

KINDERGARTEN
TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY

FIRST LEARNING PERIOD
By Marguerite Vulfs

Introduction to
The Kindergarten Day

Morning Circle

Free Play – Daily Offering

Story

Closing the Day

Looking Ahead to
Second Learning Period

INTRODUCTION TO THE KINDERGARTEN DAY
By Marguerite Vulfs

I have divided the Kindergarten Day into the following sections:

MORNING CIRCLE

FREE PLAY – DAILY OFFERING

SNACK

OUTSIDE PLAY

SCIENCE – MATHEMATICS OFFERING

STORY

CLOSING THE DAY

LUNCH

As a home school family, you can of course set whatever schedule and rhythm that works best for you. For instance, story might be told at bedtime. It helps to establish a rhythm to your day. If this seems impossible at first, begin with one element. I have found that five minutes a day of contemplating the natural world is a helpful beginning.

I have given indications and examples for each of the offerings. Most of what I have written is directed to the five and six year old kindergarten age child. If your child is a transitional kindergartener, I will indicate in each section what is appropriate for their age if it differs from the examples offered.

These offerings are in addition to the Oak Meadow curriculum should you wish to use it. Each Waldorf-inspired curriculum has been designed for diverse groups of parents. Some curriculums, including Oak Meadow, use some first grade curriculum for the kindergarten. What I am offering is based on a traditional Waldorf classroom which has been time-tested for almost 100 years.

This is the first in a series of 10 guides for each of the learning periods. This first guide has less material due to the fact that you are receiving it nine days into the first learning period. The next learning period will have more choices in each section.

MORNING CIRCLE

Singing, music, movement, sharing, empathy, impulse control, new beginnings.

I have chosen to include Morning Circle at the beginning of the day. This helps to bring focus and offers a nice transition from the work and play of home to the work and play of schooling.

Many people love creating elaborate nature tables as a focal point for your circle time. Nature tables can also be simple which is also very lovely. A vase of flowers, a candle and a simple picture are plenty to set the mood of the day. The nature table is also used to reflect the changing seasons which are a cornerstone to the Kindergarten science curriculum.

Light a candle to begin. I use this verse as I light the candle:

“See our little candle
Burning oh so bright
Oh, how I love to
See its light”

This might even be your beginning verse. There are many other worthy verses as well. Choose one that is easy for you to say and that makes you happy. A good reference for verses is the book Seven Times the Sun by Shea Darian.

Choose songs that have a seasonal flavor. Now we are in Harvest Season and Late Summer. Some suggestions are “Baa, Baa Black Sheep”, “I Have a Little Turtle”, “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”, “Pease Porridge Hot” and “Squirrel Nutkin”.

At home sometimes Morning Circle is just five minutes. Ideally a goal might be to lengthen the time to 20 minutes. An excellent way to do that is by including a movement circle in addition to your songs. During this learning period, Farmer in the Dell would be a good choice. Prior to circle, gather up your child's stuffed animals and place them around the outer circle. Hold hands with your child and move in a clockwise pattern singing the beginning verse of Farmer in the Dell. The song has many participants and you will enjoy including them all. Another idea is to write the names of the participants on colored paper and add them to the circle.

The use of small instruments I find is best modelled by the adult so as to show the proper care. The circle is a perfect time to show proper respect of instruments. For this learning period a small triangle can be introduced for “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”. Make sure that the instrument has a safe place to be stored.

Parent Hint: Practice your Morning Circle before offering it to your child.

FREE PLAY – DAILY OFFERING

This is a very purposeful part of your day. Children creating from open-ended toys help to foster imagination which later becomes critical thinking. It is often said that play is a child's work. During Free Play time also include a different offering each day from crafting, art and practical arts.

One idea for a Weekly Rhythm

Monday – Painting
Tuesday – Drawing
Wednesday – Cooking/Beeswax
Thursday – Sewing/Crafting/Gardening
Friday – Science/Mathematics/Field Trips

As your child is playing, quietly set up for your day. At some point, you can begin by calling your child over to you. This can also be done with a song or you can simply begin the task yourself. At the beginning, your child may not join you. For the first week or two this is fine, but there should be encouragement to join you. Four year olds may take a little bit longer to do this.

Painting is offered in the wet on wet technique. The three primary colors are used. They are lemon yellow, cadmium red and cobalt blue. In the Winter, Prussian blue can be substituted for cobalt blue. These colors are easily available at Ben Franklin. Most Waldorf teachers use the Stockmar brand for painting which is available from Mercurius. However, painting is a color experience at this age so you can easily use other brands.

Drawing should be made as relaxed as possible. Some children draw with vigor while others barely mark the page. It is a nice idea to arrange your child's crayons in "rainbow order". I also include pink and brown. The adult's role is to model for the child the enjoyment of drawing but not what to draw. Drawing rainbows, simple flowers, sky, green grass and trees are a good beginning for this moment. Do not expect your child to copy you. At the end of the session it is a nice thing to ask your child "Tell me about this?" At a later time you will be recording what they say on the back of their drawing. This is the foundation to writing.

Cooking can easily follow the seasons. One technique is to choose something like soup and vary the seasonal vegetables. You can also begin by making salads, either fruit or vegetable, with your abundance. Bread making also can be done at this time. I will be sharing with you a bread recipe during the second learning period.

Beeswax Modeling is very soothing. I begin by asking the children to sit down. We start with a beeswax song and I ask the children to bring the warm sun into their hands by holding them together. The song is repeated several times until the children's hands are warm. I then place about a silver dollar size of beeswax modeling material into their hands. During this learning period the idea is one of discovery of the texture of the beeswax. If your child should want to model, a simple snail is easy to create.

Crafting will be your focus for this learning period. Choose a harvest craft such as collecting plant material and making a collage. You also can make your child's sewing basket making sure the basket has at least three needles that are threaded, small pieces of felt and some buttons.

Science/Mathematics are offered in two different formats. One offering can be done daily for a short time each day for the entire learning period.

Daily for First Learning Period
Nightly watch the sky
Observe Moon Cycles & Identify any planets that stand out
Gather seeds
Watch reflections of water
Observe seasonal changes

The other format can be used during the Science/Mathematics Offering after Outside Play.

- Day 1 – Blow bubbles together
- Day 2 – Walk in a circle clockwise & counterclockwise
- Day 3 – Make a family circle around a large tree
- Day 4 – Sew a round beanbag & play catch with your child
- Day 5 – Create a mandala outside using natural materials
- Day 6 – Play in water with various round items & melt ice cubes
- Day 7 – Have items in red, blue & yellow to sort – Look through prism
- Day 8 – Build with blocks – Build a playcloth fort & play in it
- Day 9 – Smell different scents & record responses
- Day 10 – Visit farm to harvest & gather herbs to dry

STORY

Story provides a quiet time in your day. In the Kindergarten there are hundreds of stories to choose from. Waldorf teachers typically choose from Grimm's Fairy Tales by Brothers Jacob & Wilhelm Grimm as well as other fairy tales that are culturally significant to the children. Please reference a good Waldorf teachers reading list. Each learning session I will be giving you stories to consider.

The first story I am telling in school is "The Queen Bee" from Grimm's. You can choose to follow along with the story at home for two weeks. My next story for the second learning period will be "Little Red Cap" also from Grimm's.

Telling or reading of the story is best done in a matter of fact way with no dramatic gestures. This allows the children's own pictorial unfolding within themselves.

Stories lend themselves to puppet shows and play acting. With your first story, it is fine to simply tell the story.

Parent Hint: Read the story about five times to yourself first. Practice at least two times out loud before you present it to your child. You can use the bathroom if necessary for this.

CLOSING THE DAY

As your home and community are your "classrooms", closing the day might seem unnecessary. One reason to create this though is to signal to your child that their "formal" time of schooling is complete. Some ideas for Closing The Day are a simple song, using a crystal as a talking stone, talking through the morning going backwards to the beginning or meditating sitting quietly.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SECOND LEARNING PERIOD

Recognize Fall Equinox September 22 – Nice time to plant bulbs
World Character Day September 26
Bishops Pumpkin Patch Field Trip September 28
Harvest Festival/Festival of Courage/Michaelmas September 29
Plan to speak with Sarah Gordon about Salmon Viewing

Created by Marguerite Vulfs August 2018