

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.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

*When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged
in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured
with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mysitcal moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.*

WALT WHITMAN

ESSENTIAL STORIES

Treasury of Children's Poetry. edited by Alison Sage.

The Baby's Bedtime Book. Kay Chora.

The Day We Saw the Sun Come Up. by Alice E. Goudey. illustrated by Adrienne Adams.

The Phantom Tollbooth. Norton Juster. illustrations by Jules Feiffer.

Why the Sky is Far Away. retold by Mary-Joan Gerson. pictures by Carla Golembe.

The Boy With Two Shadows. story by Margaret Mahy. pictures by Jenny Williams.

The Shadow Book. by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers. photographs by Isabel Gordon.

The Day the Babies Crawled Away. Peggy Rathmann.

Look at the Moon. May Garelick. illustrated by Barbara Garrison.

Kitten's First Full Moon. Kevin Henkes.

Grandfather Twilight. Barbara Berger.

Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me. Eric Carle.

Night in the Country. story by Cynthia Rylant. pictures by Mary Szilagyi.

I Took the Moon for a Walk. Carolyn Curtis and Alison Jay.

Mary Poppins. P.L. Travers.

Visit waldorfcriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back. Joseph Bruchac and Jonathan London. illustrated by Thomas Locker.

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ALSO RECOMMENDED

MUSIC & MOVEMENT

Animal Crackers: Animal Friends. by Jane Dyer.

Phases of the Moon: Traditional Chinese Music.
Classical Chinese Folk Music.

ART

Exploring Textile Arts: the ultimate guide to manipulating, coloring, and embellishing fabrics.

NATURE

The Storyteller's Start-up Book: finding, learning, performing, and using folktales. Margaret Read MacDonald.

- phases of the moon calendar
 - constellation cards
- Museum of Modern Art
Magic Cabin

PLAY

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge: Nurturing our children from birth to seven. Barbara J. Patterson and Pamela Bradley.

- starry night silkscape
 - balancing moon
 - horizon puzzle
- Nova Natural
Hearthsong
Three Sisters Toys

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ALSO RECOMMENDED

HANDWORK

More Magic Wool: Creating Figures and Pictures with Dyed Wool. Angelika Wolk-Gerche

- Tapestry Table

Island Treasure Toys

SAMPLE WEEK:

FROM SEPTEMBER 5TH TO 10TH 2005

	notes for next week:	Mon - 5	Tue - 6	Thu - 8	Fri - 9	Sat - 10
Music & Movement			<u>Animal Crackers:</u> "Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear"			Classical Chinese Folk Music: Beautiful Evening
Art	felting	Table Printing	outline and color in shadows on sidewalk	visit yesterday's shadow outlines – compare with our shadows now		
Nature	phases of the moon calendar	nature walk, discuss colors of the season, choose new silks for nature table	bonfire – view shadows	visit Amish farmer's market, see horses, buy fresh produce	cloudy/rainy day – where have our shadows gone?	camping – make hand shadows
Cooking						
Play	Starry Night Silkscape					
Handwork	shadow puppets	Homemade Chalk		Self Paper Doll	send a "hug" to Aunt Jenn	
Helping					help with grocery shopping	scrub floors
Stories	*work on bedtime routines for new house	visit library, choose books	storytime @ library 10:30 am	<u>The Boy With Two Shadows</u>	<u>The Shadow Book</u>	<u>Treasury of Children's Poetry:</u> "Holes of Green" p.131

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						

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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

Visit waldorfcurriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

JOURNAL: WEEK THREE

Visit waldorfcriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

JOURNAL: WEEK FOUR

Visit waldorfcriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

JOURNAL: WEEK FIVE

Visit waldorfcriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

JOURNAL: WEEK SIX

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STARFISH

Went star-fishing last night.
Dipped my net in the inky lake
to catch a star for my collection.
All I did was splinter the moon.

JUDITH NICHOLS

LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE

ART

Day One:

Table Printing

Be sure to use a formica or enamel table top so that the paint will not stain. Allow the children to finger paint on the table top. (For extra fun, chocolate pudding may be used instead of finger paint.) Take paper and completely cover the finger painting. Smooth out wrinkles in the paper, and carefully remove the paper to dry. The picture will transfer from the table top to the paper.

Day Two:

Use the Homemade Chalk (see Handwork, day One) to draw an outline of your child's shadow on a sidewalk or roadway. Let the child color in and decorate his shadow.

Day Three:

Repeat the activity from above, but at a different time of day. Continue to do this until your child notices that his shadow is different each time. You can also take your child's Self Paper Doll outside and lay it down next to the shadow outlines to compare their sizes. Read The Shadow Book and talk about how you can tell the time of day based on whether your shadow is short or long.

Note: The Shadow Book by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers is out of print and may be difficult to find; however, it is well worth the search! It is used in many ways throughout this unit. If you cannot find the book, substitute another book on the subject of shadows such as

The Little Book of Hand Shadows. by Phila. H. Webb and Jane Corby.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE CONTINUED

NATURE

Day One:

Take a nature walk with your child. Observe the colors of the changing season. When you return home, choose new silks for your Nature table in appropriate colors. Some items for your Nature table in Autumn may include apples or nuts, fallen leaves, ears of dried corn, pumpkins, gourds, and any other special items which represent the season.

Day Two:

This evening, light a bonfire (if you don't have a backyard, try to find a park or nature center which is hosting outdoor storytelling around a bonfire – or go camping). With your child, sit and watch the flickering shadows cast by the flames.

Day Three:

Read [The Shadow Book](#). Then talk about the question: But where do all the shadows go when it rains? Take your child outside during a cloudy or rainy day. Where has your shadow gone? Why? Go back inside and discover it again!

Day Four:

Read [The Shadow Book](#). Show your child how to create shadow puppets indoors, using either natural light or by shining a flashlight. Many helpful directions for making hand shadows, as well as accompanying rhymes, can be found in [The Little Book of Hand Shadows](#).

You can also take your child camping and make hand shadows on the walls of your tent using a flashlight.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE CONTINUED

HANDWORK

Day One:

Make your own sidewalk chalk.

Homemade Chalk

<http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/drawpaint/feature/famf78paint/famf78paint6.html>

Day Two:

Self Paper Doll

Have the child lie down on a large piece of brown wrapping paper, and draw an outline around the child. Cut out the self doll. Let the child use crayons or paint to do as he likes to finish the doll. He might enjoy cutting out pieces of pretty material for clothes. Yarn or string is fun for hair.

Day Three:

The Self Paper Doll makes a wonderful gift. Consider making a card and sending the doll to a grandparent or other relative. If the child is very attached to the first doll he made, he can make another and write a message on it in lieu of a card. Tracing the outline of your child with his arms outstretched is a nice way to send a "hug" to someone who is sick or who you haven't seen for a while. It's also fun for relatives to see how much your child has grown.

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MRS MOON

Mrs Moon
sitting up in the sky
little old lady
rock-a-bye
with a ball of fading light
and silvery needles
knitting the night

ROGER McGOUGH

LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO

ART

The following activities are taken from Exploring Textile Arts: Making Felt pp.36-39.

Day One:

Practice “how to lay out roving”, “how to felt the fibers”, and “how to full the felted fibers”. Use about 1 oz. of roving for each sample project. This should give you roughly a 12 x 12 inch final product.

Note: Art is a time to experiment and explore artistic materials without fear that the result “won’t look right”. In other words, it is process-oriented rather than product-oriented. (If something you try doesn’t turn out well, that’s actually preferable. We learn much more from our mistakes than from our successes!) Because pure wool roving is much more expensive than crayons and paper, you may feel some pressure to have the result of your felting projects turn out well, not wanting to waste your hard-earned money by discarding them. Please try to look beyond the cost of the materials, however, and focus on learning about and enjoying working with the felt. It is not a waste of money to give your child a quality education; however, cutting short time devoted to artistic exploration by pressuring your child into a product-oriented mentality would be a waste – a very serious waste – of your child’s talents and potential, not to mention that you run the risk of destroying your child’s enjoyment of art time. By the time you and your child begin to do Handwork projects using wool roving, your open-ended experiences in Art will have given you the skills you need to create the product you have in mind.

Day Two:

Practice “how to make designs in felt”. Use the suggestions given for creating graduations of color as well as lines of color.

Day Three:

Spend another day working with designs in felt. Cut shapes from some of your previous day’s activities and incorporate them into your new design. Try working with nonwool items, using thin layers of wool fiber to get them to adhere properly. You can also experiment with machine felting some old wool sweaters (using the directions given on page 40) and cutting the resulting felt into pieces, then adding them to today’s art project.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

NATURE

Day One:

Read Grandfather Twilight. Take a walk with your child at twilight; then take a nighttime Nature walk with your child to see the moon. (To find information on twilight times, as well as moonrise and moonset times for your area, visit www.waldorfcriculum.com.)

Day Two:

Read Look at the Moon. Talk with your child about how the moon can be seen by everyone, all over the world. In China, they have a special festival to celebrate the moon – it is called the Mid-Autumn Festival. Consider celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival at home with your child or by visiting a Chinese cultural center during the celebration of the Festival.

ways to celebrate the full moon: <http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/season/feature/famf97fall/famf97fall7.html>

Day Three:

Take your child to a body of water at nighttime to see the reflection the moon casts. Then read Kitten's First Full Moon.

Day Four:

Continue to walk with your child every few nights throughout the rest of the unit and watch the cycle of the moon waxing and waning. Moon phase information is available on many calendars as well as online.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

Note: You can also learn to tell whether the moon is waxing or waning on any given night, without a moon phase calendar.

O Lady Moon

- O Lady Moon, your horns point to the East;
Shine, be increased!
- O Lady Moon, your horns point to the West;,
Wane, be at rest!

Christine Rossetti

As your child begins to notice that the moon is growing larger or smaller each night, read [Papa, Please Get the Moon For Me.](#)

HANDWORK

This week's activities refer to the website [Shadow Puppets and Their Presentation:](#)
<http://magicalmoonshine.org/shadow.htm>

Day One:

Read [The Day the Babies Crawled Away.](#)

Choose a story that you and your child would like to retell using shadow puppets. Keep it simple! Check [The Storyteller's Start-up Book](#) for some inspiration and ideas. Create a series of animal silhouettes or other puppets that you will use to tell the story. Remember that the shapes need to be clean and simple and that many small details will not be visible during your shadow puppet presentation. If your child seems to be having trouble thinking of illustrating the characters by their shadows, do the "Sun Printing" activity from [Exploring Textile Arts](#), pp.166-167 to reinforce this concept. Color your puppets with a dark paint. (Waldorf schools traditionally do not use black paint so make it a dark color of your choice. The darker the color, the better shadow your puppet will cast.)

Visit waldorfcurriculum.com for links to purchase unit materials, additional Waldorf resources & a community forum on Waldorf education.

LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

Day Two:

If you would like some of your shadow puppets to be able to move, make those puppets today, adding joints following the instructions given in the website above. Practice holding your puppets up in front of a light to see their shadows. Decorate your puppets as desired – remember, to add decorative details to your puppets, you have to think in terms of white space. This presents a special challenge to the child who is used to decorating by adding color and may be too difficult for your child, depending on his age. If decorating the puppets proves to be too frustrating, move on.

Day Three:

Today is the day you get to practice your puppet show! You can be the storyteller and your child the puppeteer, or vice versa. When you are satisfied with your performance, give a grand puppet show to family and friends. You can make the performance as spectacular as you like, with a large sign over the stage announcing the name of the play, printed programs, background music, and more (this is a nice way to get older siblings involved). If all this is too much pressure for your child, you can always give a performance to your dog or other family pet – this will be equally fun and your child will be just as proud.

Note: For more resources on silhouettes and shadow puppetry, visit http://pennybiz.net/store/merchant.mvc?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=PS&Category_Code=silhouettes

LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE

ART

Day One:

Play Dough

Combine 2 cups of flour and 1 cup of salt. Add 1 cup of water and 1 ½ tablespoons of oil. Mix and knead well. If too stiff, add more water; if too sticky, add more flour. For colored play dough, add vegetable food coloring to the water before combining it with the other ingredients. In an air-tight container, this mixture will keep very well. Items made from it will dry hard in a few days, and can then be painted.

Day Two:

Paper Maché

Cut newspaper strips ¼ inch to 1 inch wide by 5 or 6 inches long, depending on the size of the object you plan to make. Make a thin paste of flour and water (add 1 tablespoon of salt per quart of water to preserve the mixture during drying). Coat the form you plan to cover with petroleum jelly so the paper can be removed easily when dry. Dip each strip of newspaper into the flour paste and press out excess paste. Wind strips around the form making 7 or 8 layers. Allow to dry thoroughly, then sand with fine sandpaper. Paint with any kind of paint. You can add "Wilhold" glue to watercolors to make them waterproof. If other paint is used, spray with clear plastic paint when dry.

Day Three:

Colored Sand

Fine white sand may be colored with laundry blueing or crepe paper which has been soaked in water to release the color. The liquid is then mixed with the sand.

LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

NATURE

Day One:

Read "Night Flight" on page 80 of Treasury of Children's Poetry. Then take a Nature walk outside with your child at night and see your own nighttime shadows. This is also a nice camping activity.

Day Two:

Read Night in the Country. Take a nighttime Nature walk – or go camping – and focus on listening to the sounds of the nighttime.

If you live in a more urban area (or even if you don't, perhaps you can visit a friend or relative), write your own companion book called Night in the City. Spend a series of evenings listening to the sounds around you, then have your child dictate the text of your book and create the illustrations.

Day Three:

Read I Took the Moon For a Walk and talk with your child about nocturnal animals. Have you seen any animals out at night? If not, try to take your evening Nature walk a little earlier or a little later and see if you see or hear any.

nocturnal animals: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/nocturnal.shtml>

Day Four:

Potato Printing

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/cr_stamping_accessories/article/0,1789,HGTV_3338_1379910,00.html

Potato printing is the perfect medium for creating a design showing the phases of the moon! Using a medium or dark blue fabric as your base, carve a series of moon phases out of the cut potato halves, showing the changes from full moon to new moon and back again. The potato stamps can be dipped in fabric paint in a white, grey, or silvery color and will have a nice "cratery" look to them if the potato surface is slightly roughened.

HANDWORK

The following activities are taken from More Magic Wool:
Making Magic Wool pp.14-26.

Day One:

A Visit to the Sheep Farm	p.17
Sorting of the Wool	p.18
Washing the Wool	pp.18-19

Try to collect some rainwater in advance as it will give the best results when washing and dyeing your wool.

Day Two:

Mordanting	p.20
Dyeing	pp.20-24

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE

CONTINUED

Focus on creating evening and nighttime colors with your wool. These will be used in later projects for this unit. If you can't find any plants in your area to help you create these colors, try dyeing with Kool-Aid (<http://www.straw.com/cpy/wisdom/koolaid.html>); the colors will not look as natural as those made with plant-dyes but the process can be a bit easier when you're working with small children.

Day Three:

Teasing p.24
Carding by Hand p.25

Set aside your evening and nighttime colors. If you would like to make an Autumn fairy for your Nature table (pp.75-76), dye some more batches of your wool in warmer colors such as brown, yellow, red, and orange. Although your child can help with all the steps in preparing the wool, actual assembly of the Autumn fairy takes skill and patience and is a project best left to an adult.

THE SUN

The sun is a glowing spider
that crawls out
from under the earth
to make her way across the sky
warming and weaving
with her bright old fingers
of light.

GRACE NICHOLS

LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR

ART

Day One:

Set out watercolor paints to use with your child. Read "The Sun" on page 126 of Treasury of Children's Poetry. Study the illustration with your child. Then have your child use watercolors to paint the "bright old fingers" of the sun's light.

Day Two:

For today's watercolor painting activity, have your child paint to the following verse (the verse is read to set the tone; it is not necessary for your child to "illustrate" the verse):

Come golden butterfly, close to me,
Your beautiful golden wings, I should like to see.
You fly like a bird, you sip like a bee,
But you're really a flower the wind has set free.

Day Three:

Here's a wonderful Autumn painting verse to inspire your child:

Tipperty-toes, the smallest elf,
Sat on a mushroom all by himself,
Playing a little tinkling tune
Under the big round harvest moon;
And this is the song that Tipperty made
To sing to the little tune he played.

Red are the hips, red are the haws,

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

Red and gold are the leaves that fall,
Red are the poppies in the corn,
Red berries on the rowan tall;
Red is the big round harvest moon,
And red are my new little dancing shoon.

NATURE

Day One:

Read The Day We Saw the Sun Come Up the night before doing this activity. Then take your child out early in the morning to watch the sun rise. Try to find a spot where you will get a clear view of the sun coming up over the horizon.

Day Two:

Read your child an excerpt from The Phantom Tollbooth "A Colorful Symphony", starting with "The sun was dropping slowly from sight..." all the way through "darkness claimed the forest" (pp.119-124). Then go out and watch the sunset together.

Day Three:

Today read from The Phantom Tollbooth from where you left off; that is, " 'That was a very beautiful sunset,' said Milo..." all the way through "color the whole world himself" (pp.124-127). Talk with your child about what the world would be like without color. Would you like to lead the sunrise yourself?

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

Day Four:

The next morning, take your child to see the sunrise and have him pretend to orchestrate it. Then go inside and read what happens when Milo tries it: from "The idea whirled through his thoughts..." all the way through "on that very strange morning" (pp.127-131).

HANDWORK

Day One:

Bamboo Centerpiece

Using a fine-toothed saw, cut bamboo lengthwise to remove about a third of the bamboo's width; discard the smaller section. Sand interior and exposed edges of remaining piece. To prevent container from rolling, use a file to create a flat surface on the bottom of the exterior. Apply a coat of paste wax to the exterior, and paint the interior with a muted gold metallic paint to reflect light. Fill centerpiece almost to top with rock salt, then work the tea lights into the crystals.

Note: Timber bamboo can be found at many specialty garden centers, dried floral-supply shops, and import stores.

Day Two:

Scrapbook

As this is the beginning of the new school year, you'll want to make a portfolio to record your child's progress. Use cardboard covered with contact paper and let your child decorate the covers. Punch holes in each blank page and fasten with snap rings or colored cord. As the school year progresses, you'll want to add photographs, color photocopies, or sample pieces of your child's work, anecdotes and memorable quotes from your child, memories, reflections, and any momentos that would help you capture the spirit and joy of this school year. You may also want to ask your child what she thought her own best work was each week and why and include that in your record.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

Day Three:

Introduce your child to the Tapestry Table and keep it as an ongoing project throughout the next few weeks of the unit. As you take your Nature walks, gather natural materials and add them to your design. You can also include some of your hand-dyed wool. When the tapestry is complete, remove and frame it.

LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE

ART

The following activities are taken from Exploring Textile Arts:
Pin Weaving pp.44-53.

You will need to prepare the loom in advance of doing these activities with your child (see How to Pin-Weave, pp.46-47). You'll want to make the grid quite a bit larger than shown so that your child may weave without frustration. Collect a box of different scraps of various sizes, colors, and textures of fabric and ribbon.

Day One:

Vertical Slits p.50 (a)

Day Two:

Combining Ribbons and Yarns p.51 (g)

Day Three:

Free-flowing Designs p.51 (h)

NATURE

Day One:

Laminations

Arrange pressed nature specimens (leaves, flowers, grasses, etc.) on background paper. Place a single sheet of facial tissue over them.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

Daub gently with a mixture of one part Elmer's glue and two parts water. Air-dry for several hours. Then cover with a piece of waxed paper and weight under books overnight. These look very attractive scattered around the Nature table, especially for documenting the changing leaf colors of Autumn.

Day Two:

Having practiced working with paper maché in Week Three, you are now ready to create a large beautiful Sun to hang over your Nature table. The easiest way to do this is to blow up a balloon to the size you would like, then drape the newspaper strips around it as a form. Paint your Sun with warm glowing colors. When your work is dry, simply fasten a string to the tied end of the balloon and hang it up.

If paper maché is not a material which your child is comfortable with yet, create a Sun out of unspun wool to hang above your Nature table.

You may choose to hang the Sun over your dining room table if you do a blessing each day which thanks the Sun. One common Waldorf blessing for meals:

Grace

Earth who gives to us this food;
Sun who makes it ripe and good;
Dear Earth, dear Sun, by you we live,
All our thanks to you we give.

Christian Morgenstern

LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

Day Three:

Compose a morning dance to welcome the Sun – this can go along with your morning verse (see example below) or be separate. Greet the Sun each morning with your dance.

I Awaken Every Morning

I awaken every morning
To the glory of the sun,
And the sunlight touches me
And the hearts of everyone,
And I lift up my heart
To the glory of the sun.

I awaken every morning
To the songbirds in the sky,
And I hear their lovely song
As along their way they fly,
And in my heart I rise
With the songbirds in the sky.

I awaken every morning
To the people that I know,
And I see in their eyes
All the love and care they show,
And I hold in my heart
All the people that I know.

Trevor Smith Westgarth

LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

Day Four:

When you go outside this morning to greet the day, look over your shoulder and watch your shadow doing the morning dance too!

HANDWORK

The following activities are taken from More Magic Wool.

Day One:

Making Magic Wool pp.14-26

Prepare, mordant, and dye a series of wool colors for the sunrise and daytime. These warmer colors should be set aside with the evening and nighttime colors previously dyed.

Day Two:

Hand-felted Mat pp.56-57

Using some of the expertise gained in the felting activities from Art: Week One, create a hand-felted mat in a scene of your choice. It will work best if you leave the colors of the scenery as a variety of green tones, as shown in the illustration. You can purchase or dye wool roving in these shades of green as you prefer. Don't forget to try to incorporate a variety of texture elements into your design (such as was practiced in Art) to keep the landscape interesting.

Day Three:

Miniature Gnomes p.58

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

Make several miniature gnomes to inhabit your landscape.

Demonstrate to your child how to tell and act out stories using these gnomes. To add variety and interest to these stories, use the sunrise or nighttime wools to illustrate how time passes. Simply lay the wool loosely over the scenery and weave it into the plot of your story. Refer to [The Storyteller's Start-up Book](#) if you need additional resources to help develop your storytelling skills.

Encourage your child to become a storyteller too, and to use the felted background, gnome characters, and dyed wools to create and tell a story with you as the audience.

THE FALLING STAR

I saw a star slide down the sky,
Blinding the north as it went by,
Too lovely to be bought or sold,
Too burning and too quick to hold,
Good only to make wishes on
And then forever to be gone.

SARA TEASDALE

LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX

ART

The following activities are taken from Exploring Textile Arts:
Resists pp.151-153.

Day One:

Mechanical Resists – 1
p.152

Day Two:

Mechanical Resists – 2
p.152

Day Three:

Mechanical Resists – 3
p.152

NATURE

Day One:

For your camping adventures this week, try a little stargazing: <http://familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/buildmodel/feature/famf77campout/famf77campout4.html>

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

To learn some of the constellations in advance, adults might want to make use of the recommended set of constellation cards (see Also Recommended).

Day Two:

Apple Printing

Similar to the Potato Printing in Week Three, cut an apple in half (across the middle), then dip it in different colors of tempera paint arranged in a muffin tin and use the apple as a stamp. Do this several times; your child will be amazed to find that every apple contains the shape of a tiny star.

My Nice Red Rosy Apple

My nice red rosy apple
Has a secret unseen,
You'd see if you could slip inside,
Five rooms so neat and clean.

In each room there are living
Two pips so black and bright,
Asleep they are and dreaming
Of lovely warm sunlight.

And sometimes they are dreaming
Of many things to be,
How soon they will be hanging
Upon the Christmas Tree.

Traditional

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

Day Three:

Plastic Mobiles

Draw with a mixture of tempera and glue on pieces of clear acetate. Cut into star shapes and attach with thread to form a mobile. This makes a nice decoration hanging over your child's bed.

If you prefer, you can fasten the stars directly to your child's wall – in the shape of a constellation or randomly.

If you are opposed to the idea of using acetate, you can read the chapter "Mrs. Corry" from Mary Poppins and make your stars out of gold paper.

Day Four:

Go camping with your child (or just go snuggle outside together in the evening and watch the sky). Read the chapter "The Dancing Cow" from Mary Poppins and look for falling stars.

HANDWORK

The following activities are taken from More Magic Wool:
Magic Wool and the Seasons pp.63-66.

Day One:

The changing world in Autumn is a wonderful inspiration for a Seasonal Tree for your Nature table. Begin by Making the Basic Picture pp.63-65.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

Day Two:

Decorate your tree for the current season. Make sure you have enough colors of dyed wool to last you throughout the changing seasons of the year; if not, create or purchase the needed colors.

Day Three:

Consider adding some non-wool elements to your Seasonal Tree display. For example, if you would like to do a scene showing your tree at nightfall, you would drape your tree in the nighttime wools you dyed previously and nestle some hard sparkly objects in its sky to be the stars, such as tiny crystals, rocks, or even buttons. Of course, you'll need to make sure there is no way any small child in your household could reach or choke upon these objects. For an Autumn seasonal tree, you may want to tuck some acorn caps, twigs, or other natural materials into your scene to add interest and realism.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS:

One of the biggest challenges you may face as a homeschooling parent is the tendency to move toward work which is too academic too early on. Although there are lots of interesting activities you can do to explore the wonder of shadows and our sun, moon, and stars, be vigilant that you are preserving the magic and wonder of this special time in your child's life and not becoming overly technical or scientific in your explanations. Let your child experience the natural world with curiosity and joy.

If you begin to feel that you are moving too much into the academic realm with your young child, here are some suggestions:

HELPFUL HINTS:

Have some big boxes on hand for use as pretend boats, trains, cars, and houses.

Toss a blanket over a card table for a house.

Collect small match boxes, corks, wooden spools, scraps of bright paper and cloth, toothpicks, glue, and crayons to make furnishings for cardboard box rooms or a doll house.

THINGS TO PAINT ON:

Besides paper try painting on

- pieces of cardboard
- corrugated paper
- egg cartons
- newspaper
- linoleum tiles
- wood

You can make paste paint adhere to glass, metal, plastic, or aluminum foil by adding a little detergent to the paint.

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THINGS TO PAINT WITH:

Along with brushes, try painting with

- sponges
- cotton balls
- feathers
- hair rollers
- leaves or seed pods
- wads of paper
- wooden tongue depressors
- toothpicks
- carpet samples
- cardboard tubes
- rocks
- erasers

FINGER PAINT:

Mix 1 cup dry starch with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water in a container that can take boiling water. Pour in $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups boiling water and stir very rapidly. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup powdered detergent and stir again until smooth. Add powdered tempera or vegetable food coloring for desired color. Store in container with tight lid. Makes 1 pint.

OR

Simply add liquid laundry starch to powdered tempera until the consistency of heavy cream.

OR

Buy a can of nonmentholated shaving soap and let your child finger paint on a kitchen table or other nonporous surface. Colored tempera paint can be sprinkled here and there for color. When the soap becomes dry, add a few drops of water or more shaving soap. The soap wipes off easily with a dry towel, and is less messy to clean up than finger paint.

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APPENDIX:

The Mid-Autumn Festival

The Mid-Autumn Festival was once a day of thanksgiving for the rice harvest. It was an outdoor festival when people went out to the valleys and mountains to hike and picnic. Today the Mid-Autumn Festival is still spent outdoors, but now it is a celebration of the moon and the beauty of autumn.

According to the Chinese calendar, autumn falls on the seventh, eighth, and ninth months of the year. The Mid-Autumn Festival takes place on the 15th day of the eighth month, at the middle of autumn on the night of the full moon. On this night, the moon is at its roundest and brightest. It is a time to sit outside with friends and family, enjoy the moonlight, and eat mooncakes.

There are many legends about the moon that people remember at the Mid-Autumn Festival. Here's the story of the lady in the moon:

The Legend of Heng O

Once upon a time, in the heavenly court of the Jade Emperor, a beautiful servant named Heng O broke a very valuable vase and was sent to earth as punishment. There she lived with a poor family until the day she met Hou Yi, the most famous archer in the land. He fell in love with her immediately, and they got married.

Now, they should have lived happily ever after, but unfortunately, one thing about Heng O made this impossible. She was intelligent and beautiful and lots of fun, but she was more curious than a million cats! That's how she had broken the vase at the Jade Emperor's palace; she was so eager to see what was inside that she knocked it over.

Hou Yi loved his wife very much, but he was sure that her curiosity would get her into trouble one day. "Oh, nonsense," Heng O sniffed. "What's wrong with being interested in things, hmmm?"

The two lived happily together until one day when something very strange happened. Instead of just one sun rising in the morning, TEN suns rose, each one hotter than the last! In the span of an hour, all of the crops were scorched. People were being sunburned, and it was so hot all of the rivers dried up! Hou Yi knew someone had to do something about this before the whole land became a fireball, so he took his magical arrows and carefully shot down all of the suns except one. The sky became blue again and all the people cheered with relief.

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The Jade Emperor heard how Hou Yi had saved his people, and so he descended from his heavenly court to reward him. "To think, a mortal has accomplished something this extraordinary!" he said to himself.

When he got to Hou Yi's house, the first thing he saw was Heng O. He remembered her from his court, and she yelped and ran into the house. The Jade Emperor swept in after her.

"Hou Yi, I have heard about your wonderful archery skills and how you saved the land. I am forever grateful for your help."

Hou Yi was amazed that the Jade Emperor had actually descended to speak to him! He offered him all of the benefits of his household and tried to make him as comfortable as possible. "Jade Emperor, your presence is an honor! I only wish my wife, Heng O, was here to see you!" he explained.

The Jade Emperor smiled. "As a reward for your good deed, I have decided to give you the Elixir of Life!" He carefully placed a small bottle of liquid on the table. "Drink this bottle up, and you will ascend to the heavenly court, where you will live forever!"

Hou Yi gasped. He had never been granted such an honor before. Still, he might miss his home on earth.

As if reading his thoughts, the Jade Emperor said, "There are only two conditions. Do not drink the elixir until a year from today. This will give you plenty of time to learn if you are ready to say good-bye to earth and live forever in the heavens. And second, do not tell your wife about this. Her curiosity has not gone unnoticed by me!"

The Jade Emperor left Hou Yi's house and he carefully hid the bottle under a rafter in the roof. He didn't like hiding anything from Heng O, but he knew the emperor was right.

The year passed quickly and Hou Yi was still undecided about drinking the elixir. One day, he went out, and Heng O decided to clean the house from top to bottom. She began dusting under the rafters using a tall ladder, and before she got very far, she discovered the little bottle containing the elixir.

I wonder what this is, she thought, swirling the liquid in the bottle. Who would have put this bottle in such a strange place? Hou Yi probably hid it because he wanted to keep this all to himself. She sniffed. Well, I'll show him. I'll drink it all up and then fill it with water so he doesn't know the difference. That'll teach that silly man.

So, she began to drink the elixir, and as she did, she got the strangest sensation. She felt her body getting lighter, and start to float. But just as she had drunk half the elixir, Hou Yi came in and saw what she was doing.

"Heng O, don't do it!" he called up to her. He startled her so much that she dropped the bottle and it shattered, spilling half the elixir all over the floor. Heng O floated up to the ceiling and began to slide to the window.

"See what your curiosity has done!" Hou Yi shouted up to her angrily.

"Well, it would never have happened if you had told me what was in the bottle," she called, just as she floated outside.

Heng O drifted up and up, but because she had only drunk half the elixir, she only reached the moon instead of the heavenly court. There she built a house and stays to this day.

Hou Yi was angry with his wife, but he began to miss her very much. The Jade Emperor realized how unhappy he was and decided to build him a house in the sun so he could be close to Heng O. Now he lives in the sun and Heng O lives in the moon. Once a year during autumn, when Heng O's full-moon house is the brightest, Hou Yi visits his wife. This is when the Chinese people celebrate the Moon Festival and families reunite, just like the separated couple in the heavens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The summary of the Mid-Autum Festival is from [Festivals of the World: China](#).

This version of the Legend of Heng O is from [The Goodnight Book: for moms and little ones](#).

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CHINESE CULTURE RESOURCES

When is the Mid-Autumn Festival? <http://www.chinapage.com/Moon/moon-festival.html>
September 18 (2005)

Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco <http://www.c-c-c.org/>

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
The Festival of China: October 2005
<http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/festivals/05-06/china/feature/master.html>

The New York Chinese Cultural Center <http://www.chinesedance.org/>

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CHINESE CULTURE RESOURCES

Moonbeams, Dumplings & Dragon Boats: A Treasury of Chinese Holiday Tales, Activities & Recipes
by Nina Simonds, Leslie Swartz and the Children's Museum, Boston, illus. by Meilo So

From School Library Journal

Grade 4-7-This book features five holidays: Chinese New Year and the Lantern Festival, Qing Ming, the Dragon Boat Festival, and the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. Each section begins with a one-page description of the history and customs of the festival and is followed by a four-to six-page story, from one to three recipes, and two or three crafts or games. The headings on each page appear in both English typeface and Chinese calligraphy; a guide to Chinese pronunciation is included. The ample white space surrounding the text is filled with small, whimsical watercolor illustrations. Each of the four sections is introduced by a dynamic, detailed watercolor painting on a double-page spread. They include a dragon parade complete with fireworks, kites flying above a family honoring ancestors at a grave, a dragon boat race, and preparations for a moon ceremony. A two-page resource section is divided into three parts: of interest to adults, of interest to young readers, and Internet sources. Most books for young readers about Chinese holidays stress Chinese New Year; only two others feature the full range of annual festivals. Carol Stepanchuk's *Red Eggs & Dragon Boats* (Pacific View, 1994) is a shorter book with a similar scope, but fewer recipes and crafts/activities. Judith Karen Gee's *A Book of Chinese Festivals* (Steam RR, 1989; o.p.) offers a brief description of each holiday but no recipes or other activities. *Moonbeams* is a useful, visually appealing addition to any holiday collection.

Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA
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