

Paint with an emphasis on *movement*. Notice whether the child starts from the center and moves left or right, up or down, or diagonally. Try painting *movement* yourself. Let the color speak to you. How does it want to move? What feeling is it giving to you?

Paint with alternating large and small areas of each color (primary colors only). For example, a painting with a large area of yellow and a small area each of blue and red. Make a series where each color gets its chance to loom large. How does each painting feel different?

It is important to let the colors change places. Paint red in the center with yellow all around it. Next time, paint yellow in the center. These exercises have a very productive effect; they require a good deal of flexibility from the child's soul.

Paint accompanied by songs or poems.

Choose a painting done previously and have your child make up a story which is told in the painting. Allow the characters and events to arise from the soul mood of the painting.

Try standing while painting, to give your arm greater freedom of movement.

Practice painting with and without boundaries. Lie two colors next to each other – one time with a sharp division between them, then next time with a blurred line where the two colors meet and blend. It becomes more exciting when part of the work is restricted and the other colors are painted in an unrestricted way. Each time a new effect arises from the color circle. The children discover how important the restricted areas are in relation to the colors flowing into each other, the fixed against the fluid, the waking element as opposed to the sleeping. Each color will acquire its own form and gesture, and together they continue to form a whole.

Tell a story and have your children (first grade and older only) paint it. Have them lie with their backs to one another, so that each painting is individual. Later, examine the two paintings and try to learn more about each child from them. The example given in the book is: "Over there is the coquettish lilac and a cheeky little red is on its neck (close to it or on the skin). The whole stands on a humble blue." Imagine how differently each child would paint an exercise like that! Let the children have their own intimate conversations with each color.

Some notes for the teacher:

The emphasis on introductory painting exercises is

- the notion of color and subsequent exercises
- creating gesture and movement

The main thing is to clearly indicate the task at hand and then be quiet so that the children can hear the colors speak to them and enter completely into the color world. Try to avoid 15 minutes of talking and 5 minutes of painting.

It is not necessary at this time to study art history or schools of art. The idea here is to let your children feel the world of color and to enter into independent... uninterrupted... rich and rewarding conversations with it.

Parent Exercise:

Paint a large scale color circle. Try to let as many colors as possible come about above and beyond the tertiary set; create a large variety of mixed colors. Now, while watching a small section of this color circle, try to find out, to experience, which mood this color expresses. Write down the color mood on the outside of the color circle. Eventually you will have an edge full of words. Sometimes certain soul qualities lie very closely together. Green can be sly, calming, dull, depending on its place in relation to the yellow and blue. In this exercise we are not concerned with pinning down the colors onto a certain mood in a fixed and dogmatic way, but rather to exercise one's own mobility of soul – to be able to put these into words, to move along in the color circle. Perhaps the following day different words will surface. Being involved is most important and always forms the basis of the tasks. The color circle is like a living thing, in which colors are born and change, a feeding ground for the development of the young child's soul.

Day One

- Take your watercolor paper and paints outside for your Nature walk today. Try to paint what you see but also how you feel. Enjoy the day. Materials you want on hand are jars to hold the paints and clear water, brushes, painting boards and masking tape (to hold your paper firmly), and paper towels to dry the brushes. Use the plain sponges to absorb any excess water on your watercolor paper.
- After your wonderful morning of painting outside, tell your child the story "The Crow and the Pitcher."

Day Two

- Ask your child to retell the story "The Crow and the Pitcher" in her own words. Choose several sentences to add to the main lesson book. In the Second Grade section of From Nature Stories to Natural Science, Donna Simmons talks about what the expectations should be for writing at this age. If at this point in the unit, your child is really objecting to all this writing, reread pages 62-63 of what Donna wrote to see if you find it helpful. As the teacher, it is ultimately *your call* on how much writing you require in the main lesson book.
- For the illustration, the large pitcher could dominate the center of the page (as shown on page 128 of The Fables of Aesop) and you could either have the crow dropping in a pebble from his beak, or show the crow sitting on the edge of the pitcher, drinking (as shown on page 130). One of the things I love about this anthology is that it gives you so many good ideas for illustration of the story.

Main Lesson Book Composition

The *most important thing* is that your child practice retelling the stories learned. This can be orally OR dramatically OR in written form. For continued practice with developing language or composition skills, one or two sentences per daily lesson are usually sufficient. Most students between the ages of 7 and 9 can write a simple sentence in 10 to 20 minutes and also add some color or embellishment to the page. The accompanying illustration usually takes about 30 to 40 minutes if done with care. The sentence can be written in cursive writing using a stick crayon or thick color pencil (such as Lyra). It could also be written with a regular graphite pencil.

After reviewing the story presented on the previous day, the home teacher helps the child to choose an appropriate scenario from the story to illustrate and summarize with a sentence or two. Several pages can be created from one story, each telling a different scene. Alternating writing days with dramatization days is usually helpful for the child.

If your child struggles with composition, try to ask questions that will help her come up with her own ideas instead of giving her a sentence (composed by you) to write. For example, "What happened when the crow couldn't reach the water in the pitcher?" might elicit the verbal response "The crow was really thirsty but he couldn't reach the water to drink it because his beak was too short. So he dropped some rocks into the jar to make the water rise higher and then he could drink it." Now the sentences used for today's lesson came from her and not from you. As the teacher, you need to help Shaylee either expand her response or shorten it, based on what you feel she can appropriately write in a day. You can also encourage her to make the vocabulary richer, or simplify it – again based on what is appropriate for her age and abilities. Write the chosen sentence(s) for today's writing lesson on your chalkboard, if you have one, or on a drawing pad or separate sheet of paper *one word at a time* and allow her to copy it. Give her plenty of time. Since she is doing lower and uppercase letters now (only uppercase letters are taught in first grade) you may need to copy the words for her one letter at a time in some instances. It is important to model careful writing. Children imitate all of your habits, good and bad! Once she is quite proficient in writing and spelling you can simply dictate the sentence. If you are doing spelling words (I don't know if you're doing this) based on the story, you can write the sentence but leave some spaces blank, saying, "You know how to spell ___ so I will leave a blank there when I write the sentence and you can then write it from memory."

Day Three

- Today it might be really fun to actually raise the level of water in a jar by dropping in small stones. See how long it takes! You can also, if you have a lot of energy, try to overflow your bathtub by adding rocks to it. I enjoy the story from Farmer Boy by Laura Ingalls Wilder, when Almanzo talks about filling two equal sized glasses, one with milk and one with popped popcorn. One piece at a time, you can add the popcorn to the milk and it will not overflow. You can't do this with any other liquid, according to him. Maybe you can try it and see what you find out. If you have other children, they would love to participate in this.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Day One

- For your art time today, you'll want to do a Nature day observing insects. You can either sit outside and watch the ants running around or, if they've already gone underground, you can visit a Nature center or pet shop to paint some insects. Many pet shops sell ant farms. You can also find crickets, since they are used as food for larger animals. You don't have to paint only those insects, of course; enjoy walking around and seeing what you find. Since these animals are so small, take your drawing supplies and draw what you see, then wash a color of paint over the more detailed drawing to give it some life. Try to choose a paint color which evokes the *mood* of the animal (see page 64 from [Painting in Waldorf Education](#)).
- When you return home, tell the story of "The Ant and the Grasshopper."

Day Two

- First, have your child retell the story from yesterday and choose her sentences to write and copy into the main lesson book. Then read the book [The Ant and the Grasshopper](#) by Amy Lowry Poole and examine the illustrations. See if she is inspired by the illustrations to try some new things. For example, you might want to use handmade paper instead of watercolor paper for your main lesson book illustration (use a separate piece of paper and then paste it into the book). Make your own handmade paper with a kit or by following these simple instructions: <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/makingpaper.html>
- Another technique that you might want to try (which gets away from watercolor painting – but would be fun) is to make an arc of dark construction paper and sketch the outline around the ants with chalk – which I believe is how Amy Lowry Poole made the cover illustration. Instead of trying to draw tiny little ants, this is an easier way to create them. Then add this "underground" scene to the main lesson book and use your painting of the grasshopper on the textured paper above it to show how he is relaxing while they are busily running around.

Day Three

- For her Cumulative Project, you will be asking your child to read a story and decide what she thinks the moral of the tale is. It is only fair to help her practice this skill in advance – **never** ask a child to do a task for assessment purposes which she has never had a chance to practice before. Reread the book [The Ant and the Grasshopper](#) and ask her to state the moral. Add this to the main lesson book on a separate page if you wish.
- This story would make a fun puppet show. Create a simple set of characters by drawing a large grasshopper and a large ant and painting them, then attaching them to sticks. Sew a doorway puppet theater (find directions here: <http://howtouniverse.com/ACH/dwaystage.html>) and put on a play for family members or friends. At the end of the play, have your child step forward and state the moral.
- If you want, you can purchase an ant farm for the schoolroom so that your child can enjoy watching the ants in their industry.

Fables

Week Four: Clay and Beeswax Modeling

Fables studied this week:

The Serpent & the File The Fables of Aesop page 67
"It is useless attacking the insensible."

The Frog & the Ox The Fables of Aesop page 57
"Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction."

Materials:

clay & clay tools
modeling beeswax

The Serpent & the File

Background

As with watercolor painting, there are a lot of basic skill-building exercises which you can do with your child (and any younger children) to explore modeling in clay. Use your own judgment as to how many of these activities (between pages 13 and 63) you want to add to the unit, or continue them into the afternoon in your Heart time so that she can have more exposure to the materials.

Some suggestions:

- Let your children examine their hands, from which gesture and movement arise.

Complete the exercises from
In Touch with Our Hands page 14

Be sure you have a bright light behind you so as to cast a shadow on the wall.

Complete the exercises from
Hand Movements in Space and Material page 22

Using clay.

- Complete the following exercises from the First series using modeling beeswax:

Golden Ball	page 49
Acorn	page 52
Leaf	page 52
Flower Petals	page 53
Star	page 54
Guardian Angel	page 54
House of Light	page 54
Basic Exercise	page 55
Cradled Forms	page 55
Harmony Exercise	page 55

Go outside and take your modeling beeswax instead of your nature journal – model something which you see in nature instead of sketching it.

- Complete the following exercises from the Second series using clay:

Sheltering Forms	page 61
Grouping Hand-Space Figures	page 62
Bowl: Concave	page 62
Bowl of Friendly Forms: Convex into Concave	page 62
Pebbles	page 62
Mirror Images	page 62

Independent Work

The following activities from Learning About the World through Modeling make very good independent work:

Alphabet and Numbers	page 54
Sand Table (you're never too old for this!)	page 56
Snow Sculpture (in the winter)	page 63

Continue to have the children take their nature journals out for daily nature walks and write a little in them, sketch or paint. Also encourage them to bring natural items home which can form the basis of modeling exercises.

One nice activity might be to gather a selection of real acorns and use them to inspire an acorn modeled out of clay. Encourage them to use household items as texture tools to make the model more realistic.

Day One

- For your Art time this morning, take your clay (after having done some basic warm-up exercises) to the pet store and model some snakes! Observe their behavior. Maybe you can go to a nature center and see a program about snakes or do some research – there are lots of nonfiction books for kids from the library – to help you learn more about them. This is especially important if your child thinks snakes are creepy.
- When you come home, tell the story of “The Serpent & the File.”

Day Two

- Time to write the story and add it to your main lesson book.
- Illustration comes next. Having practiced with using clay to model snake shapes yesterday, your child should have a good idea how to represent that form on paper. The most important thing is the curved form of the snake (again, think about making a connection to form drawing here) and its smooth skin, as opposed to the rough texture of the file. You can use watercolor paints for the smooth snake and a different medium for the file... perhaps you can use beeswax crayons (which allow you to do a series of small dots) for the texture on the file. Feel free to do a mixed media piece, using the most positive attributes of each. This is a really important way for your child to synthesize what she has learned about each art material and to put her experience into practice. By this point in the unit (towards the end) she should be able to make fairly confident art decisions.

Day Three

- A dramatic sculpture of this fable would be an excellent project for day three. Your child should determine what pose she wants each “character” to appear in, make a flat base from a piece of clay, and then make each figure separately. You can even take photographs of the sculpture and add them to your main lesson book.
- I think you should try to find a selection of rasps or files from a hardware store so she can really feel how hard and gritty they are. It is so much fun to add textures to clay – use a variety of household materials to experiment with a test piece of clay. See what different textures you can create. Fingers are a tool, too, so use them to push and pull the clay. Poke and scratch the surface of the clay with different items to get the look you want – snake scales, file bumps, etc. For “The Serpent & the File” I’d like you to use clay exclusively; set aside the modeling beeswax for the next story. Both characters in the story are a simple gray, and the focus should be on their opposing shape and hardness. The snake is curvy and malleable. The file is straight and stiff and very firm. Using the same simple color for both allows you to focus on this contrast. Just as with the drawing and sketching components, you should try to work side by side with your child to give her confidence; however, do **not** take your piece to its conclusion. If you do this she will possibly just try to imitate your work. Brainstorm together, demonstrate the process of trial and error, but just do enough to get her started and then let her complete the sculpture on her own.

The Frog & the Ox

Day One

- In contrast to the long lean shapes of the last story, you'll be doing short and fat this time. So take your modeling beeswax and visit a farm. Focus on the stature of the animal and how it moves. Use color to represent either the actual color of the animal or its temperament
- Tell the story "The Frog & the Ox."

Day Two

- Add the story "The Frog & the Ox" to your main lesson book. You may want to act this one out as well. You and your child can work together, with one person wearing a grey or brown silk to be the ox and the other working behind the scene using a small green balloon to represent the frog. The frog can puff up several times, bragging to his friends each time, until finally he explodes! Add the illustrations to your story. I think in this case it is easier to model the frog and ox figures before drawing them, since they are unusual shapes. Give her plenty of time to do the modeling and then add her drawn illustration to the main lesson book. Remember, again, that mixed media is an option.

Day Three

- Day Three will probably be the actual main lesson book illustration since the composition piece, acting out the story, and modeling the figures out of beeswax will probably take your entire main lesson block time. However, if you have extra time on this day, consider using pages 57-59 of [Learning About the World through Modeling](#) to give you ideas for recreating other fables you have learned in this unit with modeling beeswax.

