

# *Insects*

*six-week main unit*

*Season: Spring*

*Art focus: creative paint techniques*

*Nature focus: the life cycle of insects*

*Handwork focus: wet felting*

# UNIT DESIGN

Each unit is made up of eight components: Music & Movement, Art, Nature, Cooking, Play, Handwork, Helping, and Stories.

## **Music & Movement**

A large variety of social activities can be used for the Music & Movement component -- including gym classes, music classes, yoga or other exercise classes -- or you can simply dance, exercise, and make music at home. I highly recommend Kindermusik classes; look in your local area for other Music & Movement activities. And don't forget to expose your child to Music & Movement through live performances. Although doing exercise videos with your child at home works well -- and is a wonderful way to make sure exercise is a part of your own day! -- watching performances on TV or video does not come anywhere close to the real experience and should be avoided.

## **Art**

Process -- not product -- is the emphasis of Art time. Use this time to explore thoroughly the techniques and skills used when working with a material. When it comes time to use the art materials in creating handwork, your child will be confident and able. Art should be discarded daily and in front of your child. Be sure that your child understands that art activities are for learning, for exploration, and are not to be kept. 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!

Visiting art exhibits, once your child is a little older, is also a part of Art. Look in your newspaper for local galleries; often there will even be art exhibits at the local courthouse or coffee house. Show your child that art can be found in all places. Sculpture gardens are also a wonderful outing for Waldorf homeschooling -- a nice blend of Art and Nature.

## **Nature**

Try to explore nature with your child as often as possible. Even walking your dog daily is an opportunity to be outside and to observe the natural world. Change the items on your nature table often as your child becomes aware of what is changing outside. Don't forget that nature can be experienced indoors as well through the growing of plants.

## **Cooking**

Cooking is separate from other kinds of Helping because so many quality things are learned during this time. It is similar to Handwork, as well, in that it should have an authentic context; have your child prepare food for the entire family. When children help provide daily sustenance for their families, it is a very real way for them to express the love they feel for those family members -- just as it is for you!

## **Play**

Keep Play as an empty square – but always have it in your planbook. It is a good reminder that all children need daily time to play, preferably away from adults. Unguided imaginative play is crucial for the development of the young child – play is their WORK and its importance cannot be overstated. Stay out of it as much as you can; also, try not to interfere too much in the play between your child and siblings or friends when conflicts break out. A good deal of socialization takes place as children work among themselves to resolve problems.

Your job as a parent is to provide a safe place for the children to play and to give them the best quality toys you can, such as play silks, blocks, simple dolls, and materials from nature. The more open-ended a material, the more of your child will be brought forth in playing with it. The more structured a material, the less will be required of your child – and the less your child 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 your child.

## **Handwork**

A proper approach to handwork is absolutely essential; otherwise, nothing will be gained from doing it. Handwork must have an authentic context – it must be truly useful around the home 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. Take the time to do handwork of your own, as well as teaching it to your child. Knitting, crochet, weaving, felting, carpentry, & etc. are wonderfully relaxing for you and will show your child that handwork is truly authentic.

## **Helping**

Helping around the home is an essential part of any Waldorf curriculum. It can be very difficult when transitioning to a Waldorf approach to parenting to remember to have your child share in your chores. Use this space in the planbook as a daily reminder – list specific tasks your child can be a part of each day. Or, if you are already accustomed to sharing your home chores with your child, simply fill this section in after the day is done.

## **Stories**

Each unit consists of 15 recommended stories to be read within the six weeks. You can and should revisit the stories as often as you or your child wish. The stories are of differing lengths and styles and some may appeal more to older or to younger children. Please do read each story at least once, however, to allow your child exposure to the full breadth of the topic. An ideal time for these stories is as part of your bedtime ritual.

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 your child. This personal connection and quiet nurturing time is a very different experience than the social one of experiencing a story in a group.

# PARENT PREPARATION

You don't have to have formal education training to be a homeschooling parent. It does help to be familiar with the philosophy behind whatever program you choose, however. The Waldorf approach to the preschool years is based on what is developmentally appropriate for children at this stage of their life. Each unit contains recommended readings for all parents/caregivers, including those who are not actively teaching. It is best for all the key adults in a child's life to share a philosophical approach to parenting, for consistency in child-rearing. The recommended readings will help strengthen your understanding both of your child's development and of the activities in the unit.

The most vital part of the unit, however, is something which cannot be packaged. It's you, the parent and instructor. Your mental preparedness for school is a key part of each day and it is your main task each morning. Many people do school all year round; don't hesitate to take off whatever time helps you to stay balanced. We do school 5 days a week but we do Tues/Wed/Thurs and Sat/Sun. This is so I can do my errands such as doctor appointments and shopping on weekdays and so we can take advantage of relevant activities which occur on weekends. Spreading out my days off also helps me stay on top of my lesson planning and the housework and helps me feel relaxed and balanced. This is a crucial part of allowing me to teach effectively and it has kept me happy with my decision to homeschool.

Although you are not passing on a large amount of "academic" knowledge to your children in these units, you are at all times passing on large amounts of yourself and your attitudes. Make sure you are at your best! The Waldorf philosophy allows you to integrate your children into your lives without you – as a person – being left out. Taking time to exercise each day, walk outside, prepare nutritious meals, fold laundry, wash dishes, do some handwork, and read – all of these things help make you a balanced and relaxed person. Best of all, you are sharing each of these things with your child. Each of you also gets some personal time each day, time when your child plays and can be alone with his thoughts and you can be alone with yours.

Truthfully, before I discovered the Waldorf method, I felt like my preschool daughter was always in the way. Here I was trying to get important things done and she was constantly underfoot. I knew she needed more attention, but I thought my only option was to put the dishes and laundry on hold so I could take care of my parental obligations. And it came through loud and clear; when I tried to play with her, she knew that my mind was elsewhere. Once I discovered Waldorf and described it to my husband, he said with certainty, "That's what you need to be doing". And I discovered that Waldorf homeschooling is more of an approach to parenting than it is an academic regime – it's flexible, it's fun, and it absolutely changed my life. And I'm so happy to be able to share it with you!

Please feel free to contact me at any time at [waldorf\\_curric@yahoo.com](mailto:waldorf_curric@yahoo.com).

# ESSENTIAL STORIES

The Ant and the Grasshopper. Retold and illustrated by Amy Lowry Poole.

Neighborhood Animals. Marilyn Singer, et al.

Creatures of Earth, Sea, and Sky. Poems by Georgia Heard. Drawings by Jennifer Owings Dewey.

The Story of the Root Children. Sibylle Von Olfers.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar. by Eric Carle.

The Very Quiet Cricket. Eric Carle.

Waiting for Wings. Lois Ehlert.

Whose Garden Is It? Mary Ann Hoberman. Illustrated by Jane Dyer.

Eric Carle's Animals Animals. Eric Carle.

Bumblebee Bumblee Do You Know Me? Anne Rockwell.

Dragonfly Beetle Butterfly Bee. MaryJo Koch.

The Gardener. Sarah Stewart. Pictures by David Small.

Are You a Ladybug? Judy Allen.

Bunny's Noisy Book. Margaret Wise Brown. Pictures by Lisa McCue.

Quick as a Cricket. by Audrey Wood. illustrated by Don Wood.

Visit [waldorfcriculum.com](http://waldorfcriculum.com) for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

# ALSO RECOMMENDED

## MUSIC & MOVEMENT

Trumpet Spectacular (recording)

Triangle (recording)

Fly Like a Butterfly. Shakta Kaur Khalsa. A yoga mat will also be helpful.

## ART

Creating with Paint. Sherrill Kahn.

## NATURE

Amazing Insects: Insect Facts and Information (website)

<http://www.ivyhall.district96.k12.il.us/4th/kkhp/1insects/buginfo.html>

## PLAY

Look at the Child. Aline Wolf.

- Funny Bug Dominoes
- Spin-Over Tops
- Cricket Sound Effect

## HANDWORK

The Art of Feltmaking. Anne Vickrey.

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# SAMPLE WEEK:

FROM MARCH 13 TO 19<sup>TH</sup> 2005

	notes for next week:	Mar 13	Mar 15	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 19
Music & Movement		<u>Fly Like a Butterfly</u>  Tune In to Begin pp.4-5	<u>Fly Like a Butterfly</u>  Ride Your Bumpy Camel p.6	Kidfit @ community center 9:45 am	<u>Fly Like a Butterfly</u>  Cobra Snake p.7	Triangle:  "Dance with Me"
Art		painting with water			washes	ink bleed with markers
Nature	metamorphosis	nature walk, choose nature table items	set up ant trail, observe ants	build ant habitat	collect ants	
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork	build butterfly house, butterfly feeder		felt three pieces of ant body	add six legs		add two antennae
Helping						
Stories		<u>The Ant and the Grasshopper</u>	<u>Animals Animals</u>	<u>The Story of the Root Children</u>	storytime @ library 1:30 pm	<u>Whose Garden Is It?</u>

# WEEK ONE:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# WEEK TWO:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# WEEK THREE:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# WEEK FOUR:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# WEEK FIVE:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# WEEK SIX:

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

# JOURNAL: WEEK ONE

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# JOURNAL: WEEK TWO

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# JOURNAL: WEEK THREE

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# JOURNAL: WEEK FOUR

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# JOURNAL: WEEK FIVE

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# JOURNAL: WEEK SIX

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE

## ART

### **Day One:**

Set out watercolor paper, a dish of water, and a brush. Let your child paint with the water. Be sure to give her several pieces of paper so she can experiment with the effects of using more or less amounts of water.

### **Day Two:**

Creating with Paint p.30 "Wet Into Wet"

### **Day Three:**

Use markers to color plain unused coffee filters. Lay each filter over a piece of white paper, then spray the paper with water until colors bleed through to create new designs.

## NATURE: THE ANT

### **Day One:**

Take a nature walk with your child and observe the changing of the seasons. Focus especially on the animals that you see. Talk with your child about how, with the changes in the weather, you begin to see new animals as you walk – animals that you didn't see in the winter. Some animals sleep through the winter and are now waking up. And all around us there are new creatures being born. Can you find a bird working hard to build its nest and lay its eggs? Do you know of any other animal babies born in the springtime?

When you return home, choose your nature table display for the upcoming weeks. Add new silks in the color of the season, any flowers or natural objects that you may have picked along your walk, and anything else that brings Spring into your home.

### **Day Two:**

#### Ant Trail:

Dissolve some sugar in warm water. Take bread and break it into very small pieces. Soak the bread in your sugar water. Have your child lay the pieces of bread in a trail around your yard or the neighborhood park. Check the trail periodically and observe what happens. This activity works best on a warm sunny day.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE CONTINUED

## **Day Three:**

**vocabulary words** – *habitat, colony*

Build an ant habitat: [http://www.entsoc.org/education/elem\\_mid/ant\\_habitat.htm](http://www.entsoc.org/education/elem_mid/ant_habitat.htm)

## **Day Four:**

Collect ants for your habitat. Find an anthill and follow the directions given in the link above. If you have trouble locating an ant hill, repeat your ant trail project from Day Two. Follow the ants who have found your trail back to their home. Make sure all of the ants collected are from the same area or they may be from different colonies; only ants from the same colony will successfully cohabitate. Observe the activities of the ant colony with your child. When you are finished, release your ants back to the area where they were found.

## HANDWORK

Refer to Chapter 4 of [The Art of Feltmaking](#) for directions on how to assemble the parts of your ant.

### **Day One:**

Read the poem "Every Insect" from [Animals Animals](#). Felt the three body parts of an ant using "The Ant" and the illustration accompanying it from [Animals Animals](#) as your guide.

### **Day Two:**

Having observed the ants who found your Ant Trail (see Nature, Day Two), add the six legs to your felted ant.

### **Day Three:**

**vocabulary word** – *antennae*

After observing the ants once they have been placed in your ant habitat, talk with your child about how the ants gather information about the world around them. How did the ants proceed upon being placed in a brand new world? Ants use their antennae to smell, touch, and communicate with other ants. Add a pair of antennae to your felted ant.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO

## ART

### Day One:

Creating with Paint pp.48-49 "Toothbrush Spatter"

### Day Two:

Creating with Paint p.29 "Washes"

### Day Three:

Have your child create a heavily textured drawing with beeswax crayons. There should be areas left plain white. Then apply washes of watercolor paint over the drawing.

## NATURE: THE BUTTERFLY

### Day One:

**vocabulary words** – *cocoon, metamorphosis*

Read The Very Hungry Caterpillar. What are the four stages in the caterpillar's life? Create each stage using wet felting techniques and display the life cycle of a butterfly on your nature table. You can also introduce the life cycle using the butterfly Spin-Over top.

egg:

The best technique for this is Felt Balls which is Chapter 6 of The Art of Felting. Refer to pages 76-77.

caterpillar:

The best technique for this is Beads which is Chapter 3 of The Art of Felting. Stringing the beads (p.42) helps create a caterpillar which can inch along realistically.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

pupa (which is the animal inside the cocoon) – you will probably want to felt the cocoon instead:

The best technique for this is Felt Vessels which is Chapter 9 of [The Art of Feltmaking](#). Refer to pages 100-101. When you cut the vessel to remove the stone, you will have created the hole through which the butterfly has escaped.

butterfly:

[The Art of Feltmaking](#) p.87 “Butterflies”

## Day Two:

[Fly Like a Butterfly](#) p.43 “Butterfly-Cocoon” p.11 “Butterfly”

Once your child has come out of the cocoon and rested for a while, pumping their wings will help them feel energized and ready to fly. This wonderful yoga exercise lets your child experience the magic of metamorphosis. End the session by reading [Waiting for Wings](#).

## Day Three:

Set up a Butterfly Pavilion near your nature corner. The butterflies will typically take about three weeks to hatch. Add a Painted Lady picture to your nature table.

\*\*\* Note \*\*\*

Painted Lady butterflies are considered safe to release in the continental United States. However, if you do not want to do this or if you live in AK or HI, you can look for a butterfly garden near you at a park or museum. Visit this garden to do your butterfly observations.

## Day Four:

**vocabulary word** – *nectar*

Read [Waiting for Wings](#). On the final page there is information about growing a butterfly garden. With your child, choose the plants you would like to grow and plant them in your garden. If you don't have a garden at your home, see if you can get permission to start a butterfly garden in your community, perhaps by working with a teacher at a nearby school or by volunteering to plant a garden at a senior living home.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

## **optional:**

**vocabulary word** – *proboscis*

There is also information in Waiting for Wings on Painted Ladies and on the parts of a butterfly. If you like, you can have your child compare the parts of a butterfly with the parts of an ant. Which parts are the same for both insects? Which parts are different and what do you think are they used for? Talk with your child about the answer to the question “How does a butterfly eat?” found at the back of the book. Let your child drink apricot, guava, peach, or pear nectar (Goya) through a straw. Try two straws if you’re really brave!

## **HANDWORK**

Additional projects to enhance your butterfly garden:

### **Day One:**

Build a butterfly house: <http://butterflywebsite.com/articles/house/plans.htm>

### **Day Two:**

Make a butterfly feeder: <http://www.seedsofknowledge.com/butterflies2.html>

### **Day Three:**

Butterfly Nectar Recipe:

Mix twenty (20) parts water to one (1) part white cane sugar. Boil the water for several minutes before adding sugar. Let water cool before filling feeder. Be sure to clean the feeder with hot tap water and change nectar mix every three to four days.

You can store excess nectar mix in the refrigerator for about two weeks.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE

## ART

This week's art activities are all about exploring and creating textures with clay.

### **Day One:**

Start with a slab of clay for each of you. Demonstrate to your child how to create several textures in the clay by pushing into the clay with your fingers. Now have your child make as many different types of textures as she can. Do not use any tools with the clay, simply use your fingers. It is best to also do this exercise with your own slab of clay – working alongside your child, try to come up with textures the other has not thought of. Change the amount of pressure you use with your fingers to create shallower or deeper impressions. Try making textures by pinching or twisting the clay. When you are done exchange slabs with one another, close your eyes, and gently move your fingertips over each texture, feeling their differences and similarities.

### **Day Two:**

Start with a slab of clay for each of you. Take some extra clay and roll it into tiny balls, ropes, or coils and press them into your clay to create a texture. You may need to help your child roll the tiny balls. Working side by side, make as many different textures as you can. Now give a name to each texture you have created: does it remind you of pebbles, hair, water, flower petals, sand?

### **Day Three:**

Today you get to use clay tools!

Any object that makes an impression in the clay is considered a clay tool. Some good ones are: shells, buttons, keys, forks and spoons, twigs, leaves, or pinecones. If you like, you can introduce the exercise, then take a nature walk with your child, searching for additional clay tools for each of you. When you come back inside, resume the clay exercises.

Start with a slab of clay for each of you. Choose one clay tool. Press it into the clay many times in one section of your slab to create a texture area. Young children may have a hard time restricting their texture to one section of the slab; if this is the case, relax and just enjoy the clay and the tool. There is no need to force an activity on your child if free exploration seems more appropriate. Now use the same tool in a different way to create a second texture area. Some ways to do this are to hold it at a different angle, use the other end of the tool, drag it through the clay, or to press more lightly or more softly into the clay. Continue using different parts of the same tool until you have created at least five different texture areas.

Choose a second tool and repeat the exercise. See how many different textures can be made from a single clay tool.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

## NATURE: THE DRAGONFLY

### Day One:

**vocabulary word** – *nymph*

Using the dragonfly Spin-Over top, show your child the stages in the dragonfly life cycle. In the middle stage of its life, the dragonfly is called a nymph. If you can, go to a small pond, collect some water samples, and examine them for dragonfly nymphs:

<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/conker/pond-dip/tools.htm>

It is also possible to purchase dragonfly nymphs to raise yourself (in an aquarium). This way your child will be able to see the nymphs grow and molt first-hand. Another benefit to releasing dragonflies near you is that both nymphs and adults love to feast on mosquitoes.

**Caution:** Purchased nymphs may take as long as three years before maturing into dragonflies. Also, dragonflies are named thus due to their powerful jaws – they will eat other small aquarium inhabitants. If this is going to upset your child, you do not want a dragonfly nymph habitat in your home.

### Day Two:

Observe adult dragonflies. Perhaps there are some at the pond you visited. You can also try contacting nature centers near you to see if they have dragonflies or recommendations as to where some can be found. Some zoos may also have dragonfly exhibits.

The best places to find dragonflies: <http://www.metrokids.com/may04issue/eyeonnature.html>

### Day Three:

Dragonflies are constantly eating and, since they eat while flying, they are nearly always on the move. However, even dragonflies must rest sometime. Today you will have your child create a yoga pose for the dragonfly at rest.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

First, remind your child to always listen to the messages his body sends him. If something is uncomfortable or causes pain, it should be stopped immediately. Be sure your child understands this important point before moving forward. Have your child do some warm-up exercises from [Fly Like a Butterfly](#) to begin your session. You should do these as well, on your own mat (if your health permits this).

Together, practice some deep breathing. Then have your child begin to describe what he thinks it would be like to be a dragonfly. What thoughts would a dragonfly have while resting? After some mediation ask your child to create a pose for the resting dragonfly. If possible, participate in this pose with your child. When you are ready to move on, finish your yoga session as usual.

After you are completely done, talk with your child about the experience. What were his impressions? Was he able to establish a connection with the world of the dragonfly or does it still seem quite distant?

## **Day Four:**

Take a nature walk with your child. What new signs of Spring have appeared in the past weeks? Collect as many different types of flowers as you can. When you get home, press the flowers.

Directions for pressing flowers, as well as how to make a traditional flower press & a microwave flower press:

<http://www.preservedgardens.com/how-to-press.htm>

## HANDWORK

### **Day One:**

Read books by Eric Carle, closely examining the illustrations: [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#), [The Very Quiet Cricket](#), or [Animals, Animals](#). Talk with your child about the characteristics of color, texture, and contrast used in Carle's art. Also look at how many pieces of different papers he used to create each creature. Talk with your child about the parts of a dragonfly. Then have your child create a variety of tissue papers to be used to create dragonfly collages. Refer back to activities from

Week One

Art: Day 2, Day 3

Week Two

Art: Day 1, Day 2, Day 3

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

## **Day Two:**

Create the project you will use to showcase your child's dragonfly collages.

Renew a folding screen: <http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=tv5205>

Or, if space is more limited, consider making a nightlight for your child's room:

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=channel173344>

## **Day Three:**

When creating each dragonfly collage, lay the cut papers out on a flat surface first to determine how they will be put together. For the most successful collages, make sure there is a pleasing contrast of colors. Try to have some colors and textures repeat throughout the collages. Create a pattern for the dragonfly body parts and cut multiple bodies and wings out from the papers. Once you are sure there will be enough completed dragonflies to fill your project, look at your remaining papers. If you would like to use some of the leftover papers as a border, cut the border pieces out and put them on your project first. Consider having some partial dragonflies visible at the edges, as if what you see is only a snapshot of a greater view. Finally, assemble the dragonflies and glue the pieces onto your project.

# LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR

## ART

This week's art activities are all from [Creating with Paint](#). They will work best when you use fabric as the painting surface.

### Day One:

Tape Resists pp.58-59

### Day Two:

Freezer-Paper Resists pp.60-61

### Day Three:

Crayon Batik pp.55-57

## NATURE: THE LADYBUG

### Day One:

Set up Ladybug Land near your butterfly pavilion. It will be easier for your child to compare the life cycles of the two insects if they are side by side. Use the ladybug Spin-Over top to talk to your child about the stages in a ladybug's life. Again, if you are not interested in raising and releasing insects because of environmental concerns, find a nature center or museum near you where you and your child can do ladybug observations.

### Day Two:

**vocabulary** –*aphids, beneficial insects*

Put up a Ladybug Ranch in your garden. Below it, plant a rosebush. Both of these will help attract ladybugs to your area. Roses are especially prone to being attacked by aphids and aphids are the main food of ladybugs in both its larval and adult forms. If you don't have a garden, visit a farm, a plant nursery, or the garden of a neighbor and ask them about the damage caused to plants by aphids. Then talk with your child about the good work that ladybugs do by eating aphids. Can you find a place near your home where ladybugs would be beneficial? When you release your adult ladybugs from Ladybug Land, put them in the location you have chosen.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

## **Day Three:**

Dance with your child to the Ladybug song on "Triangle", following along as you hear each description of the ladybug's movements.

## **Day Four:**

Read Neighborhood Animals. Look at the ladybug footprints going across the page. Try taking a nature walk outside with a magnifying glass in hand. Ask your child where she thinks ladybug footprints would be found, then find several leaves to look at. If you can't find any ladybug tracks, look for other tracks (large or small). Try to decide what kind of animal might have made those prints. If you like, you can reread Neighborhood Animals when you get home to compare the footprints you found with those of the animals in the book.

## HANDWORK

This week's projects involve the use of polymer clay. Polymer clay safety: <http://www.jaedworks.com/clayspot/polyclay-faq/safety.html>

\*\*\* Note \*\*\*

If you don't feel your child is old enough to use polymer clay safely, please substitute a bakeable homemade modelling clay recipe and paint your project after it has cooled. Bakeable "salt clay" recipe: <http://www.buildingblocksc.com/recipes.htm>

## **Day One:**

Create a ladybug out of polymer clay. Make sure your child includes the three body segments and the six legs, then add the wings.

## **Day Two:**

Model a leaf out of polymer clay. Make the leaf large enough to set your ladybug on, as if she is walking across it. Read Neighborhood Animals and then, before baking your leaf, use clay tools to make a path of tiny footprints on the leaf surface behind your ladybug.

## **Day Three:**

Glue the ladybug onto your leaf as desired. Glue a strong magnet to the bottom of your work and place it on your refrigerator.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE

## ART

These activities will use the flowers you gathered and pressed in Week Three. Instead of having your child glue down the flower petals when she completes her collages, press them between wax paper: <http://www.flower-press.com/waxpaper-flower-pressing.htm>. This is simpler to do and much less messy.

### Day One:

#### Free Exploration

Give your child an assortment of dried flowers and a piece of wax paper. Allow her to explore the materials and make designs freely, without direction.

### Day Two:

#### Symmetry

Take a piece of wax paper and fold it in half horizontally or vertically. Using a ruler and a pencil draw the center line. Place the sheet of wax paper over a plain piece of white paper to make the line easier for your child to see. Using this line of symmetry is a way to create balance in a composition. Demonstrate the concept to your child by placing the same or similar flowers on either side of the line of symmetry in such a way that they form a mirror image of each other. Let your child practice creating a symmetrical design.

### Day Three:

#### Patterns

Today use a large piece of wax paper and fold it in half. Rotate the paper and fold it in half again, then in half again. When the paper is unfolded, there should be eight equal sized segments. Using a ruler and a pencil, draw each line and place the wax paper over a plain piece of white paper. Like symmetrical designs, pattern designs encourage children to pay attention to the placement of each item in their composition. Once the paper has been prepared, add one element to the first segment and then repeat it in each segment before adding the next. Allow your child to practice creating patterns with the dried flowers. The designs can be cleared away repeatedly and the wax paper used over again as a template for each new composition.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

## NATURE: THE BUMBLEBEE

### Day One:

Read Bunny's Noisy Book. Take a nature walk with your child. Find a good spot to stop and close your eyes. Sit and listen together. When you are both finished listening, talk about what you heard. Did you both hear the same things or did you each find something unique? What created each sound that you heard? Especially consider the animal sounds you may have heard.

After your nature walk, your child will enjoy adding the following yoga exercise to her repertoire:  
Fly Like a Butterfly p.42 "Buzzing Bee"

### Day Two:

Set up the Humble Bumble Home. It is very important to follow the directions carefully when choosing its location or you will not be successful in attracting a bumblebee queen.

### Day Three:

Together with your child, listen to "The Flight of the Bumblebee" on Trumpet Spectacular. Ask your child what animal he thinks the music is describing. Then create a bumblebee dance with your child. Listen to the recording again and dance along.

### Day Four:

Create a bumblebee mobile. First take a wooden ring and hang it over your nature table. Create your bees using wet felting methods – making sure each bee has its three body segments. You will probably want to add the antennae and six legs with thread. Cut out wings from white tissue paper or netting. Glue or tie on the wings for each bee and hang the completed bumblebees from your ring. The mobile will look the most natural if your bees are hung at different heights. Gather flowers and place them in a vase below your mobile.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

## HANDWORK

### **Day One:**

Make a set of stationery by first creating large sheets of handmade paper: <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/makingpaper.html>  
If you like, you can add some of the dried flower petals collected for the Art exercises.

Once dry, some of the sheets can be cut to create notecards. Others can be cut to create envelopes using an envelope template: <http://www.mnsi.net/~ewswa/pages/resource/templates.html>

### **Day Two:**

#### Envelope Glue

This recipe makes a clear glue for your envelopes. After it dries you can remoisten it, and seal the envelope shut.

Mix 2 Tablespoons white glue and 1 T white vinegar together in a small bowl or paper cup until well blended. Using a small paint brush, or your finger, smear a line of glue along the edge of your envelope flap. Let the glue dry completely, then store the envelope in a dry place until you are ready to seal it.

### **Day Three:**

Make and decorate a stationery box to hold the new supplies:

[http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr\\_paper\\_crafts\\_origami/article/0,1789,HGTV\\_3293\\_1369560,00.html](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr_paper_crafts_origami/article/0,1789,HGTV_3293_1369560,00.html)

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX

## ART

This week's art activities are all from [Creating with Paint](#).

### Day One:

Scraping Paint with a Credit Card pp.47-48

### Day Two:

Brayers p.50

### Day Three:

Sponging Over Mesh p.28

## NATURE: THE CRICKET

### Day One:

#### Cricket Habitat

Purchase crickets from a pet store or bait and tackle shop. Prepare a terrarium in a jar including: potato halves, potting soil, pebbles or gravel, plants, and a screen or cheesecloth to cover. Add a handful of moss, making a safe place for babies can hide to avoid being eaten by the adults. For food, your crickets would like bits of fruit and vegetables and some dry rabbit food (alfalfa pellets). Keep a small container (such as a jar lid) filled with water in the habitat. Observe the crickets with your child.

If you do not want to keep crickets in your home, you and your child can do cricket observations at the pet store.

### Day Two:

Read [The Very Quiet Cricket](#). Show your child how to use the Cricket Sound Effect to create cricket chirps. Using "The Flight of the Bumblebee" as your inspiration, compose a cricket song.

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# LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

## **Day Three:**

Fly Like a Butterfly p.95 "Cricket Rub"

## **Day Four:**

Read I'm as Quick as a Cricket. Do some more observations of your crickets and talk with your child about how the cricket moves. Have your child compose a cricket dance as you play the cricket song. Now switch roles and have your child play while you dance. Or you can do the Cricket Rub together and chirp back and forth in cricket conversations.

## HANDWORK

In this final week of the Insects unit, your child will be creating a set of dishes to showcase the animals he has studied. Consider creating six place settings, one for each insect. Or choose the insect your child enjoyed the most and focus on that one for your projects. Please pay close attention to all safety precautions when choosing and using the materials in these projects. Many permanent ceramics paints are not suitable for use on dishes on which food will be served, even though the labels may state that the products are nontoxic. PorcelaineB. ceramic paints, which are baked on the surface after application, may safely be used on dishes that will come in contact with food. To avoid potential problems, you may choose to paint designs on the bottom of a clear glass plate.

## **Day One:**

Using soft translucent colors, have your child paint a set of plain plates and/or bowls. Paints which are safe for use on dishes:  
[http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr\\_tools\\_equipment/article/0,1789,HGTV\\_3346\\_1370355,00.html](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr_tools_equipment/article/0,1789,HGTV_3346_1370355,00.html)

## **Day Two:**

Stamp insect stamps of your choice around the rim of each item. Refer to Creating with Paint, pp.38-39, for more information on rubber stamping with paint.

## **Day Three:**

Create a matching set of glasses, mugs, or tumblers. Consider adding some serving pieces to your set such as a platter, serving bowls, or a pitcher.

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# ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

## NATURE

### **Other Insects**

If you and your child would like to expand the scope of the unit and learn about other insects, try doing some insect collecting from your backyard or neighborhood park and see what you find. One technique for doing this is called sweeping. More information on sweeping for insects as well as directions for making your own insect net: [http://www.entsoc.org/education/elem\\_mid/collecting.htm](http://www.entsoc.org/education/elem_mid/collecting.htm)