slow than take chances. They also

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realize the importance of staying in a group where everyone is included. It is much kinder and far more fun to include everyone. It is wrong to tease someone who might be a little slow or different. After all, that person just might turn out to be the bravest one of all!