

Squeaky Clean

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

January 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.

"Squeaky Clean"

January 1st is a Sunday, housekeeping day – the perfect way to start a new year! There are many safe and nontoxic ways to clean your home. If you have a preschool aged child working along side you, you want to be sure that you are not using any harmful chemicals. Here is my favorite trick:

fill your bathtub with hot water all the way past the line of soap scum, add several cups of apple cider vinegar and let sit until the water is cool to the touch, then scrub

Find more tips on using natural cleaners in Martha Stewart Living magazine, May 2004 issue.



One Room Schoolhouse:

Squeaky Clean is also a perfect theme for making New Year's resolutions. Work with your older children to make resolutions which are focused and reasonable to attain, then create a plan for how they will achieve their new goals. Try putting action steps on each month of their new 2006 calendar so that they won't lose track of their goals as the year progresses.

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
Tuesday	visit library
Wednesday	make vegetable soup
Thursday	bake bread, churn butter
Friday	handwork (beeswax modeling, simple sewing, finger knitting, seasonal crafts, coloring)
Saturday	visit nature center
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 waldorfcurriculum@yahogroups.com.

Sunday – January 1

Housekeeping:

remove old calendars, hang new 2006 calendars

sweep and wash floors, dust

make laundry powder

The Wholesome Home Book of Recipes and Household Formulas

wash windows MS Living September 2004

Circle time:

Walnut Boats Festivals Family and Food page 151

Storytelling:

read Harry the Dirty Dog

Dinner:

Pasta Salad with Roasted Broccoli Everyday Food page 97

Monday – January 2

Watercolor Painting

Circle Time

Storytelling:

read Small Pig

Dinner:

Rice Pilaf with Tomatoes Everyday Food page 121

Tuesday – January 3

visit library

Circle Time

Storytelling

Dinner:

Oatmeal-Almond Crisps Everyday Food page 156

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:

two heads broccoli
zucchini
mango
red onion
head Boston lettuce
Granny Smith apple
mesculin lettuce mix
tomato
dried currants
sunflower seeds

Pantry:

8 oz penne
8 oz jarred roasted red peppers
walnuts
long-grain white rice
14.5 oz diced tomatoes in juice
sliced almonds
14.5 oz stewed tomatoes in juice
ditalini
14.5 oz can hearts of palm
mango chutney
chili powder
white vinegar

Deli:

Kalamata olives
deli ham

Meats:

lb gr turkey

Dairy:

whipping cream
yogurt
cheddar cheese
sour cream

Bakery:

whole wheat sandwich bread

Frozen:

10 oz frozen cauliflower

MATERIALS LIST

Walnut Boats:

walnut halves (5)
small strips of paper
modelling beeswax
dish of water

Festivals Family and Food page 151

King Winter:

thin knitted cotton for doll's skin
a stand (see page 12, figure 6)
0.8 mm thick wire, 16 inches long
fabric scraps for clothing:

- white or grey material for the robe
- white woolly material for the cloak
- material for the undergarment

uncarded wool for hair – white
a piece of silver card
a piece of silver paper

The Nature Corner pages 81-82

white silk, crystals and
large geode for King Winter's throne

Mrs. Thaw:

thin knitted cotton for doll's skin
a stand (see page 12, figure 6)
0.8 mm thick wire, 16 inches long
fabric scraps for clothing:

- blouse
- skirt
- apron (dark colors)
- apron (fresh colors)
- cloak
- hood

uncarded wool for hair – grey brown
modelling beeswax for shoes
twigs and a bit of wire, or small broom

vase of buds and early blooming plants

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

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

Activities

- Martha Stewart Living magazine May 2004
- Martha Stewart Living magazine September 2004
- The Wholesome Home Book of Recipes and Household Formulas by Yvonne Young Tarr
- Festivals Family and Food by Diana Carey and Judy Large
- The Nature Corner by M v Leeuwen & J Moeskops

Storytelling

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- Harry the Dirty Dog by Gene Zion
- Small Pig by Arnold Lobel
- Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson
- The Wiggler by Lisl Weil

Snack

- The Waldorf Kindergarten Snack Book
by Lisa Hildreth http://www.waldorfbooks.com/liv/natural_home/index.htm
- Rodale's Basic Natural Foods Cookbook

Dinner

- Everyday Food magazine January/February 2006

Please feel free to contact me at any time at waldorf_curric@yahoo.com.