Woodcutter Circle

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

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

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

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

In the Summer the breezes blow through me
I bend, I bend

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

In the Autumn the apples ripen on me
They drop, they drop

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

In the Winter the snow falls down on me
It glistens, it glistens
Brrrr!

Stand tall, pretend to shoulder an axe

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.

March around the circle
Stand still, stamp feet
Stamp feet

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.

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.

compiled by Renee Schwartz
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, Roll hands up and clap at top
Up he goes to the treetop. Roll hands down to lap
Whirly, twirly, round and round, Bend right arm in a crescent, look at it
Down he scampers to the ground. Brush fingers of left hand up forearm and across width of right hand
Furry, curly, what a tail, Cup hands, look inside
Tall as a feather, broad as a sail. 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 Hunkered down on knees
It pokes OUT! Head suddenly appearing
Four paws Hands suddenly appear
They have CLAWS! Circling round and round on the floor
Burrowing deep Curl up as small as possible
Bear goes to sleep

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

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

Refrain
A snippety-snappety, Clap hands on each count
Hi-diddle-dee!
A clickety-clackety,
One, two three!

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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 Create rhythm as desired
All together we play xxx / xxx / xxx / xxx Children imitate rhythm using their sticks

Woodpecker he say xxx x / xxx x / xxx x / xxx x Create rhythm as desired
All together we play xxx x / xxx x / xxx x / xxx x 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,  Say reverently
May strength and kindness,
Shine right through.

The woodchopper chops down an old oak tree; Make chopping motion with edge of left hand
Here are the chips — one, two, and three.
Count three fingers
An old lady comes who is looking for sticks;
She picks up the chips — four, five, and six.  Finish counting by holding up six fingers

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

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.

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!

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!

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.  
Then they stack the little logs.  
And then they stack the tiny sticks.

compiled by Renee Schwartz

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

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

Cover children with silks and sing

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:

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  

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:

http://www.waldorfbooks.com/item_1582.htm  
http://www.waldorfbooks.com/item_3031.htm

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