

Ichthyomusicology

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

February 01, 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.

"Ichthyomusicology"

ie. the study of music and songs about fish and marine life. This is a school program by Magpie (<http://www.magpiemusic.com/schoolguide.html>) which we are going to see as a field trip. It's a good time of year to start taking walks on the beach again, as the weather warms up, and to take a look at creatures which live in the water. You can also visit a pet store, aquarium, nature center or museum as part of this topic.

Not interested in fish? Whales? Sharks? Crabs? And so on? Use this topic as a chance to talk about mermaids. Sarah's Silks makes a lovely mermaid dress-up costume <http://www.bellalunatoys.com/silksdressups/items/dressups/mermaid.htm>

or you can knit your own (see the Resource Guide). Imagine reading "The Little Mermaid" by Hans Christian Anderson with your child, then putting on your silk dress-up costume(s) and sit on a rock in the living room, combing your hair. How magical.

Feel free to share your own suggestions for this topic by writing to the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.



One Room Schoolhouse:

Use this topic with your older children as a chance to talk about water quality and pollution (around here it's "Save the Bay"). Here are some ideas:

- See if there are campaigns in your area to educate people about conserving water and using greywater, cleaning up riverbanks and streams, and recycling. If not, start one!
- Many nature centers already have programs of this type; take your child to see deformed fish and frogs, catfish with liver disease, and other casualties of humans not taking better care of marine environments (depending on the age of your child, this may be very graphic – make sure you see the exhibits in advance to determine their suitability).
- Use a rainbarrel to capture rainfall at your home and use it throughout the seasons for watering your garden, thereby conserving tapwater.
- Visit a sewage treatment plant and see what goes into making our water clean again.
- Walk through your house and see if there are any dripping faucets – put a container under them and measure how much water is wasted in a day, then have your child take a plumbing lesson to learn how to fix the problem.
- Take a hike into a natural area and count how many pieces of trash you find (picking them up as you go, of course). It's a good idea to take a notebook with two columns – in one, mark how many animals you see, in the other mark how many pieces of trash you see. Seeing more trash than animals really helps drive the point home with your child.
- Start a campaign to save a filthy river or damaged wetlands area – maybe you'll find an endangered plant or animal whose very existence is at stake.
- Teach your child about the water cycle and the watershed you live in. Even if you don't think so, the ground you live on is part of a watershed. Take a field trip to find the body of water which you affect every day.
- Talk with your child about pesticide runoff. If your gardening (or lawn-care) products aren't already organic, make them so. Have your child research pest-control solutions which are more gentle on the earth. Making the research specific to an actual pest which lives in your area is a good idea. Then have your child make a poster or sign to hang up in your house where the gardening and lawn care supplies are kept, stating how to control harmful insects or pests as they appear later this year. Make it relevant!
- Used motor oil is often dumped into gravel driveways but always eventually finds its way into rivers and streams. Petition your local government to establish a used oil collection center at the dump. Again, consider ideas which will be REAL – there's nothing worse than getting a child really worked up about saving the earth just to have him feel that nothing he does is actually going to make a difference.

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. We encourage you to share your own ideas; simply email the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.

Wednesday – February 1

Visit Library storytime 10:30 am topic is "Colors"

Circle Time:
coloring with beeswax crayons

Storytelling:
read Harold and the Purple Crayon

Dinner:
Prune Pudding (dessert) Cooking from the Cupboard page 247

Thursday – February 2

Bake Bread, Churn Butter:
Buttered Sweet Potato Knot Rolls Cooking Light 2004 page 31

Circle Time: Candlemas
make beeswax candles (rolled)
make floating candles All Year Round page 28

Storytelling

Dinner by candlelight

Friday – February 3

Handwork:
Flower Fairy (kit from Weir Dolls)
<http://www.weirdollsandcrafts.com/knittedoll/knittedkits/kitflowerfairy.html>

Circle Time:
bring early spring blooming flowers indoors to Nature table
(or purchase bulb-forcing kit)

sing "King Winter" Pentatonic Songs page 25

Storytelling:
tell story of Spring
Spring by Gerda Muller

Snack:
Mini Cherry-Pecan Streusel Loaves Everyday Food December 2005
page 122

Saturday – February 4

Field Trip: "Ichthyomusicology" @ CSM 4 pm

Circle Time:
make Muesli Cooking Light 2004 page 36

Storytelling:
read The Little Mermaid
look at mermaid picture in Living Alphabet

Breakfast:
Cinnamon Waffles Cooking from the Cupboard page 21

Sunday – February 5

Housekeeping:
sweep floors, dust
purchase new bath towels, wash them and hang them out to dry
fold and put away old towels for later projects

Circle Time

Storytelling
read To Bathe a Boa

Dinner:
Braised Rabbit with Prunes The Cook and the Gardener page 571

Monday – February 6

Watercolor Painting/Dance Class dance class @ SCC 10 am

Circle Time:
pretend to be mermaids (swimming,
singing, combing hair, diving under water)
begin mermaid costume New Knits on the Block

Storytelling:
read All I See Is Part of Me

Dinner:
Chicken Roasted with Oranges,
Rosemary, and Bay Leaves The Cook and the Gardener page 573

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:

dried fruit: prunes, cranberries, dates, figs

fresh herbs: thyme, rosemary

carrot

4 oranges

Pantry:

canned sweet potatoes

bread flour

whole wheat flake cereal

slivered almonds

oat bran

white wine

chicken broth

Meats:

2 ½ lb rabbit, cut into pieces

4 lb roasting chicken

Dairy:

milk

eggs

8 oz sour cream

2 cups buttermilk

heavy cream

Frozen:

pearl onions

MATERIALS LIST

Rolled Beeswax Candles:

These kits are easy to find (we got ours at Jo-Ann Fabrics); you can also search online.

Chinaberry offers one at quite a good price:

<http://www.chinaberry.com/11344.cfm>

Floating Candles:

from All Year Round

- small cookie cutters
- paraffin (this can be bought at the grocery store, look with the canning jars)
- narrow wick
- sheet of aluminum foil, greased
- wax container and pan

instructions for several other types of candles are given, including Walnut Candle Boats, Sand Candle, Earth Candle, and Water-Dip Candles

Flower Fairies:

We are using a kit from Weir Dolls; you can also make your own flower fairies following the directions and patterns given in All Year Round for Snowdrop, Primrose, and Crocus

Bulb-Forcing Kit:

Again, easy to find locally (last year we got ours at Target); also available online.

You can also make a bulb forcing gift kit:

http://www.homecrafting.com/collection_elite/downloads/Bulb%20Forcing%20Gift%20Kit.pdf

although I would use river pebbles to fill the jar instead of the plastic garlands of beads suggested here.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

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

Activities

- All Year Round by Ann Druitt, et al.
- Pentatonic Songs by Elisabeth Lebret
- New Knits on the Block by Vickie Howell

Stories

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
- Spring by Gerda Muller
- The Little Mermaid by Hans Christian Anderson, illus. by Lisbeth Zwerger
- Living Alphabet by Famke Zonneveld
- To Bathe a Boa by C. Imbior Kudrna
- All I See Is Part of Me by Chara M. Curtis

Recipes

- Cooking from the Cupboard by Jeanne Jones
- The Cook and the Gardener by Amanda Hesser
- Cooking Light Annual Recipes 2004
- Everyday Food magazine, December 2005

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