Booklist: Main Lesson

Japan

Miss Happiness and Miss Flower. by Rumer Godden.

use library to find additional resources on Japan, Japanese culture, origami and other handwork, Japanese music, cookbooks, and so on

Linear Measurement

Inch by Inch. by Leo Lionni.

Charlie Needs a Cloak. by Tomie de Paola.

How Big is a Foot? by Rolf Myller.

How Tall, How Short, How Far Away? by David A. Adler.

Maps and Globes. by Jack Knowlton.

The Borrowers. by Mary Norton.

A Study of Natural Resources

Building an Igloo. by Ulli Steltzer.

The Eskimo Twins. by Lucy Fitch Perkins.

Houses of Snow, Skin and Bone. by Bonnie Shemie.

Houses of Wood. by Bonnie Shemie.

Houses of Bark: Tipi, Wigwam and Longhouse. by Bonnie Shemie.

Houses of Hide and Earth. by Bonnie Shemie.

again use library if additional resources are required including nonfiction books and collections of Native American legends

Extensions

Archaeology for Kids. by Richard Panchyk.

Independent Skills Review

The Giant Jam Sandwich. by John Vernon Lord.

Measuring Penny. by Loreen Leedy.

The Librarian Who Measured the Earth. by Kathryn Lasky.

Cumulative Project

On the Banks of Plum Creek. by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

House. by Albert Lorenz.

Pogo's House. by Jo Norling.

When Clay Sings. by Byrd Baylor.

Andrew Henry's Meadow. by Doris Burn

When the Wind Stops. by Charlotte Zolotow.

Additonal Resources

Teaching Practical Activities. by Roy Wilkinson.

Learning About the World Through Modeling: Sculptural Ideas for School and Home. by Arthur Auer.

The Hand-Sculpted House. by Ianto Evans, et al.

Parent Preparation

Starting Your Day

A successful school day **begins with you.** For this reason, each lesson block begins with a meditation for the parent to use when beginning his or her preparation time. This meditation time is absolutely essential. You must take the time each day to prepare yourself for teaching by reviewing the knowledge to be transmitted, your goal for your child's learning, your child's developmental stage, the nature and temperament of his being and your own, as well as planning how to maintain the rhythm of your teaching and your day in the face of any obstacles which may arise. For example, knowing that you have a first grade child and a two-year old, you wouldn't try to begin your main lesson block while the toddler entertains herself independently in another room – you would shortly be interrupted by tears of frustration or boredom from the younger child. Then getting up and leaving, saying briefly to your older child, "I'll be back," coaxing the toddler into a new entertainment, rushing back to your first grade lesson, saying "now then, where were we?"... this undermines the entire purpose of your teaching. Remember, children learn from what you do but they learn much more from how you do it. Showing your child that learning together is a precious time, to be treasured and enjoyed, will go a long way toward building what teachers like to refer to as a "life-long learner."

Teaching the Main Lesson

The Main Lesson is one of the basic elements of the Steiner curriculum. It involves the thorough working of the main subjects (such as geography, science, history, mathematics or literature), taught in main lesson blocks of about two hours per day, over several weeks. It is always conducted in the morning, when the children are fresh and is followed by a change of activity.

The topics are approached through a variety of means, including stories, painting, recitation, a physical group project or a game, until the children have made some connection to it with every part of themselves. It is then set aside to 'digest' and a further topic is taken up. This pattern is natural to children, as anyone who has observed the success of 'crazes' in a playground will know. The result is a thorough and satisfying assimilation of knowledge, thus maintaining the child's enthusiasm for learning.

A standard planbook format, with a grid consisting of topics to be studied and activities for the day, is not adequate when preparing for a Main Lesson block. Try, rather, a cluster of blank pages in a three-ring binder or a large spiral-bound tablet of blank paper. Each day's preparation should consist of the front and back of two consecutive pages:

Page One: Meditation

On the first side of the first page, write out the day's meditation longhand. This will help you to internalize its essence, as well as reminding you to take the time for your personal daily meditation and spiritual preparation.

Page Two: Main Lesson Block Content & Notes

On the back of this page write the topic of the day's main lesson and make your notes as to the varying sources you will use and integrate into its teaching. This page will include pieces of music and artwork, nature walks and activities, stories to tell, and your own personal resources to prepare for teaching the topic such as newspaper, magazine, or encylopedia articles, books, plays, and any other art or language experience which will help you to convey the day's lesson.

Page Three: Daily Schedule

On the facing page – that is, the first side of the second page – write the schedule for the day, including what you are teaching and roughly when you intend to do each activity. The main lesson block for first grade is 1 ½ hours initially and then 2 hours as the child becomes more used to academic work. After the main lesson, a more active time period is necessary, such as outside play. You will be able to determine yourself what type of schedule works best for your child and your family as a whole. Be sure that you have not forgotten any of the components of your module; although not every topic is done every day, there should be time allotted to each of your child's subjects at some point in every week.

Page Four: Journal & Planning

On the back of your schedule page, write your notes and reflections after the day has passed. These journalling pages and observations will be an invaluable resource as the school year passes. Do not forget to take some time each day to reflect on the learning that has taken place between you and your child, and to write down both the practical (teaching strategies that did or didn't work, your child's breakthroughs and struggles) and the philosophical (how teaching the lesson touched you emotionally, things you are learning about your child's being or your own, inspirations, doubts, and fears); doing this will make you a much better teacher and enrich you as a parent. Along with your journalling, do some lesson planning for the future while ideas inspired by today's lesson are still fresh in your mind. Be sure to write down what you will need to do to prepare yourself for teaching future topics as well, such as learning to knit, or to find the best resources for teaching the foreign language you have chosen.

Daily Meditation

Out of the gravity of our time
There must be born
Courage for deeds.
Give to your teaching
What the spirit has given you,
And you will liberate mankind
From the nightmare
That weighs upon it
Through materialism.

Rudolf Steiner

Lesson Plans: Part One

Introduction

Take a nature walk with your child. Look around you carefully. Discuss the natural resources that you see. If you had to build a shelter for yourself, what would you make it out of?

Activation

On the Banks of Plum Creek

Read chapters 1 and 2 of On the Banks of Plum Creek. What was their new house made of? Why? What is your house made of? Walk all around your house and make a list of the building materials you can see. Visit a building site of a house under construction (over several days, if possible, to observe different parts as they go up). What materials are being used to build it? See if a builder on the site can take some time to talk to you and answer questions.

Refer to Teaching Practical Activities by Roy Wilkinson, pages 20-22. Nurture your child's interest in building materials and structures over the course of the unit to lay the foundation for the cumulative project.

Begin Human Habitation unit.

Explorations

Set A:
Begin Miss Happiness and Miss Flower as a read-aloud. As the story develops, discuss the premise that your environment is a part of your self.

Set B:
During the days that you are reading the story, learn more about Japanese culture by visiting museums, listening to music, speaking with Japanese people, attending festivals and other cultural events, and cooking some Japanese foods.

Set C:
Ask your child what she would like to learn about Japan and visit the library to do research and find additional resources. A good handwork project for this time is to learn origami. Consider learning about and trying to write some haiku as well (introduced in Chapter 5 of the book).

Main Lesson Book: have your child complete several pages in her main lesson book to demonstrate what she has learned about the people and the culture of Japan

Continue reading Miss Happiness and Miss Flower to the end. If your child shows interest in making a Japanese doll house, move straight into the Building lessons (part two); otherwise, continue with the Japanese cultural studies until the book is finished and then use the introduction and activation which follows to begin the next section.

Lesson Plans: Part Two

Introduction

Inch by Inch

If your child hasn't already taken an interest in building the Japanese doll house (and thereby begun to learn about measurement) introduce the subject by reading Inch by Inch.

Can your child explain the joke in this book? (that you can't measure a song in the same way that you measure the length of a bird's leg or neck) Tell your child that the measurement of a bird's beak or wing is a kind of measurement you will be studying called *linear measurement*. You measure the length of a song using time.

Activation

Charlie Needs a Cloak

Read Charlie Needs a Cloak. Make a cloak for your child to wear during the winter months. Start with the stage where you cut the cloth. So as not to waste fabric take an old sheet to make the cloak pattern with. Shove your scissors into the cloth and start randomly cutting, holding pieces up to your child and saying, there that ought to fit. Of course, you don't need to ram the point home if your child is already explaining to you that you need to measure how big she is first.

Explorations

Set A:

Measure your child and then help your child cut and sew the cloak pieces:
http://www.alleycatscratch.com/lotr/makingem/Patterns/Cloaks.htm

Set B:

Find a measuring tape which is marked in centimeters on one side and inches on the other. Talk with your child about how, just as with weight and volume, people in different countries use different systems of linear measurement.

Choose another pattern to sew (this would be a good time to give your child her own sewing box, such as the one carried by Magic Cabin) and try making it all using inches to measure. Your child shouldn't have much trouble with this, as long as you measure consistently with one side of the tape or the other. If she doesn't seem to realize how different the two are, switch back and forth between centimeters and inches so as to ensure an unsuccessful result then examine what went wrong.

Main Lesson Book: have your child write a short passage and create a corresponding illustration to explain why it is important to use the same system of measurement throughout the entirety of a project

Set C:
How Big is a Foot?

Parent Background: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_measurement

This lesson, which will take approximately two days, was adapted from Math and Literature K-3 Book One by Marilyn Burns.

Summary of How Big Is a Foot?:

This story takes place "Once Upon a Time" when beds had not been invented. A king wants to give the queen something to sleep on for her birthday. He tells the queen to lie down on the floor. Then, using his own feet as a measure, he paces around the queen to find the length and width of the bed he wants built. The king tells his apprentice the bed should be 6 feet long and 3 feet wide. The apprentice measures the wood with his own feet (which are much smaller than the king's feet) and creates the queen's bed. When the bed is finished, it is too small, and the angry king throws the apprentice into jail. After the apprentice thinks for a long time about the problem of the bed, he figures out a solution and makes a new bed. This bed is the right size for the queen and is ready just in time for her birthday. The king is so happy he frees the apprentice and makes him a royal prince.

Begin to read How Big Is a Foot?, stopping on the page where the apprentice goes to jail. Talk about possible solutions for the apprentice's problem. Then have your child write a letter to the apprentice expressing sympathy for his predicament and advising him how to solve his problem. (use this letter for evaluation: Your child understands the problem if she suggests that the apprentice should use his feet to measure the queen first and then make the bed, *or* that he should use the length of the king's foot to measure the materials for the bed and then make the bed.)

Then finish reading the story.

Extra Activities:

a. The king used his feet to measure the queen's length. What else could the king have used to measure the queen?

b. Help your child trace around her foot on a piece of paper. Trace around your own, and compare the size of the two.

c. Then use each foot (label which one is whose) to measure a variety of objects around the house and create a chart to show your results.

d. After your child has measured several items, see if she can successfully estimate the measurement of other things and then check to see if her estimate is correct.

Read How Tall, How Short, How Far Away? to learn more about the history of measurement.

Set D:
Build the Japanese doll house from Miss Happiness and Miss Flower, following the instructions in the back of the book. Add decorations to the house by sewing small quilts and cushions, making furniture, finding accessories, planting a miniature garden and so on.

Set E:
Begin The Borrowers as a read-aloud. This book studies the concept of scale. Continue further explorations in scale by visiting an architect and viewing a series of blueprints. If possible, ask to see the blueprints of a house and then visit the actual house after it has been built. This will be even more dramatic than the differences in scale between a sewing pattern and the final project, or between the dollhouse plans and their result.

Consider a subscription to National Geographic magazine. The most distinguishing feature of this magazine is the fact that a pull-out map is included in every issue, covyour childg a wide variety of places in the world and periods in time. These maps make a wonderful addition to your classroom walls.

Use this also as an opportunity to review map skills studied in second grade. Use Maps and Globes as your review material.

Main Lesson Book: have your child write a short passage and create a corresponding illustration to explain the concept of scale and how it is used

Extension: Archaeology

Create a survey grid *to scale* of your backyard and complete the activities in Archaeology for Kids.

"Archaeology in the Classroom" article:
http://www.cobblestonepub.com/fa_sandlund.html?x=6.088933885097505006960011283541 78

If your child really enjoys learning more about archaeology, consider a subscription to Dig magazine: http://www.cobblestonepub.com/mags_9up.html

Lesson Plans: Part Three

Introduction

After your child has had several experiences transferring plans on paper to tangible objects, introduce the concept of one, two, and three dimensions.

Parent Background: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimension

Have your child measure the length, width, and height of an object in your home. Write the three numbers down on a sheet of paper. Then ask her to tell you which one is which. Chances are that, even shortly after completing the measurements, she won't be able to recall. Show her how these are usually written with an identifying letter next to them such as:

ℓ = (the l is usually written in cursive handwriting to distinguish it from the number 1)

w =

h =

Activation

Ask your child to take a piece of paper and divide it into three colums. Label the first One Dimension, the second Two Dimensions, and the third Three Dimensions. Then have her walk around the house and identify objects which belong in each column. After a while, your child should come back to you with a puzzled look on her face, having been unable to find anything which has only one or two dimensions. It seems that everything around us is a *solid*, that is, it has length, width, and height.

Explorations

Set A:

A line has only one dimension (zero dimensions is a point). Give your child a piece of graph paper and have her draw a straight line. Measure its length. This is the one dimension of a line.

Now have your child draw a two dimensional, or flat, shape. Now you have the ability to measure its length and width.

Using the Cut and Assemble 3-D Geometrical Shapes (included in your packet), photocopy the templates for the 3D shapes you would like to make. The shapes are two dimensional while they are flat on the page; however, when you assemble them they become three dimensional and now have length, withth, and height. In addition, each shape now can be said to contain a *volume*, currently of air.

Revisit some of your origami projects from Part One of the lesson plans or continue to assemble three dimensional geometrical shapes to explore.

Set B:
Visit a fine arts museum and categorize the works of art (choose 10-12 to study) as two dimensional, such as a painting, or three dimensional, such as a sculpture.

At home, create a piece of artwork and then try to add an extra dimension to it. Start with a one dimensional line. Then turn your piece of artwork into a two dimensional shape. Add texture to your piece and bring it off the page to create a third dimension. Can you guess what the fourth dimension is? (time) Creating a moving piece of sculpture would be the ultimate accomplishment.

More about the fourth dimension:
http://www.strangehorizons.com/2002/20020916/fourth_dimension.shtml

Find additional geometry lesson plans and explorations at
http://mathforum.org/geometry/geom.units.html

Lesson Plans: Part Four

Introduction

Visit a museum or park which has a Native American exhibit. Examine how the native peoples of your area lived. Of what did they construct their homes? What did they eat, what did they wear, how did they capture their prey? Consider your area in terms of its natural resources. Often tribes were restricted to the materials they could find around them, or the limited amount they could trade with nearby peoples. Can you think of a material which we take for granted but which they had to do without? What did they use instead of the material we use now?

Begin The Eskimo Twins as a read-aloud.

Activation

What are the features of a structure that make it a house? Have your child make a list of the qualities of a house, the characteristics which are necessary and those without which it cannot be considered a house. Then read House to examine some of the many forms shelter has taken around the world and throughout history. What do they have in common? Revise your list of characteristics if necessary.

Explorations

Set A:

Read Building an Igloo. Build a model igloo out of sugar cubes (available at the grocery store). This will seem simple until your child gets to the top and realizes that a different shape is necessary to complete the arch and to keep the structure stable.

Parent Background:
The early Egyptians made their temples with flat roofs, and windows and doors with lentils supported by columns. During the Roman period building designers had openings made possible by the invention of the keystone, a slanting stone at the top middle of the arch that redistributed the weight to the sides of the arches.

Keystone Photographs: http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/key.html

Show your child how to shape a keystone to complete the building of your igloo.

Set B:
Why do the Eskimo people choose to build their homes out of snow and ice? Refer to the Bonnie Shemie series of Native Dwellings books to study and compare native peoples and their homes of snow, skin and bone, wood, bark, hide and earth. Make models of additional dwellings if desired.

Main Lesson Book: For each type of dwelling, have your child create an illustration for her main lesson book along with an explanation of how it was constructed and why the people chose to build with this material.

Set C:

Revisit the place you went on your initial nature walk for Part One of the lesson plans. Again, ask your child to identify natural resources which you find and to brainstorm ways to make a shelter from them. See if your child is able to look at her environment from a different perspective, synthesizing the information learned about Native Americans, to recognize a wider variety of materials and to be able to draw tenable conclusions about ways to use them to construct a dwelling.

If desired, have her take photographs of the natural resources she finds on her walk (before and after completing the unit) for purposes of comparison. Ask her to explain why she chose the different materials each time.

Begin work on the Cumulative Project.

Independent Skills Review

Part One

Set C
exercises for learning to write haiku: http://www.gigglepoetry.com/poetryclass/Haiku.html

Main Lesson Book: write the haiku you are most proud of in your main lesson book and create a corresponding illustration

skill: understanding the purpose and form of haiku
check: that the poems embody the spirit of haiku

Part Two

Set A
Read Measuring Penny and use it as inspiration to find as many ways as you can to measure your dog! Keep a journal of your efforts.

Main Lesson Book: explain some of the many ways you found to measure your dog and create a corresponding illustration

skill: understanding that an item can be measured in many ways
check: that the measurements are seriously and carefully taken

Set B
Complete some or all of the linear measurement exercises in
http://alphaplus.ca/APUBBB/TCSB/metric/pdf/part2.pdf

Complete the 8 worksheets for reviewing linear measurement, capacity and mass
http://alphaplus.ca/APUBBB/TCSB/metric/pdf/part5.pdf

skill: correctly using units of linear measurement, capactiy and mass
check: that the answers are correct

Set C
Read The Librarian Who Measured the Earth.

Main Lesson Book: explain how Eratosthenes was able to measure the size of the Earth and create a corresponding illustration

skill: reading non-fiction text
check: that the explanation and corresponding illustration are accurate

Set E
Read The Giant Jam Sandwich. How big was the sandwich? Explain how you reached your answer.

For evaluation purposes, parents should read solutions to "How Big Was the Cat?" from Teaching Children Mathematics magazine, February 2002 (included in packet).

Part Four

Set B
Gather a set of Native American legends from the library. There are many many resources for this; one excellent series is the Native American Legends series written and adapted by Terri Cohlene. Try to find legends from a wide variety of tribes.

Reading the legends you have found, make note of the natural resources mentioned in each one. Include animals which are mentioned, land features, plants, nuts, and berries, the climate, and so on. What are the connections between the people who told the tale and the land they lived on? Could another tribe from a different area have told the exact same legend?

If you found legends which were similar across tribes, consider what their common elements are. Are the common elements related to the natural resources each tribe had in their area? Or is it the universality of human nature which is the common element (such as different versions of the Cinderella story)?

Choose one legend to retell and illustrate in your **Main Lesson Book**.

> **skill:** comparing and contrasting a variety of texts
> **check:** that your child can correctly identify which plot elements are natural resources and which are characteristics of human nature

Cumulative Project

For her cumulative project your child will build a doghouse.

Read Pogo's House: the story of lumber. Have your child brainstorm and draw up plans *to scale* for the doghouse she would like to build.

Before your child begins to build, however, introduce her to the world of building structures with earth. Read Chapter One of The Hand-Sculpted House. Complete some of the activities in Chapter Seven: Redefining "House" and Chapter Eight: Materials and Tools.

for more resources on Earth Construction House Building:
http://www.hollowtop.com/cls_html/do-it-yourself/rammed_earth.htm

In the end, have your child decide what material she'd like to use to build the doghouse and then have her proceed from there.

Decide together in advance what you'd like the assessment criteria for this project to be. Consider steps such as brainstorming a materials list and shopping around for the best prices, planning a diagram on paper to scale and creating a three-dimensional scale model, measuring all of the materials herself without any help, and a timeframe for completion of the project. Have your child keep a journal of the construction process from planning through to implementation including diary entries, anecdotes, and photographs.

Since she was a part of choosing the assessment criteria, put your child in charge of evaluating her success in this project.

For parents, think back to the Daily Meditation for this unit. Have you taught your child to be more ecologically aware, sensitive to the environment around her, and grateful for the natural resources which she finds around her? Has she learned to respect native peoples who have gone before and to understand that all around the world people share a common need: shelter. It is one of the things which unites us.

Assessment Criteria

Content/declarative knowledge: how well does the student know the **content**?

Assess your child's work during introduction, activation, exploration, and extension components of the unit. Assess her independent skills review activities. For example,

- Does your child possess an understanding of and respect for Japanese culture? Can she explain some of the things which make Japanese culture unique?
- Can she identify what a natural resource is, give examples of some which can be found around her, and explain how humans rely on them?
- Can she properly use units of linear measurement, explain how they came to be, and give examples of situations when those units are not the correct way to measure something?
- Can she explain the difference between one dimensional, two dimensional, three dimensional and fourth dimensional objects? Can she give an example of each?
- Can she articulate the dependence of native peoples on the natural resources of their area and explain how several types of dwellings were constructed?
- Is she aware of the positive and negative consequences of building with wood and with earth?

Quality of the **product**: how well did the student present the work in writing, speaking, etc.

Assess the quality of your child's main lesson book work. For example,

- Did she concentrate on using her best handwriting and work diligently on her illustrations?
- Were her explanations clear and easy to follow?

Assess the quality of your child's Cumulative Project Journal. For example,

- Did she make notes on her process, observations, and conclusions as she proceeded to plan and build the doghouse?
- Did she keep a neat and tidy journal which is easy to read?

Quality of the **application**: how well did the student execute the knowledge application process?

Assess your child's cumulative project. For example,

- Did she demonstrate proficiency in using units of linear measurement?
- Did she work comfortably with two dimensional and three dimensional planning?
- Did she use the cumulative project as an opportunity to synthsize material learned in this unit and ultimately gain greater understanding of the process of creating shelter?
- Did she learn to respect the need for shelter, the dependence on the materials of the earth, and the common ties which unite us as humans?