

“Tuppence a Bag”

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

January 13, 2006

ACTIVITIES

As you well know, spending time with children is always rewarding. It can help you to see the world around you in a whole new way and to value things that you may take for granted or consider perfectly ordinary. On the other hand, when you are entirely responsible for their care, even small children can be intimidating. Just what do you do with them all day? This newsletter is here to help – whether you're a parent, grandparent, babysitter, caregiver, neighbor, or anyone acting as a substitute teacher and spending the day with a preschool-aged child.

The following sections will give some suggested activities for this week's theme as well as methodology and ideas for preparation.

"Tuppence a Bag"

"Feed the birds, Tuppence a bag," cries the Bird Woman in Mary Poppins. This is the time of year when birds appreciate a little extra help finding food. Feeding birds is a great way to bring wildlife closer to home. By installing a variety of feeders and providing appropriate habitat, you will be able to attract many different types of birds to watch and enjoy throughout the year.

During the winter months, you will attract birds that overwinter in your area and help them survive a tough time of year. When spring arrives, look for birds to nest and raise their young nearby. In the summer, you'll be able to enjoy watching adult birds bring their young to your feeders.

Not all birds like the same kind of feed from the same kind of seed or the same kind of feeder. So it's not surprising that the more types of food and feeders you provide, the more birds you will attract. The most successful feeding stations include an assortment of feeders at different heights to best stimulate the way birds feed in the wild.

How to Create a Backyard Bird Haven:

<http://www.gardenersupply.com/on/demandware.store/Sites-Gardeners-Site/default/Link-Page?id=5029>



One Room Schoolhouse:

Older children can move beyond bird watching to bird identification. Give your child a bird guidebook and teach him how to use it. Begin a Birding Journal where you record each new type of bird, where you saw it, and the date. Your child may also want to learn to make bird calls and to see if he can imitate a bird well enough that other birds are fooled. Wooden bird calls are available through Magic Cabin:

http://www.magiccabin.com/magiccabin/product.do?section_id=0&bc=1004&pgc=733&cmvalue=MCD|0|Normal%20Search%20Result|P1

The Great Backyard Bird Count, an annual event, will be held this year from February 17-20. This is an excellent time for your children to put their bird watching skills to use and ties in well with the preschool Winter unit: Families. Find more information at <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/>

For the child who enjoys watching squirrels, consider a Squirrel Feeder Kit:

<http://www.bestnest.com/bestnest/RTPProduct.asp?SKU=ENT-WK004> or make one of your own design.

Daily Schedule

7 am wake up, morning verse, get dressed, breakfast

8 am School

- ❖ opening verse 8 am
- ❖ daily activity 8:05 am

Monday	watercolor painting, dance
Tuesday	visit farmer's market, make vegetable soup
Wednesday	visit library
Thursday	bake bread, churn butter
Friday	handwork project (beeswax modeling, coloring, seasonal crafts)
Saturday	field trip (visit nature center, art gallery, museum, concert, dance)
Sunday	housekeeping (waxing, washing, polishing, mending)

- ❖ independent play (outside) 8:50 am
- ❖ circle time 9:30 am
- ❖ independent play (inside) 9:45 am
- ❖ clean up 10:25 am
- ❖ story, puppetry, drama 10:40 am
- ❖ closing verse 10:55 am

11 am lunch

11:30 am nap

2:30 pm snack

3 pm independent play

4:30 pm nature walk

5 pm prepare dinner, set table

5:30 pm dinner

6 pm bedtime routines

7 pm bedtime

For more details on this schedule, please visit our website at www.waldorfcriculum.com and click on the article "How to Homeschool."

Index Cards

When you follow this simple schedule, the only things you'll really need to plan in advance are

1. the daily activity,
2. circle time,
3. storytelling, and
4. dinner.

Your entire planning can easily fit on a 3x5 index card. Make up a card for the day with notes on what you plan to do and simply carry it with you. Or, if you will have the child on a regular basis, sew a small pocket to keep the card in and hang it on the wall. The child will love to run to the pocket and take out each day's card to see what you'll be doing together. Make note of what resources you need to complete the activities, such as story books, cookbooks, a book of rhymes and fingerplays, craft books, etc.

The Waldorf Way

Some things about the Waldorf way of spending time with preschool children may be new to you. Here are some general notes; feel free to visit our website at www.waldorfcriculum.com for more information and resource links for Waldorf education.

Verses provide rhythm, security, and a transition between one activity to another. They are an important way for your child to take the time to stop, rest, and center himself before beginning the next activity, and they also provide a moment of quiet thankfulness and gratitude for each part of the day.

Helping around the home is an essential part of any Waldorf curriculum. It is not necessary to put a child in front of the television while you do the dishes or sort the laundry into lights and darks; let the child help you. Even if you have an automatic dishwasher, a child can help by rinsing the dishes before they are loaded. Children love to do work that they know is truly helpful and all young children thrive in situations where they are allowed to imitate an adult. Washing the dog, washing the car, sweeping or dusting, repotting houseplants, feeding the cats, setting and clearing the table... all of these are wonderful activities to do with a preschool-aged child.

Cooking is always a wonderful activity for a child to participate in. Bearing in mind any dietary restrictions (such as vegan or vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher, etc.), food allergies, and common-sense kitchen safety, consider preparing a simple recipe with the child. Children love to wash vegetables, measure and mix ingredients, and set the table for a meal. Preparing and eating a snack is always popular!

Don't forget the many benefits of unguided imaginative *Play*. You need to stay nearby for safety's sake, if the child is in an unfamiliar environment or you aren't certain what should or should not be childproofed. All children need daily time to play. In the preschool years, play is the WORK of the young child. Prepare an appropriate play space and then stay out of it as much as you can; give the child the simplest and highest quality toys you can find such as large pieces of cloth, blocks, dolls, and materials from nature (such as pinecones, feathers, or shells). Avoid plastic toys. Consider a basin of water and some measuring cups or add some dish detergent and give the child a whisk. The more open-ended a material, the more of the child will be brought forth in playing with it. The more structured a material, the less will be required of the child – and the less he will grow and develop when playing with it. As a simple test, try playing with the toys yourself. If you find you tire of a thing quickly, so will a child!

The Waldorf view of *Handwork* is different from the usual craft projects done with young children. Handwork must have an authentic context – it must be truly useful and must be completed slowly, deliberately, and with pride. As children grow, they benefit from the lessons learned in doing handwork – that taking your time, following all the steps, and doing your best work will result in a product of which you can be proud.

Process – not product – is the emphasis of *Art* time. Be sure that your child understands that art activities are for learning, for exploration, and not to be afraid to have fun! Even many adults in our society are afraid to experiment with art materials because “it won't look right”; nip this attitude in the bud!

Storytelling is an important part of the Waldorf method. A wonderful resource we recommend is [Storytelling with Children](#) by Nancy Mellon. If at all possible try to learn more about storytelling and puppetry. If you just don't feel comfortable telling stories orally, we provide suggestions for picture books you can read which go along with each topic. It will actually be more damaging for your child to experience an insincere story where the adult feels false and uncomfortable. Also, remember that storytime or puppet shows at your local library can be a part of your plans for the day but DO NOT take place of reading one-on-one with the child. This personal connection and quiet nurturing time is a very different experience than the social one of experiencing a story in a group.

What follows are my notes for lesson planning this week. Please feel free to share your own suggestions by writing to the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.

Friday – January 13

Handwork:

make finger puppets for “The Little Red Hen” using Feltcraft patterns:
hen p.61 [cock without cockscomb and wattle], duck p.45, cat p.55, dog p.56

Circle Time

Storytelling:

have your child use the finger puppets to retell the story of “The Little Red Hen”
http://www.bres.boothbay.k12.me.us/wq/nnash/WebQuest/little_red_hen.htm

Dinner:

Chili-Roasted Sweet Potato Wedges Everyday Food page 122

Saturday – January 14

Field Trip: Clearwater Nature Center family campfire @ 1 pm
<http://www.pgparks.com/places/nature/clearwater.html>

Circle Time:

Mix 'n Match Sandwich Faces Cooking Art page 113

Storytelling:

tell story about one of the animals seen at the nature center

Dinner:

Minestrone with Pesto Vegetarian page 28

Sunday – January 15

Housekeeping:

sweep and dust
tackle items from mending pile

Circle Time:

“Mummy has scissors, snip, snip, snip” Spindrift page 28

make sewing cards for N (use Christmas cards)
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/lessonplans/ect/greetingcards.htm>

Storytelling:

read The Seamstress of Salzburg

Snack:

Pineapple-Banana Smoothie Everyday Food page 17

Monday – January 16

Watercolor Painting:
paint to ballet music from The Nutcracker

Circle Time

Storytelling:
read Dancing with Degas

Dinner:
Herb-Rubbed Salmon Steak Everyday Food page 30

Tuesday – January 17

Visit Farmer's Market, Make Vegetable Soup:
Curried Celery Soup Vegetarian page 32

Circle Time:
make bird treats
http://coco.essortment.com/birdtreats_rgzk.htm

Storytelling:
read Chapter Seven of Mary Poppins

Dinner:
Spiced Carrot Cake Everyday Food page 128

Wednesday – January 18

Visit Library, choose new books Storytime @ 10:30 am
held at BCNES

Circle Time:
set out treats for the squirrels (peanuts in the shell)

Storytelling:
read The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin

Dinner:
Creamy Spinach Everyday Food page 112
Slow-Roasted Tomatoes Everyday Food page 113

VERSES

Opening Verse

The Waldorf method places a strong emphasis on establishing rhythms throughout the day which give a comfortable sense of order and security to a child's life. One of these is to start your day (or your time together) with a short meditation called an opening verse. Choose a place which is clean and orderly; children are deeply sensitive to their environments and are unable to feel calm in the midst of chaos. Lighting a candle while you say the verse is customary, as this helps to establish a reflective atmosphere. Even if you choose not to do light a candle, the opening verse will be a transition for the child into your care. After you declare yourselves to be "ready now for work and learning", you can blow out the candle and begin your day!

Opening Verse:
In the morning at the sunrise
When the light of day doth break,
Children's souls, by angels guided,
Sleep from rested body shake,
Ready now for work and learning,
Happy, steady, and awake.

Closing Verse

Use this verse to end your time together on a high note, striving to go forth and made the rest of the day a good one. Like the opening verse, lighting a candle is customary and provides a sense of closure. When the candle is blown out, you will go forward feeling positive about the next thing to come your way.

The golden sun so great and bright
Warms the world with all its might.
It makes the dark earth green and fair,
Attends each thing with ceaseless care.
It shines on blossom, stone, and tree,
On bird and beast, on you and me.
So may each deed throughout the day,
May everything we do and say
Be bright and strong and true,
Oh, golden sun, like you!

GROCERY LIST

Produce:

1 ½ lb sweet potatoes
green pepper
radish
apple
2 onions
2 leeks
2 lb celery with leaves
lb potatoes
4 small zucchini
cherry tomatoes
lb plum tomatoes
banana
herbs: fresh mint
lb curly spinach

Pantry:

olive oil
spices: chili powder
slivered almonds
peanut butter
2 cartons vegetable stock
cannellini
8 oz can crush pineapple in juice

Meats:

salmon steak

Dairy:

eggs
milk

Bakery:

two kinds of sandwich bread

Frozen:

peas

MATERIALS LIST

Finger Puppets:

an assortment of wool felt
basic sewing supplies
patterns and directions from [Feltcraft](#)
tracing paper and a pencil
bits of yarn, beads, and so on for decoration

Sewing Cards:

old Christmas cards
hole punch
wool yarn
clear Scotch tape

Bird Treats:

(I have all the materials for these on hand)
 Corn Bread
 Grandma's Sunflower Seed Cookies
 Fat Cakes
 Peanut Butter Pine Cone

Squirrel Treats:

peanuts in the shell

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

<http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/VERSES.htm>

Activities

- Feltcraft by Petra Berger
- Painting with Children by Brunhild Muller

- "A Night at the Ballet" CD set
http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000002XEG/ref=pd_bxgy_text_b/103-0938158-3463859?%5Fencoding=UTF8

- Spindrift: Poems, songs, and stories
published by Wynstone Press
http://www.waldorfbooks.com/edu/thr/early_childhood.htm

Stories

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon

- The Seamstress of Salzburg by Anita Lobel
- Dancing with Degas by Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober
- Mary Poppins by P.L. Travers
- The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin by Beatrix Potter

Recipes

- Everyday Food magazine January/February 2006
- Cooking Art by MaryAnn Kohl
- The Best-Ever Vegetarian Cookbook by Linda Fraser

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