

Sailing By

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

October 12, 2005

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.

Many families also use the weekly newsletter topics as a one week long mini-unit for homeschooling.

The following sections will give some suggested activities for this week's theme as well as methodology and ideas for preparation.

Opening Verse

The Waldorf method places a strong emphasis on establishing rhythms throughout the day to 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.

Stories

It Looked Like Spilt Milk
Autumn Leaves
Autumn
Leaf Man
Hawk, I'm Your Brother
The Other Way to Listen

by George Shaw
by Ken Robbins
by Jean Mulatier
by Lois Ehlert
by Byrd Baylor
by Byrd Baylor

Leaves Falling Down

The biggest sign of Autumn for many young children is the sight of leaves changing colors and falling. This is a magical time and lots of explorations with leaves should be encouraged. We offer the following suggestions; feel free to share your own ideas by emailing the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoo.com.

Play :

Catching Them As They Fall

Lie down on your back and watch the sky intently. When you see a leaf beginning to fall from the sky, wait until it reaches about the height of your head then scramble up and try to catch it before it hits the ground.

Jumping in a Pile of Leaves

A time-honored tradition, this one needs no explanation.

Nature Table:

Preserving Leaves

To preserve Autumn leaves, mix 1 part glycerin in 2 parts hot water, and let leaves soak in mixture for 3 to 4 days (let dry about 10 days). These make a lovely addition to the Nature table.

Handwork:

Pumpkin Carving

Leaves are wonderful to use for tracing! You can tape leaves to a pumpkin and trace the shape to the pumpkin with a pen or marker. Then, cut out the leaf shapes. Place as many as you can on the pumpkin, and you will have a beautiful and unusual lantern to light up at night.

Leaf Print Tablecloth

Find directions for this project at

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=tv3635&contentGroup=TV&site=living>

Leaf Shape Coasters

My grandmother has an unusual set of coasters made of carpeting. My cousins made them for her by tracing leaf shapes onto carpet remnants. The cut out leaves have lasted 30 years and appear to be indestructible! My daughter loves to throw them up into the air and pretend they are Autumn leaves falling down – a nice way to enjoy the season all year round. This project could easily be done with felt in Autumn colors (the wool felt assortment in Earth Tones from Magic Cabin would be good for this), but would not be as durable.

Clouds

Spread a blanket out on the grass and lie down on your backs. Watch the clouds sail slowly overhead. When you go back inside, read [It Looked Like Spilt Milk](#). Then

Art:

Shaving Cream Clouds

let the child create cloud shapes of her own out of a huge pile of non-mentholated shaving cream.

Hawks Soaring

One of the most striking things we noticed while lying on a blanket and looking at the sky was the hawks soaring in the air above us. They make flying look so effortless and fun – simply catch and updraft and follow it. Talk with the child about how it might feel to fly. Would you like to be a bird? Then read [Hawk, I'm Your Brother](#).

To learn to identify hawks while they are in flight, we recommend [Hawks From Every Angle](#) by Jerry Liguori.

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!

OTHER IDEAS

Cooking

Because many children and families have restricted diets such as vegan or vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher, etc. we generally do not suggest specific cooking activities for the week's theme. However, cooking is always a wonderful activity for a child to participate in. Bearing in mind any 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!

Independent Play

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!

Helping

Helping around the home is an essential part of any Waldorf preschool 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.

PLANNER

Activities: highlight the activities you would like to do

Opening Verse

Stories

- It Looked Like Spilt Milk by George Shaw
- Autumn Leaves by Ken Robbins
- Autumn by Jean Mulatier
- Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert
- Hawk, I'm Your Brother by Byrd Baylor
- The Other Way to Listen by Byrd Baylor

Leaves Falling Down

Play

- catching them as they fall
- jumping in a pile of leaves

Nature Table: Preserving Leaves

Handwork

- Pumpkin Carving
- Leaf Print Tablecloth
- Leaf Shape Coasters

Clouds

Art: Shaving Cream Clouds

Hawks Soaring

- Hawks From Every Angle: how to identify raptors in flight by Jerry Liguori

Cooking

Independent Play

Helping

Closing Verse

PLANNER

Book List: list the books you will be reading

Materials: list all materials required for your chosen activities