

Piñata Party

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

February 13, 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.

"Piñata Party"

Valentine's Day makes a wonderful, and unusual, occasion for a pinata party. Simply fill a heart-shaped pinata with candies and valentines. When the contents come tumbling out, have fun finding and distributing the valentines to your guests. Then enjoy the candy! We are making and taking a pinata to storytime at the library, as a part of their Valentine's Day party.

You can make very simple but beautiful party decorations with your children. Consider the valentine decorations in All Year Round (page 37) or make crayon hearts:
<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=channel1133&contentGroup=MSL&site=living>

Share some of your own party ideas with the Group:
waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com



One Room Schoolhouse:

Older children love to make gifts for the little ones. Here are some suggestions of Valentine's Day presents.

- ❖ hooded bath towels for children, toddlers and infants:
For large children, use a bath sheet and half of hand towel. For toddlers and infants use a regular towel, not too thick, and a washcloth. *Note: Thick towels get very difficult to sew.* Pleat the middle of one side of the towel. I usually do a center box pleat with a pleat on each side. Stitch over pleats to hold them. Fold washcloth or half of hand towel in half. Stitch across one end (the cut end of the hand towel. Stitch the edges of the seam down using a zigzag stitch. Center washcloth or half hand towel over the pleats and stitch across. Turn towel and stitch back on the inside of the towel, catching the top of the pleats. I usually stitch twice over the washcloth or half hand towel both on the outside and inside. The ends of the towels and the face edge of the hood can be trimmed with lace or a wide bias binding.

For a special touch, embellish with heart-shaped applique; simply trace a cookie cutter onto a red or pink print fabric and cut out, then sew to the finished towel. Make sure you wash the dark fabric thoroughly first, to make sure it will not run!

- ❖ felt heart necklace:
from [All Year Round](#), page 37
- ❖ knitted heart sachet:
<http://www.knitting-and.com/knitting/patterns/misc/heartsachet.htm>
- ❖ Valentine heart pops:
<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=recipe2309&contentGroup=MSL&site=living>
- ❖ Valentine's day fairy:
Have your child make a Valentine's day fairy of her own design. This makes a wonderful gift or can be used as a decoration year after year.

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.

Thursday – February 16

Bake Bread:

Pita Bread

Rodale's page 382

Circle Time:

Radiant Sun

A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 74

use mini play silks set from Fairy Cove to be all the different colored flowers

<http://www.fairycove.com/store/WsDefault.asp?One=37>

Storytelling:

read The Story of the Root Children

Snack:

Pea Guacamole

Everyday Food page 26

serve with pita bread, sliced radishes and carrot sticks

Friday – February 17

Handwork:

make root children for Nature table

The Nature Corner Early Spring
pp.17-23

Circle Time

beeswax modelling

verse from A Child's Seasonal Treasury page 29

Storytelling:

"The Daffodil"

Let's Dance and Sing page 2

Dinner:

Cornmeal-Crusted Tilapia with Salsa

Everyday Food page 141

Spicy Black Beans

Everyday Food page 140

Saturday – February 18

Field Trip:

Brookside Gardens

<http://www.mc-mncppc.org/parks/brookside/>

Circle Time:

Storytelling:

repeat "The Daffodil"

Let's Dance and Sing page 2

Dinner:

Lime Squares with Pistachio Graham-Cracker Crust

Everyday Food page 70

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:

banana
fresh strawberries
1b baby spinach
red onion
fresh herbs: chives, cilantro
avocado
radishes
carrot sticks
2/3 cup shelled pistachios
lime (for zesting, preferably organic)

Pantry:

8 oz can crushed pineapple
4 small packages red Jell-o (same flavor)
pastry bag
white balsamic vinegar
tomato salsa
2 14.5 oz cans black beans
plain graham crackers
all purpose flour
14 oz can sweetened condensed milk
parchment paper

Meats:

turkey bacon
4 tilapia fillets, 6 to 8 oz each

Dairy:

eggs
yogurt
whipping cream
unsalted butter

Bakery:

seven grain sandwich bread

Deli:

1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese

MATERIALS LIST

Heart-Shaped Pinata:

heart-shaped balloon
newspaper, torn into strips
paper mache

- recipe one: $\frac{3}{4}$ white glue to $\frac{1}{4}$ water
- recipe two: 1 part flour to 5 parts water
- recipe three: 1 part flour to 1 part water
- recipe four: liquid starch
- optional: salt

paper clip and a piece of string
candy and valentines for filling pinata

how to paper mache: http://www.dltk-kids.com/type/how_to_paper_mache.htm

to decorate your pinata, use white computer paper for the final layer then paint as desired

Valentine Decorations:

from All Year Round, page 37

valentine pattern (page 255)
tracing paper
red card stock
matching red thread and a sewing needle
paper clips, sharp craft scissors, and a darning needle

Crayon Hearts:

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=channel1133&contentGroup=MSL&site=living>

waxed paper
handheld pencil sharpener and stick crayons OR a grater and block crayons
kraft paper
iron
silk thread

MATERIALS LIST

Hooded Bath Towels:

for a large child you will need a bath sheet and a hand towel
for infants and toddlers use a standard bath towel and a washcloth

Note: white towels work best for this project; they do not have to be expensive
(thick towels get very difficult to sew)

basic sewing supplies
lace or wide bias tape for edges
red or pink print fabric for applique and matching thread (WASH FABRIC first until it
does not run!!)
cookie cutters or other heart shaped templates
washable fabric marking pen

Felt Heart Necklace (or garland):

from All Year Round, page 37

red wool felt
matching red embroidery floss and an embroidery needle
unspun wool fleece or cotton for stuffing
tracing paper and a pencil

Knitted Heart Sachet:

<http://www.knitting-and.com/knitting/patterns/misc/heartsachet.htm>

any cotton or wool red yarn and the appropriate size needles
cable stitch holder
small stitch holder
unspun wool fleece or cotton for stuffing
potpourri, dried herbs and flowers, or other sachet filling, as desired
narrow red satin ribbon for hanging
red rosebud or other decoration, lace scraps for trimming

MATERIALS LIST

Crocheted Root-Child:

from The Nature Corner, page 22

brown knitting wool
unspun wool fleece, preferably brown
brown or yellow mohair wool
a piece of thick knitted cotton, 1 ½ inches square
crochet hook
pencil

Sewn Root-Child

from The Nature Corner, page 22

a piece of soft thin knitted cotton, 4 inches square
a piece of skin colored thicker knitted cotton, 2 ¼ inches wide and 2 inches long,
plus a scrap for the hands
a pipe cleaner
a piece of dark brown materials, 7 inches square
wool for the hair
unspun wool fleece for stuffing
dry rice for weighting
basic sewing supplies
tracing paper and a pencil
knitting or embroidery weight wool, cotton, or silk for the hair
embroidery needle

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

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

Activities

- All Year Round by Ann Druitt, et al.
- A Child's Seasonal Treasury by Betty Jones
- The Nature Corner by M v Leeuwen & J Moeskops
- Let's Dance and Sing: story games for children arranged by Kundry Willwerth

Stories

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- Hooray, a Pinata! by Elisa Kleven
- The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear by Don Wood
- The Story of the Root Children by Sibylle Von Olfers

Recipes

- Everyday Food magazine January/February 2006
- Cooking Art by MaryAnn F. Kohl
- Rodale's Basic Natural Foods Cookbook by Charles Gerras

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