

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.

ESSENTIAL STORIES

Houses from the Sea. by Alice E. Goudey.

The Snowy Day. Ezra Jack Keats.

Seven Blind Mice. Ed Young.

Red Berry Wool. Robyn Eversole. paintings by Tim Coffey.

Sing a Song of Popcorn: Every Child's Book of Poems. selected by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, et al.
illustrated by nine Caldecott Medal artists.

Halibut Jackson. by David Lucas.

What Do You Do With a Tail Like This? Steve Jenkins & Robin Page.

Fairy Houses. Tracy Kane.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt. Michael Rosen. Helen Oxenbury.

Zen Shorts. by Jon J. Muth.

Henri Rousseau. Ernest Lloyd Raboff.

Dancing with Degas. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

A Picnic with Monet. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

In the Garden with Van Gogh. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

A Magical Day with Matisse. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

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ESSENTIAL STORIES

Note

Two additional titles have now been released in this series:

Sharing with Renoir. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

Sunday with Seurat. Julie Merberg and Suzanne Bober.

ALSO RECOMMENDED

MUSIC & MOVEMENT

This is the Way We Wash a Day songbook and CD. from Naturally You Can Sing.
<http://www.naturallyyoucansing.com/>

ART

Children and Painting. Cathy Weisman Topal.

Alice in Wonderland. illus. by Cooper Edens (and others in series, for read-alouds)

NATURE

Young Naturalist's Notebook. from Hearthsong.
<http://www.hearthsong.com>

HANDWORK

The Children's Year. Stephanie Cooper, et al.

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ALSO RECOMMENDED

PLAY

How to Use Child-Sized Masterpieces. Aline D. Wolf.

- art postcards
- Nautilus puzzle by Spiel und Holz
- child-sized washbasin, washboard, clothesline & clothespins
- sandpaper blocks

We always recommend a musical instrument for each unit; this one is exceeding easy to make on your own.

Sandpaper Blocks

Materials

2 4-inch pieces of a two-by-four piece of wood (for each pair)

Sandpaper

Glue

Directions

Glue sandpaper onto the wood and rub together for an interesting sound.

It is nice to make an assortment of these in different grits and compare.

If desired, glue a small handle on each block. A small wooden doorknob from the hardware store should be about right.

See a picture: http://www.kindermusik.com.au/shop/speciality_instruments.htm

WEEK ONE:

FROM _____ TO _____

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

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WEEK TWO:

FROM _____ TO _____

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

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WEEK THREE:

FROM _____ TO _____

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

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WEEK FOUR:

FROM _____ TO _____

notes for next week:

Music & Movement						
Art						
Nature						
Cooking						
Play						
Handwork						
Helping						
Stories						

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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						

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JOURNAL: WEEK ONE

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JOURNAL: WEEK TWO

Visit waldorfcriculum.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

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

LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE

ART

The following activities are from Children and Painting.

Day One:

"Getting in Touch with Your Painting Arm" page 10

Day Two:

"Developing a Brushstroke Vocabulary" page 12

Day Three:

"Painting to Music" page 18

NATURE

Day One:

As with all of our preschool units, we recommend starting with re-evaluating your Nature table. First take a Nature walk and observe the sights and sounds of the season. Then choose a background silk, Nature table figures or cards, and objects which represent the season to you and your child. For example, you might wish to make some of the Spring flower fairies from The Children's Year (snowdrop p. 36, crocus p. 37, primrose p. 37, violet p. 38). If you celebrate Easter, the projects 10 through 20 from this book (pages 23 to 35) will be helpful suggestions. Regardless of your religion, knitted ducks or pompom rabbits are nice additions to a Spring table.

Day Two:

Take your child to see a sheep being sheared. Search online to find a location near you (visit Google www.google.com and type "sheep shearing demonstration [your state name]" in the search box). This is an important part of the introduction to this unit so plan to begin ONLY after seeing a demonstration, even if it means postponing the topic by a few weeks. Sheep are generally sheared in April and May.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE CONTINUED

Day Three:

Purchase some raw wool, either at the site where you saw the sheep shearing or online (visit www.waldorfcriculum.com for an up-to-date list of suppliers). This is wool which has not been washed since it came off the sheep. Feel its greasy texture (from the lanolin) and matted surface. It is amazing how much the wool will change as you go through the process of making it into fabric.

Day Four:

Wash your wool gently and thoroughly; hang to dry. This is a good time to read Red Berry Wool.

Washing raw wool: <http://www.hjsstudio.com/wash.html>

There are also directions for this on page 152 of Toymaking with Children (if you have it on hand from the Color unit).

HANDWORK

Day One:

Later in this unit, you'll be gathering and drying herbs and flowers for soap-making. Choose an assortment of potted plants to grow either in your home (if you are short on outdoor space) or in your yard. Plants from the nursery are best, as opposed to starting your own from seeds, so that they will be ready for harvesting in a few weeks' time. Make plant markers to label your new plants – a simple way is to purchase wooden popsicle sticks and an assortment of smallish wooden shapes from a craft store (we are using a pack of 1 1/8 – 3 3/8 inch wooden stars). Write the name of the plant on the star and glue it to the popsicle stick. Let dry.

Day Two:

Add your plant labels to the garden or pots. If you have an outside garden, this will be especially handy when your young children go to water the plants. Instead of trying to guess where the plants are that need tending, they will look for the shapes.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK ONE CONTINUED

Day Three:

Make a rucksack for your child (The Children's Year, project 1). This is very practical storage for storing gardening tools and supplies and is easier for a child than carrying a bucket of gardening things all around the yard. The rucksack can also be used as a backpack for camping or other overnight trips, toy storage, or for grocery shopping at the farmer's market.

If you don't feel up to making a rucksack, an alternative project for this day is to make a nice border around your new flower bed. Your child can choose special rocks, pieces of driftwood or shells, or carry bricks... whatever the material is of your choosing (or his). This helps to establish it as a special, well cared for space and continues the message that your child will play an important role in tending it.

With this good beginning, don't forget to water! Every other day at about 10 am is usually a good time. Although underground perforated drip hoses provide the best watering system, I think having your child lug a watering can, or even carrying small batches of water in paper cups, is a good way to go. Track 26 in This is the Way We Wash-a-Day is called "Little Watering Can" and would be a wonderful song to sing while doing this task.

LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO

ART

The following activities are from Children and Painting. Read in advance the directions for "Painting a Texture Chart" (page 24).

Day One:

Practice creating different textures using different parts of the paintbrush, as shown on page 24.

Day Two:

With your child, gather a variety of materials with a wide range of textures, such as those shown on page 25.

Give your child the opportunity to feel each of the textures you have chosen, but it is not necessary to do any verbal comparison. Just set the stage for exploration and stand back. Then set your collection aside for tomorrow. This is a good time to read Seven Blind Mice. You might enjoy setting up some blindfold games for your child (if he is not frightened by being blindfolded). Try giving him several household objects to identify, or asking him to match pairs of identical objects (set out six objects – three pairs – to start).

Day Three:

"Painting a Texture Chart" page 24

This is a good time to read We're Going on a Bear Hunt. Perhaps take a Nature walk outside; the texture painting exercise will open your child's eyes to looking at the world outside in a different way.

NATURE

Day One: Teasing

Take a portion of your clean dry wool (at each stage of the process – except the dirty raw wool – keep some set aside before moving on to the next step of processing, so that at the end you can display the entire progression from fleece to cloth) and show your child how to

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO

CONTINUED

tease the wool. This means simply slowly and gently pulling, not tearing, the wool apart. Again, if you have [Toymaking with Children](#) from the Color unit, you can find a picture of children doing this, along with a nice discussion of the emotional effects of this slow and rhythmical task. Teasing the wool creates a loose fluffy pile of airy tufts of wool which is nice for projects and imaginative play.

Day Two: Carding

Next, *card* a portion of your remaining clean dry wool. This is the process of making all the fibers smoothly aligned – different from the airy puffs created by teasing – which is called roving. Hand carders and drum carders (for larger quantities of wool) are both available for this job. It is best to use hand carders so your child can experience the rhythmical motion.

how to use hand carders: <http://www.joyofhandspinning.com/hand-carding.html>

Some families report good success using dog brushes to card small amounts of wool. If a set of hand carders is out of your budget, you may want to try this. Or you can skip it... but in order to progress into spinning, you *will* need to card at least some of your wool. Check to see if there is a local fiber artists guild near you; you may be able to borrow hand carders.

Day Three: Spinning

Again, keeping some of your wool roving set aside (more than just for your display; many Waldorf projects call for unspun wool) *spin* the remainder. As with carding a variety of tools are available. A spinning wheel is used for large amounts – this probably won't apply to you but, again, you can borrow one – and they can be expensive. But you can make a drop spindle very inexpensively.

how to make a drop spindle: <http://www.joyofhandspinning.com/make-dropspin.html>

Spinning your wool is what makes it into yarn or thread. The longer the fibers of the wool, the better it will spin. If you find that the wool you have purchased has very short fibers, you may want to find a different supplier in order to spin your own yarn successfully. Or, you may be happy buying wool yarn at this point. It is easy to find 100% wool yarn now that felting is so fashionable (check a craft store like Michaels if there is no specialty yarn store near you) and your child has now learned where it comes from. Don't get so frustrated that your child begins to sense the unit isn't fun. If following the journey of wool the entire way, from the sheep's back to a sweater on your back, isn't for you – that's fine! You and your child should primarily enjoy the experiences in the unit so do what is comfortable for *you*.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO CONTINUED

If you do purchase yarn, remember to make it a natural color so that you can still practice dyeing it on your own.

Day Four: Winding

Today you will have your child help you to *wind* the wool into a ball. (This can – and should – be done with your purchased yarn as well; yarn which comes in skeins always has to first be rewound into a ball before being used in any projects... or it will tangle.) Again, focus on enjoying the slow rhythmical work of the task and the contrast in the texture of the wool at each stage (although you don't need to verbally point this out to your child). There are several nice Waldorf verses to accompany this kind of task; consider beginning with

May our fingers be nimble,
And our hearts be glad,
In every task we do.

Or, sing Track 48 from [This is the Way We Wash-a-Day](#), "Help Me Wind My Ball of Wool."

HANDWORK: LAUNDRY

Day One:

Begin your exploration of washing clothing by hand (a wonderful way to stop and experience the texture of your clothing!) by making soap powder. Simply grate a bar of laundry soap (I prefer Zote soap; Fels Naptha has a caution label on the side stating not to touch it with your hands). Grating a bar of soap is another fun way to explore texture.

Take one cup of the grated soap and mix with ½ cup Arm & Hammer washing soda and ½ cup borax. For a light load use 1 tablespoon. Yes, tablespoon! For a large or heavily soiled load use 2 tablespoons. This recipe is very inexpensive and lasts a long time.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK TWO

CONTINUED

WHERE TO FIND INGREDIENTS

Fels-Naptha® Laundry Soap Bar: Made by the Dial Soap Company, so any store that carries Dial should be able to get it for you. If they carry it, it will be found in the bar soap or laundry soap aisle at your regular supermarket. It is usually on the bottom shelf. Zote is a Mexican brand of laundry soap and may be found in larger grocery stores or in a Mexican grocery store. If you can't find it in your area, try Ivory Soap instead.

Super Washing Soda: Washing Soda can be found on the laundry detergent aisle of your supermarket. It comes in a 55-ounce yellow box. Baking soda SHOULD NOT be used in place of washing soda. They are completely different products, although they are both made by Arm & Hammer.

Borax: One brand name is 20 Mule Team® Borax (also owned by Dial). It is also found on the laundry detergent aisle.

Day Two:

Let your child experience washing laundry with a washbasin and a washboard. Glass washboards are less likely to have splinters but they are heavier, so you have to decide what kind you prefer. They may be found in antique stores or purchased on eBay. (Washboards also make great musical instruments, like in the Sound unit, and are a wonderful tool for wet felting, as in the Insects unit. It's worth having one on hand.) When you are done with your laundry, hang it to dry on a clothesline.

Although it will be most fun for your child to wash her own clothes, larger household things like towels and blankets are not a good choice. They will be heavy and tiring. It's best to try just doing a few things to begin, or having your child wash her doll's clothes and bedding or her play cloths.

For a song to sing while hand washing, try Track 19 from [This is the Way We Wash-a-Day](#), "Washin' Woolies."

Day Three:

Bring your dry laundry, fold it and put it away. If it feels stiff as a board, use a little vinegar in the rinse water next time. It acts as a natural fabric softener.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE

ART

The following activities are from Children and Painting.

Day One:

"Four Different Approaches" page 90

Day Two:

"Landscapes and Waterscapes" page 26

Day Three:

"Adding Color to Texture Paintings" page 28

NATURE: DYEING WOOL

Day One:

This week you will be dyeing your yarn and some of your unspun roving if you wish (having unspun wool in different colors is wonderful for imaginative play). Gather materials and from the outside to make dyes. Some common natural dyestuff are:

Carrots	Turmeric
Beets and beet greens	Spinach
Mint leaves	Red cabbage
Red and yellow onion skins	Peach leaves
Dandelion heads	
Coffee beans	
Tea leaves	

Visit <http://www.pioneerthinking.com/naturaldyes.html> for more!

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK THREE CONTINUED

Day Two:

Prepare your dyes (see how to dye material naturally: http://www.ehow.com/how_1351_dye-material-naturally.html).

Place the wool in each dye bath and bring to a gentle simmer. Let simmer one hour, then rest in the dye bath overnight. Remember that the colors will be much lighter after the wool dries. You can take some of each batch of wool out and leave some in overnight to achieve a variety of shades.

Day Three:

Gently wash your wool until the water runs clear and hang it out to dry.

Day Four:

Try overdyeing some of each batch of wool for new and interesting colors.

HANDWORK: FAIRY HOUSES

Day One:

To introduce this activity, read Fairy Houses including "How to Get Started with Your Fairy House". Then take a walk around your garden or backyard and choose the best location for a fairy house. Build the house today, then go back and check on it each day. Just as Kristen did, add a little more each time as inspiration strikes. Find tips and plenty of examples in the back of the book.

Day Two:

Add some food for your fairies to eat and a water feature.

Day Three:

Add beautiful decorations to your fairy house.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR

ART

The following activities are from How to Use Child-Size Masterpieces for Art Appreciation. Be sure to read all of the preliminary information as well as the specific tips for selecting the postcards used in Steps 1, 2, and 3.

Day One:

"Buying the Postcards" page 10

Introduce the activity by taking your child to an art museum. You don't need to have any kind of heavy discussion about the art you see, just walk around and enjoy yourselves. Before you leave, visit the gift shop and select your art cards. I recommend beginning to collect cards well in advance so that you have a collection which is sufficiently large enough for the activities but it is also good for your child to have cards of artwork he has seen in person – and it makes an excellent introduction to the concept of art cards.

Day Two:

"Caring for the Postcards" page 8

Today, set the stage for the activity by giving your children the preparatory talk that she recommends in this section of the book.

This is also your day for "Arranging Them in Sets", "Making the Pocket Folders", and "Mounting the Postcards", all of which are described on page 11. Don't bother with "Printing Names and Titles" as steps 4 through 8 are not suitable for preschoolers.

Day Three:

Finally, you can begin by giving your child the folder for Step 1. Your child will no doubt proceed very quickly and be ready for and interested in the challenges of Steps 2 and 3. These activities are seen as games by children. Aline Wolf recommends setting up Easy, Intermediate, and Advanced sets of cards for each of these Steps. For each step, spend some time on it and give your child the opportunity to do the exercises with several sets of cards at each level. It's not about rushing on to the next step as quickly as possible. Your child will give you clues as to how to proceed.

Also, please remember that you are not teaching your child the names of the painters or the paintings. Step 3 is as far as you should go with a preschool child. You can do many many instances of Step 3 and still provide your child with new and stimulating explorations.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

NATURE: SHELLS

Day One:

Introduce this week's Nature topic by reading Houses From the Sea. Take a Nature walk along a beach and see what you find. Gather some shells which particularly appeal to you and place them on the Nature table. Maybe you can add a small bathtub to your fairy house!

Day Two:

Shells may be made into beautiful candles. Simply remove the wick and small metal disk from a tealight and place in the bottom the bottom of a stable shell. Melt and pour wax (pure beeswax is best, it may be found in block form at some craft stores or online) to fill the shell then let stand until hardened.

Day Three:

Focus on the texture of the shells that you have gathered (you can also buy shells from a craft store). Again, blindfold your child – if she is willing – and ask her to find the shells that match. Arrange them into pairs in advance. Take the blindfold off and see if you are correct!

Do some texture rubbings of your shells. Place a piece of lightweight paper over the shell surface and gently rub with the side of a block beeswax crayon. Gather a variety of texture rubbings and compare them (do this by simply laying them side by side – it's not necessary to ask your child to articulate his thoughts). Note: this is easiest to do if only one color of crayon is used throughout.

Day Four:

Explore other wonderful textures from the sea. You may gather and dry seaweed (or try eating some, available at health food stores and some restaurants) or purchase a natural sponge for your child's bath. There is an amazing difference between the feeling of a natural and an artificial sponge. Or use small sponges and do a sponge painting project to decorate a room of your house. Your child will love to help and there's no better way to enjoy the wonderful variety of marking with made be made by the texture of a sponge.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FOUR CONTINUED

HANDWORK: SOAPMAKING

This week you will be gathering and drying herbs and flowers for use in soap. You can also purchase dried flower petals and herbs, but try to use those from your garden if you can. Experiment with different combinations. To dry your herbs and flowers, either press them according to the directions in Young Naturalist's Notebook or use a microwave: <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/hil/hil-8111.html>.

My family will be using a soapmaking kit this week called Soothing Soaps for Healthy Skin Soapmaking book & Kit by Sunfeather Natural Soap Company so the following recipes are based on that. If you need ideas for different combinations to use in your own creations, try adding some of these natural ingredients into your next batch of soap:

Oatmeal

Lavender buds

Rose petals

Calendula petals

Poppy seeds

Spearmint leaves

Peppermint leaves

Lemon balm leaves

Sage leaves

You might even end up growing a soap garden!

Although you can make your own soap by hand, the process is not very safe for young children. Lye can be fatal if swallowed. We recommend melt and pour soaps with pre-made glycerin soap blocks. Find molds at your local craft store or simply use muffin tins or mini loaf pans (cut soap into slices) from your kitchen. Another fun thing to add to soap is tiny shells, which are gradually revealed as the soap wears away. Let your child accompany you on your Nature walks to discover soapmaking ingredients. As you gather plant materials, sing Track 29 from This is the Way We Wash-a-Day, "Fairies of Water, Fire, Air & Earth."

Day One:

Lavender and Rosemary Soap

Day Two:

Chamomile, Sage, and Laminaria Seaweed Scrub Cleanser

Day Three:

Fresh Aloe Vera and Lemon Balm Soap

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE

ART

The following activities are from Children and Painting.

Day One:

"Mixed Media: Composing a Color Collage" page 48

Day Two:

"Mixed Media: Painting the Collage" page 48

Day Three:

"Using a Pointillist Approach" page 51

NATURE

Here are several suggestions of projects which will let your child enjoy his new yarn. They are all from The Children's Year.

Day One:

"Finger Knitted Cord" page 16

Day Two:

"Twisted Cord" page 17

Day Three:

"Eye of God" page 19

Day Four:

Your child will also enjoy seeing you use his yarn in projects. Consider using it in your own knitting projects (plenty of clothing and toy patterns are included in The Children's Year) or, if you have a loom, even weaving some of it into cloth. There's a wonderful weaving song in This is the Way We Wash-a-Day called "Mother's A-Weaving" (Track 7) which can also be done as a movement verse at circle time.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK FIVE CONTINUED

HANDWORK: TOYMAKING

The following activities are from The Children's Year. There are directions for making toys throughout the book so don't limit yourself to those only suggested in the Spring chapter.

Day One:

"Somersaulting bear" page 13

Day Two:

"A moving picture – ducks and fishes" page 21

Day Three:

"A moving picture – an elephant" page 22

LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX

ART

The following activities are from Children and Painting.

Day One:

"Serendipitous Paintings" page 136

Day Two:

"Painting from Direct Observation" page 140

Day Three:

"A Gallery of Mixed Media Ideas" page 142

Using a variety of picture books from this unit, study the style of illustration of each and try to imitate it. In the case of the poetry collection Sing a Song of Popcorn, a different illustrator is used for each chapter of the book. There is also a variety of illustration styles used in Zen Shorts and Alice in Wonderland (edited by Cooper Edens). Cut paper collage is used in What Do You Do With a Tail Like This? and The Snowy Day. Consider what types of mixed media could be used to imitate each illustrator's style. Have fun!

(Do not use the art print books for this activity – Degas, Monet, Matisse, Renoir, Seurat, Van Gogh, Rousseau)

Another mixed media project to try is illustrated at the top of page 21.

Mixed media gives your child a chance to practice more and explore the potential of each art material, gain confidence and further hone his skills – as well as to speculate about new and exciting combinations may arise from blending several media. Texture activities such as these may be done over and over without boring your child. If you find that you particularly enjoy mixed media and collage, try making an art piece of each season to display over your Nature table. What kinds of colors and brushstrokes would help express the lightness and newness of a Spring morning? What natural materials would be good in an Autumn collage? Would colored pencils or oil pastels be better to convey the bright bustle of Summer? Texture is a topic which can be enjoyably studied throughout the year.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

NATURE

The following activities are from Young Naturalist's Notebook. It is not necessary for you to make a map of your backyard (this is a little too complicated for preschool) but many of the activities they suggest are a wonderful way of exploring your property.

Day One:

Trees: "Leaf Prints" and "Pressed Leaves"

Try also making a Leaf Print Tablecloth:

<http://www.marthastewart.com/page.jhtml?type=content&id=tv3635&contentGroup=TV&site=living>

Day Two:

Mammals: "Be a Detective" and "Tracking Tips"

This is a good time to read The Snowy Day.

Day Three:

Reptiles: "Make a Toad House" and "Tough Turtles"

Visit a Nature center – or find a turtle in your back yard – which you can touch. Make sure you wash your hands afterwards as turtles can carry salmonella.

Day Four:

Weather: "Make a Wind Sock" and "Pinecone Forest"

This is a good time to do "Painting a Weather Chart" from Children and Painting, page 14.

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LESSON PLANS: WEEK SIX CONTINUED

HANDWORK: TOYMAKING

The following activities are from The Children's Year. There are directions for making toys throughout the book so don't limit yourself to those only suggested in the Spring chapter.

Day One:

"A willow whistle" page 35

Day Two:

"Silk rainbow fairy mobile" page 39

Day Three:

"The plank" page 42

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

NEWSLETTER TOPICS

Watch for our website to be updated with newsletter topics corresponding to this unit. These newsletters are our actual weekly lesson plans as we implement the unit and contain many additional ideas.

You may also feel free to contact us at any time for additional support as you implement this unit

waldorf_curric@yahoo.com

or consider joining our Yahoo Group to meet other families following along with this program. Sign up through the link on our website, www.waldorfcriculum.com, or by visiting the Group page directly <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/waldorfcriculum/>.

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