

Happy Birthday to You!

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

January 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.

"Happy Birthday To You!"

Birthdays are a wonderful occasion for celebrating your child. Find birthday suggestions in Festivals Family and Food, A Child's Seasonal Treasury, Beyond the Rainbow Bridge, and Waldorf Education: A Family Guide.

Beautiful birthday rings, candles, and ornaments may be purchased online at www.novanatural.com.



One Room Schoolhouse:

Older children can make many birthday presents. Try having them make a list now of all the people they'd like to give gifts to this year, then brainstorm ideas for presents. Add these birthdays and the gift suggestions to your new 2006 calendar so that they won't be forgotten, and make a plan to work on a few gifts at a time.

Birthdays can be a challenging time as we work to celebrate our children in a way which is loving but not overly materialistic. Please share your suggestions for appropriate birthday gifts and celebrations for different ages with the Group at waldorfcurriculum@yahoogroups.com.

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. Please feel free to share your own suggestions by writing to the Group at waldorfcriculum@yahoogroups.com.

Saturday – January 7

Visit Nature Center:

BCNES,
visit gift shop -- look for puppets, books or craft projects to follow up

read Box Turtle at Silver Pond Lane (or learn about another animal she was interested in)

Circle Time

Storytelling:

tell story about King Winter and Mrs. Thaw, read Children of the Forest

Dinner:

make cookies with Papa (jar mixes from Aunt Kate)

Sunday – January 8

Housekeeping:

sweep and dust indoors
clean leaves off of front steps
put clean sheets on the beds, clean towels in the bathrooms

Circle Time

Storytelling:

read Frederick

Dinner:

Crispy Apricot Pork Chops Everyday Food page 89

Monday – January 9

Watercolor Painting

painting verse from A Child's Seasonal Treasury
paint with yellow and green

Circle Time

Storytelling

tell story about Yellow and Green using this morning's painting

Dinner:

Piccioni Ripieni (Stuffed Pigeons) Italy: The Beautiful Cookbook
page 169

Tuesday – January 10

Visit Farmer's Market, Make Vegetable Soup:
Eight Vegetable Soup with Millet Rodale's page 120

Circle Time:
plant seeds in pots, make markers

Storytelling:
read The Surprise Garden

Dinner:
Manhattan Fish Chowder Everyday Food page 138

Wednesday – January 11

Visit Library, choose new books Storytime @ 10:30 am

Circle Time:
make beeswax candle for Rebecca's birthday cake, get out the birthday crown,
set up birthday ring, pick flowers for vases

Storytelling:
read The Carrot Seed, act out rhyme
Here's a little seed in the dark, dark ground. (*have child crouch down*)
Out comes the warm sun, yellow and round. (*wave a yellow silk scarf over him*)
Down comes the rain, wet and slow. (*gently pitter pat his head with your fingers*)
Up comes the little seed, grow, grow, grow! (*the child grows up tall and strong*)

Dinner:
Ginger Berry Compote with Angel Food Cake
Everyday Food page 128

Thursday – January 12

Bake Bread, Churn Butter
Cracked Wheat Bread from "Make Homemade Breads Your Specialty" article
Better Homes & Gardens, October 1974

Circle Time:
"Bread is a lovely thing to eat" Spindrift page 33

Storytelling:
read The Little Red Hen

Dinner:
Chicken with Fennel and Tomato Everyday Food page 84

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:

fresh herbs: sage, rosemary
4 onions
1 lb carrots
3 stalks celery with leaves
3 large baking potatoes
2 small zucchini
1/2 lb fresh string beans
2 medium tomatoes
1 lb plum tomatoes
2 fennel bulbs
6-8 leaves Swiss chard or spinach
lemon

Pantry:

dry white wine
cracked wheat cereal
all purpose flour
dried herbs: bay leaves, basil
28 oz can plum tomatoes in juice
2 8 oz bottles clam juice

Meats:

4 bone-in pork loin chops about 8 oz each
bacon
1 lb skinless tilapia fillets
4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves about 8 oz each

Dairy:

eggs

Bakery:

multigrain sandwich bread
angel food cake (or have mom bring one to Rebecca's birthday on the 11th)

Frozen:

4 Cornish game hens
1 lb mixed berries

MATERIALS LIST

Plant Seeds:

three packs of different type seeds, transferred from wrapping to plain envelopes

three craft sticks, three different colors of acrylic paint

potting soil

watering can, water

tray for pots to sit on in front of window

Beewax Candles:

beeswax candle kit from Jo-Ann Fabrics or supplies from [The Hanukkah Candle Kit](#)

RESOURCE GUIDE

Waldorf Verses for Circle Time and Play

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

Activities

- Box Turtle at Silver Pond Lane by Susan Korman
- A Child's Seasonal Treasury by Betty Jones
- The Hanukkah Candle Kit by Jordan Abramson
- Spindrift: Poems, songs, and stories
published by Wynstone Press
http://www.waldorfbooks.com/edu/thr/early_childhood.htm

Storytelling

- Storytelling with Children by Nancy Mellon
- Children of the Forest by Elsa Beskow
- Frederick by Leo Lionni
- The Surprise Garden by Zoe Hall
- The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss
- The Little Red Hen by Paul Galdone

Snack

- The Waldorf Kindergarten Snack Book
by Lisa Hildreth
http://www.waldorfbooks.com/liv/natural_home/index.htm
- Rodale's Basic Natural Foods Cookbook
- Better Homes & Gardens magazine October 1974

Dinner

- Everyday Food magazine January/February 2006
- Italy: The Beautiful Cookbook Lorenza de' Medici

Please feel free to contact me at any time at waldorf_curric@yahoo.com.