

Cook with Me

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

March 07, 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.

"Cook with Me"

Cooking together is marvelous fun for your child. Please be sure that your child can follow multi-step directions (to save frustration for both of you) and understand basic safety rules (don't touch that, it's sharp) before you begin. Our article "If Your Child is Under 40 Months" states that, out of all of the elements of our preschool curriculum, cooking should be introduced *last*:

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Articles/under_40_mos.pdf

So please use common sense safety precautions!

The other element of this newsletter topic is my daughter's birthday. I chose to cook with her all week as a part of her birthday celebration – it's her favorite school activity. We have several birthday traditions which are referred to in this newsletter. We like to make our own candles (the Hannukah Candle Kit by Jordan Abramson is wonderful for this; it contains different colored small sheets of beeswax, wick, and glitter) and this year I will be introducing a birthday verse ("Birthday Anticipation") and a birthday story. Beyond the Rainbow Bridge contains a wonderful Birthday Story for a Kindergarten Child (page 146) as told by Nancy Foster, as well as a beautiful adoption birthday story (as told by Nancy Parsons).

Please share your own ideas for birthday celebrations and cooking with preschool children with the Group: waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.



One Room Schoolhouse:

Cooking has many connections with curriculum in the older grades. It is standard in a Waldorf school for the third grade class to plant wheat, or some other grain, and tend it, harvest it, grind it, and bake their own bread with their very own flour! This blends cooking with gardening and history.

Math is another connection to cooking. Our Introduction to Fractions unit for fourth grade (available for purchase on our website) uses cooking activities to introduce and reinforce basic skills:

<http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/fractions2nd.html>

In addition, the math curriculum of the third grade year focuses on the maths of practical life, cooking being one of them. Our Baking unit for third grade includes a study of Time, Temperature, Weight and Volume – all math skills put into a real-world context:

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Lower%20grades/03/baking_overview.html

Both units are available on our website for \$12.50.

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.

Tuesday – March 7

Visit Farmer's Market, Make Vegetable Soup

Circle Time:

"Bunny and the Garden"

A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 100

Storytelling:

read & cook The Ugly Vegetables

Dinner:

Poached Pears with Vanilla Cream Sauce

Everyday Food page 45

Wednesday – March 8

Visit Library

storytime @ 10:30 am

Topic: "Weather"

Circle Time:

"Wind" riddle

A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 106

"Bunny" riddle

A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 106

do along with "Nother Rabbit" from Hanky-Panky

Storytelling:

read & cook The Apple Cake

Dinner:

Spaghetti Carbonara

Everyday Food page 95

Thursday – March 9

Bake Bread, Churn Butter

Circle Time:

"Golden Petal Song"

see Verses page

Storytelling:

read & cook Sun Bread

at bedtime, "Birthday Anticipation"

A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 6

Dinner:

Salmon with Potato-Artichoke Hash

Everyday Food page 70

Friday – March 10

Handwork:

Leah make present for Natalie (pillow for doll), paint wrapping paper
Verse before painting see Verses page

Circle Time:

Natalie make birthday candles for her cake (4), set out birthday ring and crown
choose flowers for vases

Storytelling:

read & cook Mr. Badger's Birthday Pie

Dinner: Natalie's birthday dinner; open presents from Mama, Papa & Leah
play silks, Waldorf doll, crocheted doll hammock, doll pillow

tell birthday story Beyond the Rainbow Bridge page 146

Saturday – March 11

Field Trip:

Sears portrait studio, Natalie's birthday portrait (4 years old) 10 am

Circle Time:

"mystery gifts" from Harmony and Kelly, make thank-you cards

Storytelling:

read & cook Miss Poppy and the Honey Cake

Dinner:

Roasted Pineapple Everyday Food page 127

Sunday – March 12

Housekeeping:

clean house before party Natalie's birthday party 2:30 pm

Circle Time:

presents from family and friends at party

Storytelling:

read & cook Growing Vegetable Soup

Lunch:

Ham and Cheese Croissant Everyday Food page 28

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!

VERSES

Golden Petal Song

When I woke up this morning
The day had just begun
I saw a golden flower *(hold hands in front cupped – as if holding a flower)*
With petals like the sun

The flower was unfolding
And waking from the night *(unfold fingertips slowly, keeping palms together)*
Each petal's face was shining
In the morning light *(place fingers on cheeks with palms under chin)*

And this petal's name was [*child's name*]
(child stands as name is said--touch child on the head)

And now our golden flower
Has opened to the sun *(raise flower up and open)*
And we will shine and blossom
Till the day is done! *(spread arms and sway)*

Verse before painting

Now I take the brush so gently
In my hand with loving care
Watch the color flow so softly
On the paper clean and clear.

GROCERY LIST

Produce:

fresh herbs: Italian parsley, cilantro
2 lemons
3 yellow onions
red onion
4 firm bananas
radishes
red bell pepper
2 pink grapefruits
head Boston lettuce
1 ½ lb head green cabbage

Pantry:

pepper mill
wooden spoon
spices: peppercorns, aniseed, poppy seeds
8 oz can water chestnuts
16 oz canned tomatoes, crushed
golden raisins

Meat:

2 lb beef brisket

Dairy:

unsalted butter
milk
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Frozen:

16 oz peas

GROCERY LIST

Ugly Vegetable Soup:

from The Ugly Vegetables

chicken broth
5 dried scallops
4 oz piece of chicken
½ cup chopped sheau hwang gua
1 cup chopped sy gua
1 cup torng hau
1 cup shiann tsay
1 cup knong shin tsay

Granny's Apple Cake:

from The Apple Cake

milk
butter
eggs
raisins
3 tart apples

Sun Bread:

from Sun Bread

serve with butter, honey, or jam

GROCERY LIST

Miss Poppy's Very Own Blackberry and Apple Pie Recipe:

from Mr. Badger's Birthday Pie

self-rising flour
¼ cup lard
1 lb cooking apples
½ lb blackberries

Miss Poppy's Very Own Honey Cake Recipe:

from Miss Poppy and the Honey Cake

honey
2 fresh eggs (visit farm as alternate field trip for this day)

How to Make Vegetable Soup:

from Growing Vegetable Soup

1 large onion
2 carrots
1 medium potato
9 green beans
1/6 small head cabbage
1 stalk broccoli
3 medium tomatoes
1 small green pepper
1 zucchini
1 ear corn
4 bouillon cubes
big handful peas
fresh parsley
dried marjoram

MATERIALS LIST

Doll Pillow:

<http://www.crochetmore.com/dollpillow.htm>

crochet hook size H

3 ply sportweight cotton yarn

2 pieces of material approximately 6 inches x 5 1/2 inches in complimentary color

matching thread and sewing needle

unspun wool fleece for stuffing

Thank You Cards:

How to Write a Thank-You Note:

http://www.themorningnews.org/archives/how_to/how_to_write_a_thankyou_note.php

Awash with Color:

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=channel193647&contentGroup=MSL&site=living>

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

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

Activities

- A Child's Seasonal Treasury by Betty Jones
- Hanky-Panky: traditional handkerchief toys by Elizabeth Burns
- Beyond the Rainbow Bridge by Barbara J. Patterson
- The Hanukkah Candle Kit by Jordan Abramson

Stories

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- The Ugly Vegetables by Grace Lin
- The Apple Cake by Nienke van Hichtum
- Sun Bread by Elisa Kleven
- Mr. Badger's Birthday Pie by Elizabeth MacDonald
- Miss Poppy and the Honey Cake by Elizabeth MacDonald
- Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

Recipes

- Everyday Food magazine March 2006

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