

The Park in the City

*Waldorf Curriculum
Preschool Newsletter*

May 4, 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.

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 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.

Stories

The Park in the City

Flower Fairies of the Spring

or Flower Fairies of the Summer

Flower Fairies of the Garden

Flower Fairies of the Trees

Flower Fairies of the Wayside

by Philip Ressner

by Cicely Mary Barker

by Cicely Mary Barker

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Did you know that May is the official fairy month? On every moonlit May evening, the little people host sumptuous dancing parties attended by fairies dressed in gorgeous gowns. Of course, it is very difficult for humans to see these balls. Don't lose heart – you can also find evidence of fairies during the daytime. Fairies can be found everywhere, even in such unlikely places as the park in the city.

Flower fairies are easy to find. They visit each flower in bud, causing it to burst into bloom. Look through the Flower Fairy books (choose Spring or Summer depending on your area) and see if you can find some fairies for flowers which are blooming at this time. Share these poems with the child. Visit gardens, look in trees, and search by the wayside for evidence of fairy life.

Note to adults who may think Fairies aren't real:

Believing in the fairy world is important for children. It's great fun, stimulating, and promotes respect for wildlife and the environment. It encourages children to pause, wind down a little, observe, and allow their imaginations to soar - while raising their awareness of nature's daily wonders.

Gift Making

Marbled Fairy Milk

you will need: 1 cup 2% milk, a round pie pan, food coloring, liquid dish soap

Pour milk into the pie pan. Add 1 to 2 drops of different food colorings. Drop liquid dish soap into each spot of color and watch the colors chase each other around the pan. Be patient. The longer you watch, the more the colors will move and change.

Be sure the child knows NOT to drink the milk. This marbled milk is for fairies only, as the soap will make humans sick.

Nature

Even in such an unlikely place as the park in the city, fairies can be found. If you live in a rural area, it will be easy to find some of the flowers mentioned in the flower fairy books. But even if you live in an urban area, visit your local park. You will surely be able to find at least one fairy, most likely The Dandelion Fairy ([Flower Fairies of the Spring](#)).

Take your dish of Marbled Fairy Milk and place it near a flower bud which is still closed. You probably won't see the fairy drink the milk but you'll know that he or she was there when the flower begins to open.

Note: The following plants are best suited for this activity. The blooming times refer to the time when the plants will flower when planted outdoors. If you are unable to find any of these flowers near you, most of the plants can be purchased at your local garden center. The Nature activity will be the most exciting if the child gets to "see" the fairy take the present!

Flowers	Opening Time	Description
Scarlett Pimpernel <i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	8 a.m.	A low-branching plant, which often grows in sandy soils along roadsides. It blooms outdoors from June to August and is 10 to 30 cm tall.
Dandelion <i>Taxacum officinale</i>	9 a.m.	A small yellow flower that is in common in every lawn. It blooms from March to September and is 5 to 45 cm tall.
Morning Glory <i>Ipomoea purpurea</i>	10 a.m.	A funnel-shaped flower grown on a vine. It blooms from July to October and can grow to be 3 meters in length.
Water Lily <i>Nymphaea sp.</i>	11 a.m.	A white flower that floats on ponds and quiet waters. It blooms from June to September.
Goatsbeard <i>Tragopogon pratensis</i>	12 p.m.	A bright yellow flower on a long stalk, often mistaken for a dandelion. It blooms from May to July and can grow to be 70 to 100 cm tall.
California Poppy <i>Escholtzia californica</i>	1 p.m.	A brightly-colored, four petal flower. It blooms from May to September and grows 20 to 30 cm tall.
Chicory <i>Cichorium intybus</i>	2 p.m.	A flower with square-tipped, blue petals, common on roadsides and in open fields. It blooms from June to October and grows 3 to 120 cm tall.
Four O'clock Flower <i>Mirabilis jalapa</i>	4 p.m.	A common garden plant with yellow, red, white or mottled flowers on long vines. It blooms in the spring and grows to be about 1 m in length.
Evening Primrose <i>Oenothera biennis</i>	6 p.m.	A lemon-scented, large, yellow flower on a hairy stem. It blooms from June to September and grows to be 60 to 150 cm tall.

Handwork

A fairy house would be a wonderful addition to the Nature table. First choose the flower fairy you would like to make a house for (use a fairy which represents a flower currently in bloom). Pick several of the flowers for that fairy and dry the petals. This is fastest using a microwave, if you have one.

Pressing flowers in the microwave:

<http://home.ivillage.com/decorating/crafts/0,,82gz,00.html>

Now gather materials to create your fairy house. These small structures are made from materials at hand - bark, twigs, stones, pinecones, shells, feathers, etc. Refrain from using artificial materials. Add walkways, trees, flower beds, windows, gazing balls, swings, porches, etc. To attract the specific flower fairy that you want, use the flower petals you have pressed liberally throughout your design. A young child's house can be a simple structure with a path leading up to an entrance, while older children create more details such as bridges, moats, sleeping lofts and eating areas.

If you don't want to put the fairy house on your Nature table, consider placing it outside in a garden bed or in the woods; it would also make a wonderful gift for a gardener or fairy lover.

Song

Blow Away the Morning Dew

Traditional
Old English Song
Copyright Unknown

(4/4 Time)

Upon the sweetest summertime,
In the middle of the morn,
A pretty fairy I espied,
The fairest ever born.
And sing, blow away the morning dew,
The dew, and the dew,
Blow away the morning dew,
How sweet the winds do blow.

She gathered to her lovely flow'rs,
The pretty snowdrop bell
That hides its head in sheltered bow'rs,
The daffodil as well.
And sing, blow away the morning dew,
The dew, and the dew,
Blow away the morning dew,
How sweet the winds do blow.

Community Giving

Consider adopting a park with the child. (see Appendix for Resources List)

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

No specific cooking activities are suggested because many children and families have restricted diets such as vegan or vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher, etc. 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!

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 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

- candle

Stories

Gift Making

- 2% milk
- round pie pan
- food coloring
- liquid dish detergent

Nature

- purchased plant (as needed)

Handwork

- paper towels
- blotting paper
- flowers and leaves for pressing
- heavy, flat microwave safe dish
- microwave
- natural materials for fairy house such as bark, twigs, stones, pinecones, shells, feathers, dried flower petals, etc.
- wood glue

Song

Community Giving

Cooking

Play

Helping

Closing Verse

- candle

PLANNER

Book List:

list the books you will be reading
feel free to substitute other books you may have on hand
which relate to this theme

Materials:

list all materials required for your chosen activities

APPENDIX: RESOURCES LIST

There are “adopt a park” programs in nearly every state of the United States. In a quick internet search, I have come up with a brief list (below) – if you know of any other such programs for your state, county, or town, please email the group at waldorfcriculum@yahogroups.com.

Below the website link, you will find the location of each program:

1. AK - <http://www.co.fairbanks.ak.us/Parks&Rec/AdoptAPark/>
Fairbanks
2. AL
3. AR - http://www.accessfayetteville.org/parks_recreation_trails_and_greenways/adopt_a_park_programvolunteers.html
Fayetteville
4. AZ - <http://www.ci.tucson.az.us/tcb/tcbaap.htm>
Tucson
5. CA - <http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/parks/AdoptaParkBrochure.htm>
Visalia
6. CO - http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/parks-recreation/JOBS_VOL_INTERN/volunteer_opportunities.htm#adopt_a_park
Boulder
7. CT - <http://www.hebronct.com/parks.htm>
Hebron
8. DE
9. FL - <http://melbourneflorida.org/leisure/adoptp.htm>
Melbourne
10. GA - <http://www.parkpride.org/adopt.html>
Atlanta
11. HI - <http://www.co.maui.hi.us/departments/Parks/>
Maui County

12. IA - http://www.maquoketaia.com/parks/parksandrec_parks.htm
Maquoketaia
13. ID
14. IL - <http://www.lib.niu.edu/ipo/ip900915.html>
Champaign
15. IN - <http://www.mishawakacity.com/parksandrecreations.asp>
Mishawaka
16. KS - http://www.wichita.gov/NR/rdonlyres/9F6D16ED-94C8-4D22-B65D-B3282247BF80/0/Adopt_A_Park_Program_Agreement_14f.pdf
Wichita
17. KY - <http://www.loukymetro.org/pressrelease/PressRelease.asp?id=406>
Louisville
18. LA - <http://www.parkwaypartners.com/Adopt-a-N.G./adoption.htm>
New Orleans
19. MA - <http://www.pittsfield-ma.org/subpage.asp?ID=195>
Pittsfield
20. MD - <http://www.laurel.md.us/parks.htm>
Laurel
21. ME - <http://www.state.me.us/doc/parks/volunteer/volunteer.html>
22. MI - <http://www.geneseecountyparks.org/adopt-a-park.htm>
Genesee County
23. MN - <http://www.ci.stpaul.mn.us/depts/parks/environment/park-partners/parklist.html>
St. Paul
24. MO - <http://www.cityofcapegirardeau.org/depts/parks/parks.htm>
Cape Girardeau
25. MS
26. MT - http://www.ci.great-falls.mt.us/people_offices/park_rec/adopt.htm
Great Falls
27. NC - <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/adopt/>
Greensboro

28. ND - http://www.fargoparks.com/facilities_adopt.html
Fargo
29. NE - <http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/kob/adoptapark.htm>
Omaha
30. NH - http://www.ci.keene.nh.us/parks/adopt_a_park.htm
Keene
31. NJ - <http://www.oceantwp.org/clean%20communities/spot%20app.htm>
Township of Ocean
32. NM
33. NV -
[http://www.ktmb.org/index.php?url_channel_id=14&url_publish_channel_id=50
&well_id=2](http://www.ktmb.org/index.php?url_channel_id=14&url_publish_channel_id=50&well_id=2)
Reno
34. NY - <http://www.co.nassau.ny.us/parkmuse.html>
Nassau County
35. OH - <http://ci.fairborn.oh.us/parks/adopt-a-park.htm>
Fairborn
36. OK - <http://www.lastfrontiercouncil.org/programs/adopt-park.htm>
Oklahoma City
37. OR - http://www.willamalane.org/a_parks/park-adopt.htm
Springfield
38. PA - <http://www.eastonpaonline.com/Adopt-a-park/ContactInfo.asp>
Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton
39. RI - http://www.southkingstownri.com/code/rec_adoptpark.cfm
South Kingstown
40. SC - <http://www.discoverouthcarolina.com/stateparks/partners.asp>
41. SD - http://www.rcgov.org/parks_recreation/parks/parks_home.htm
Rapid City
42. TN - http://www.cityofbartlett.org/pdfs/parks_rec/ws0504_spevents.pdf
Bartlett
43. TX - http://www.ci.longview.tx.us/services/adopt_a_park.html
Longview

44. UT
45. VT
46. VA - <http://www.co.hanover.va.us/parksrec/default.htm#top>
Hanover County
47. WA - <http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/parks/volunteers/adoptapark.htm>
Seattle
48. WI - <http://www.sturgeonbaywi.org/Parks%20&%20Recreation-Community%20Information.htm>
Sturgeon Bay
49. WV
50. WY - <http://www.cheyennecity.org/parks.htm>
Cheyenne

APPENDIX: RESOURCES LIST

Information for CANADA:

Alberta - <http://weaselhead.org/volunteer.php>
Calgary

British Columbia - <http://www.city.langley.bc.ca/rec/volunteer.htm>
Langley

Manitoba

New Brunswick

Newfoundland and Labrador

Northwest Territories

Nova Scotia

Nunavut

Ontario - http://www.city.vaughan.on.ca/newscentre/pdf/citypage_20050414.pdf
Vaughan

Prince Edward Island

Quebec

Saskatchewan

Yukon