

The Honeybee in Winter

Into their hives the busy bees crawl.
Into the ant hills go ants one and all.
The brown caterpillars have hidden their heads.
They spin silk cocoons for their snug little beds.
The squirrels have gone into their holes in the tree.
The bird nests are empty. No birds do we see.
The elves have all gone for the winter, we know.
There isn't a person who knows where they go.

*Make ten fingers walk
Continue same motion
Put one fist under opposite arm
Motion of spinning
Move hands behind back
Show palms
Fold hands*

All is quiet. Outside the beehive the snow is falling...

It snows — it snows — it snows!

Start with your hands slightly above your head, lowering them straight down, parallel to each other, with airily moving fingers and thumbs, until your fingertips touch your thighs. The speed of your movements should be even and the "ow" in "snows" slow, almost singing.

It snows — it snows — it snows!
Far and wide — far and wide —

*Repeat the movement
With the same airy finger gesture, move your parallel hands in a light arc up - first to the left, then to the right. Give yourself time. Again, stretch the vowels in "far," and "wide," almost singing.*

Wherever I look —

Move your hands with the same finger movements up and to the sides in opposite directions

Snowfields white —

Bring your hands together again, tracing the same path. Speak the vowels slowly.

White snow!

Move your parallel hands up, and at "white," let it snow straight down to your thighs or to the floor. Let the "ow" in "snow" sound until your fingertips have completely descended. The whole sequence from the beginning to here must be experienced as a breathing action. The silent direction changes are important.

Hay-oh! — Hay-oh! — Hay-oh! —

Lift your hands high and turn them rhythmically in and out

Hay-oh! — Hay-oh! — Hay-oh! —

Repeat the movement

All is quiet. Inside the beehive the bees are dreaming...

They dream of the flowers...

Prepare for Circle Dance

In and out the dusky bluebells
In and out the dusky bluebells

Some children stand in a circle, holding hands and making arches. A line of other children hold

In and out the dusky bluebells
Won't you be my partner?

hands and weave in and out of the circle.

Pitter patter pitter patter on your shoulder
Pitter patter pitter patter on your shoulder
Pitter patter pitter patter on your shoulder
Won't you be my partner?

Lightly patter on shoulder

They dream of the trees...

We are little lemon trees, waving all our leaves,
Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! Come the busy little bees!
They sip and they sup from all of our flowers,
Buzzing all around us for hours and hours!

Wave your hands above your head

*Open your hands
Twirl around on the spot. Sit.*

They dream of the rain...

Pitter, patter, pitter, patter
Ten little raindrops dancing on the walk
Pitter, patter, pitter, patter,
This is how they talk.

Tap all over the body with the pads of the fingers

They dream of the breeze...

Flowers tall,
Flowers small,
Count them one by one,
Blowing with the breezes
In the springtime sun!
1, 2, 3, 4, 5

*Let tall fingers stand up
Let little finger and thumb stand up*

Touch each finger as you count

**Now the Ice Dragon covers the land with white
See, there is not a flower in sight.
The bees huddle close, to keep their Queen warm
Holding her safe in the midst of the swarm.
When she shivers she must have some honey,
Gathered back when the days were so sunny.**

Place hands back in lap

Little bees work very hard,
Making golden honey,
Taking nectar from the flowers,
When the days are sunny.

**A little bee brings honey to her Queen,
From the sweetest flowers you ever have seen,
She sips it and sighs, warmed through once again,
And the bees rest on. Will this Winter end?**

All of the children lie down and rest

**One morning the Queen tells a brave little bee,
Creep to the entrance and fly out for me,
Search and search all over the land,
Find me a flower somewhere if you can.**

This journey can be done with a finger puppet

**The kind little bee wanders high, wanders low
She worries and wonders; she still sees some snow
Will it be Spring soon or do cold winds still blow?**

**A white patch on the ground
A bell rings a sweet sound
A snowdrop is what she has found**

Gently ring a bell to awaken the "bees"

**She holds onto its stem, leans in, takes a sip
And swiftly flies home with the news of her trip.**

Children sit up

Snowdrop down, crocus up

*Make bud shape with hands, point down,
point up*

Head held down, and head held up,
Down to Mother Earth
And up to Father Sun
Winter is over, and spring has begun.

Repeat the movement

Point arms down

Point arms up

Jump up, hold hands and dance

**The hive starts stirring when all hear the news
Hurry, hurry, there's no time to lose!**

Winter's gone
The snow has past.
Spring time's here
We shout, at last!
Flower buds do open wide,
Bees are welcome deep inside.

Move busily around the "hive"

Prepare for Circle Dance

Look who's here, it's Lady Spring,

*Children stand in a circle. A Lady Spring is
chosen and stands in the center.*

Lady Spring, Lady Spring,
Look who's here, it's Lady Spring,
Lady Spring is here.

Who'll come into our wee ring... etc.
And dance with Lady Spring?

Lady Spring chooses a partner

William will come into our wee ring.... etc.
And dance with Lady Spring.

*Keep singing this verse, both choosing a partner
Continue until all children are dancing*

Come with me said Lady Spring... etc.
We're off to dance and sing.

Everyone sing and dance

Teaching Notes:

We did this in January, and then transitioned into Laurie Clark's "The Honey Bees Waggle Dance Circle" in time for Candlemas on February 2nd. Hers is found in Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures: Therapeutic Support for Early Childhood, volume 2 on page 73. She states that the inspiration for her Circle comes from Arthur Auer's bee story in Learning about the World through Modeling: Sculptural Ideas for School and Home, available FREE at the Online Waldorf Library: <http://www.waldorflibrary.org/books/3/view/52/ebooks/42/learning-about-the-world-through-modeling-ebook>

Puppetry Notes:

Suzanne Down has a bee puppet pattern on page 115 of Around the World with Finger Puppet Animals.

There is also a bee pattern in The Nature Corner: Celebrating the Year's Cycle with Seasonal Tableaux by M. van Leeuwen and J. Moeskops.

Verse & Movement Credits:

The Breathing Circle: Learning through the Movement of the Natural Breath by Nell Smyth
"We are Little Lemon Trees," p.104; "Pitter Patter Raindrops," p.67

Gesture Games for Autumn and Winter by Willa Ellersiek
"It Snows," p.90

Rhymes for Fingers and Flannel Boards by Louise Binder Scott and J.J. Thompson
"In Wintertime" by Maude Burnham, p.120; "Flowers," p.127

The Singing Year book and CD set by Candy Verney
"In and out the dusky bluebells," p.28, track 27; "Snowdrop down," p. 3, track 1; "Lady Spring," p.9, track 7

Spring Tales by Suzanne Down
"Winter's gone"

Summer by Wynstones Press
"Little bees work very hard," p.53

Story Credits:

Inspired by chapters 1 and 2 of Little Bee Sunbeam by Jakob Streit, available FREE at the Online Waldorf Library: http://www.waldorflibrary.org/books/3/view_bl/52/ebooks/107/little-bee-sunbeam-ebook