

Woodcutter Circle

Here is my trunk, I'm a tall, tall tree

In the Springtime the blossoms bloom on me
They open, they open

Here is my trunk, I'm a tall, tall tree
In the Summer the breezes blow through me
I bend, I bend

Here is my trunk, I'm a tall, tall tree
In the Autumn the apples ripen on me
They drop, they drop

Here is my trunk, I'm a tall, tall tree
In the Winter the snow falls down on me
It glistens, it glistens
Brrrrr!

Here is the woodcutter, sturdy and strong;
With axe on his shoulder he strides along.

Woodcutter's footsteps are strong and are bold,
Logs he will cut in the winter wood cold.
Chip, chop, chip, chop,
Collect some wood for the winter cold.
Chip, chop, chip, chop,
Collect all the wood that the basket will hold.

As the woodcutter walks along he passes a... hedgehog.

Hedgehog, hedgehog, cute and small,
Curls up like a prickly ball.
Hides beneath the old wood pile,
Peeking out, he makes me smile.

*Touch toes, then rise up slowly, sliding fingers
along sides, bringing them up until your arms
are stretched out fully and high above your head
Bring hands down to shoulder height
Open and close hands slowly like blossoms*

*Repeat movement
Wave hands back and forth above head
Bend your body side to side*

*Repeat movement
Bring hands down to shoulder height, make fists
Open hands downward quickly like falling apples*

*Repeat movement
Bring hands down to shoulder height
Sing quietly, wiggle fingers gently
Shiver*

Stand tall, pretend to shoulder an axe

March around the circle

Stand still, stamp feet

Stamp feet

*Lying on the back curled up, draw the knees
toward the tummy. At the same time, lift the
head, neck and upper torso also off the floor,
drawing them toward the knees as well. It is
ideal to do this without grasping onto the knees.
That may be too difficult at first, so allow holding
on as needed. The goal is to be able to hold this
position, without rolling over to either side, for up
to 30 seconds. Start with whatever the child can
manage, gradually extending the time by a count
or two.*

*This verse can also be done with a finger
puppet.*

**As the woodcutter walks along he passes a...
rabbit.**

Crouch on hands and feet, elbows and knees slightly flexed. Hands will be placed on the floor, basically parallel with the shoulders. Feet will be behind, slightly separated (one a bit further forward than the other). Tracks in the snow of the four feet would look a bit like a "Y," the two back feet prints making the stem, the hands the open top. To move forward, the arms advance together, followed by the two feet. Keep repeating these "hops."

**As the woodcutter walks along he passes a...
squirrel.**

Whisky, frisky, hippety hop,
Up he goes to the treetop.
Whirly, twirly, round and round,
Down he scampers to the ground.
Furly, curly, what a tail,
Tall as a feather, broad as a sail.

Roll hands up and clap at top

*Roll hands down to lap
Bend right arm in a crescent, look at it
Brush fingers of left hand up forearm and across width of right hand
Cup hands, look inside
Clap two times, open hands*

Where's his supper? In the shell.
Snap, crack, out it fell.

**As the woodcutter walks along he passes a...
bear.**

Bear has a snout
It pokes OUT!
Four paws
They have CLAWS!
Burrowing deep
Bear goes to sleep

*Hunkered down on knees
Head suddenly appearing*

*Hands suddenly appear
Circling round and round on the floor
Curl up as small as possible*

**As the woodcutter walks along he passes a...
wee elf.**

Under the toadstool, there sat a wee elf;
He rocked to and fro and he sang to himself.

Rock body back and forth

Refrain
A snippety-snappety,
Hi-diddle-dee!
A clickety-clackety,
One, two three!

Clap hands on each count

He cut and he basted, this wee little elf,
Because he was making a coat for himself.

Hold up imaginary coat

Repeat refrain

The little elf rocked and sang all the night;
He stitched and he sewed till the morning light.

Rock back and forth and pretend to sew

Repeat refrain

He borrowed some green from the grass on the ground,
From a nut on the tree he borrowed some brown.

*Cup hands
Pointer finger and thumb together*

Repeat refrain

His coat was all done and he scampered away,
Singing his song that was happy and gay.

Motion of fingers running

Repeat refrain

**As the woodcutter walks along he passes a...
woodpecker.**

Pass out rhythm sticks, one pair per child.

Woodpecker, woodpecker knockin' on a tree
Peck out a rhythm and we'll echo you.
Woodpecker, woodpecker knockin' on a tree
Peck out a rhythm and we'll play it too.

Woodpecker he say xxx / xxx / xxx / xxx
All together we play xxx / xxx / xxx / xxx

*Create rhythm as desired
Children imitate rhythm using their sticks*

Woodpecker he say xxx x / xxx x / xxx x / xxx x
All together we play xxx x / xxx x / xxx x / xxx x

*Create rhythm as desired
Children imitate rhythm using their sticks*

Woodpecker, woodpecker knockin' on a tree
Peck out a rhythm and we'll echo you.
Woodpecker, woodpecker knockin' on a tree
Peck out a rhythm and we'll play it too.

Collect rhythm sticks in basket

As he comes to the trees he starts his work.

In all I say, in all I do,
May strength and kindness,
Shine right through.

Say reverently

The woodchopper chops down an old oak tree;
Here are the chips — one, two, and three.
An old lady comes who is looking for sticks;
She picks up the chips — four, five, and six.

*Make chopping motion with edge of left hand
Count three fingers*

Finish counting by holding up six fingers

Chip chop, chip chop,
The woodman with his chopper chops,
Chip chop, chip chop,
Stout and strong and proper chops.

Stand up and act out vigorous chopping

On beeches, oak and larches too
His hatchet brightly rings,
And while he chops so cheerily
So cheerily he sings.

We are able, we are strong
We work well as we sing this song:
Work-a-day, work-a-day, one and all,
When work is done, we stand tall,
Work-a-day, work-a-day one and all,
When work is done, we stand tall.

Pretend to be chopping trees while singing

Here is the woodcutter, sturdy and strong,
With an axe on his shoulder he strides along.
He chops the wood with a swing of his arm
Chop chop chop!
Branches fallen in winter storm
Chop chop chop!
And brings it home for the fire side warm
Tramp tramp tramp!

Stand up tall and shoulder axe

Swing arm

March around the circle

**As he comes to his home, his children run to greet
him. They build a woodpile together.**

We push the saw, we pull the saw,
 we push the saw, we pull the saw,
For cutting winter wood.
We push the saw, we pull the saw,
 we push the saw, we pull the saw,
To work together is good!

*Partners face each other, sitting on the floor
with legs extended, hands joined, rocking back
and forth in a see-saw motion, with all the
benefits that come from gentle, rhythmic
movement.*

We push the saw, we pull the saw,
 we push the saw, we pull the saw,
For cutting winter wood.
We push the saw, we pull the saw,
 we push the saw, we pull the saw,
To work together is good!

First they stack the big logs.

*Sit, extend legs fully and cross and uncross
them as an X several times.*

Then they stack the little logs.

*Extend arms fully and cross and uncross them
as an X several times.*

And then they stack the tiny sticks.

*Extend pointer fingers fully and cross and
uncross them as an X several times.*

The woodcutter and his children go into their cozy cottage and sit by the fireplace.

**They light a match
and watch the flames go up.
They rub their hands to get warm and snuggle up
by the bright crackling wood fire.**

*Gesture of lighting a match
Hands side by side moving like flickering flames
Rub hands together briskly, cross and rub arms
Lie down and curl up on the floor*

Peace bless this house,
Peace bless this house,
Love, Hope, Faith, and
Peace.

Cover children with silks and sing

Peace bless this house,
Peace bless this house,
Love, Hope, Faith, and
Peace.

Teaching Notes:

We did this in February after Valentine's Day. After singing "Peace Bless This House" twice, I read them a poem while they were still resting. I have listed several favorite selections from And Then Take Hands by Molly von Heider, but you can choose anything suitable which you like.

"Timber"	anon.	page 32
"Woodfires"	anon.	page 31
"What Do We Plant?"	Henry Abbey	page 31

Verse & Movement Credits:

Around the World with Finger Puppet Animals by Suzanne Down (finger puppet pattern p.97)
"Hedgehog," p.36

The Breathing Circle: Learning through the Movement of the Natural Breath by Nell Smyth
"Bear Has a Snout," p.93; "We Push the Saw, We Pull the Saw," p.76

A Child's Seasonal Treasury compiled and written by Betty Jones
"The Squirrel," p.49

Let Us Form a Ring: An Acorn Hill Anthology by Nancy Foster
"Winter Circle Play" first and second verses, p.18
"Here is the woodcutter, sturdy and strong"
"Woodcutter's footsteps are strong and are bold / Logs he will cut in the winter wood cold"

Movement for the Young Child by Estelle Bryer
"In All I Say," p.92

Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures vol 2 by Nancy Blanning & Laurie Clark
"Hedgehog," p.15; "Rabbit," p.14

Rhymes for Fingers and Flannel Boards by Louise Binder Scott and J.J. Thompson
"The Elf's Coat," p.99, "The Woodchopper," p.52

Rhythms on Parade CD by Hap Palmer
"Woodpecker," track 3

Seven Times the Sun by Shea Darian (and CD)
"Work-a-day," p.91, track 22; "Peace Bless this House," p.191, track 49

The Singing Year book and CD set by Candy Verney
"Here is the woodcutter, sturdy and strong," p.97

Winter by Wynstones Press
"Chip chop, chip chop / The woodman with his chopper chops," p.61

"I'm a Tall, Tall Tree" tune can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKNDu_69jlg

And a very special thank you to Miss Erin Winkles from the Waldorf School of St. Louis for sharing the "Woodpile" and "Fireplace" movement suggestions.

Story Credits:

Inspired by "Winter Circle Play" in Let Us Form a Ring: An Acorn Hill Anthology by Nancy Foster, pp. 18-20. Book and companion two-CD set are available at [WaldorfBooks.com](http://www.waldorfbooks.com).

http://www.waldorfbooks.com/item_1582.htm

http://www.waldorfbooks.com/item_3031.htm