

KINDERGARTEN
TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY

SEVENTH LEARNING PERIOD
PART B
By Marguerite Vulfs

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LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

You are about to embark on the longest journey of home schooling before school ends without a "vacation". It is also a moment in which tremendous physical and developmental growth can occur for your child. As well, it is still Winter and not yet Spring - similar to that point in labor where the Mother giving birth is in Transition, dilated to about 9 cm. Right now many people want some reassurance and ease with the situation of the weather. Depending on your personality and where you live in the area, this moment is either one you approach with nice anticipation or perhaps with less enthusiasm. Take heart! There are so many signs of Winter relief!

Taking a cue from my animals, I want to encourage you to give your children reassurance of warmth. They need both physical and emotional warmth right now. Keep the slippers on! It makes all the difference! Keep the soups and teas going but change them up now. Add more veggies to your soups or serve miso based broths with noodles and greens. Serve your children a different tea than normal and turn it into a tea party with cozy stories. Outside, you might look for early greens - miners lettuce and dandelion. Take care to harvest where animals are probably not harvesting as well. This moment can also be exhausting for everyone so try for an early bedtime -- your children need it and you will gain some time to plan for the next few months.

Field trips await you. Plan now for wildflower hikes and whale migration along the Mendocino coast. Or keep the winter blues away and head up to the Sierras for a day in the snow. Even thinking about this is a nice diversion from shoveling snow and trying to stay warm right now!

For the next two weeks, I hope that you find enjoyment in the moment. I am offering you a variety similar to what the weather is offering -- use what makes the most sense for your family situation and your child.

Blessings,
Marguerite

NATURE TABLE & CIRCLE

In a traditional Waldorf classroom, the Nature Table undergoes a change right now. Where King Winter has dominated in all of his glory, Mrs. Thaw and her helpers now begin to take charge. Mrs. Thaw with her broom slowly begins to brush away the snow to reveal early flowers or at least something green. But today as we await yet another storm, her work will be undone. As all of you live in different parts of Nevada County (or Yuba or Placer County), Nature looks different right now for you than perhaps for your child's friend who lives in Truckee or above 3200 feet. So, take your cue for what you offer from the Nature around you. If King Winter dominates, then have Mrs. Thaw hiding behind a rock. Or if the first flowers are appearing, retire King Winter and begin your journey toward Spring. Even in the snow scenes of Truckee, the sky looks different now than it did in December. Add that almost Spring blue now to your Nature Table for some Winter relief.

Depending on your situation, your Circle time will look different as well. Take your cue again from Nature. If you are Winter bound, continue with your sweet Winter songs. Add songs about birds, and you might also take a cue from migrating whales and add "Baby Beluga". And for something to look forward to, plan that trip to the Mendocino Coast for whale watching.

If flowers are beginning to appear in your world, then add the following song.

"In my garden there is a bulb,
I'm the one who put it there.
Who will help it now to grow?
Earth and Sun and Wind and Air."

Or you can begin to "wake up the flowers" with this song.

"Crocus wake up, Spring is coming, Spring is coming.
Crocus wake up, Spring is coming - it is on its way."

Continue with some rainy day songs and finger plays with nursery songs like "To Market, To Market". The point is that it makes no sense in the world of your child to create songs which do not reflect what is happening in Nature around them.

If you need some inspiration, look to the Lavender Blue website and listen to some of their offerings. This moment in between Winter and Spring can also be a moment of review.

SCIENCE

This transition from Winter to Spring is filled with the changes of birds migrating and flowers beginning to appear. In the Kindergarten, the curriculum continues with observation and experience. To make the most of this moment, some planning is needed. I like to concentrate on the flowers appearing and have the children find the wonder in discovering something new. In the upper elevations, this might have to wait until later in the Spring. You could replace this moment with observations of the sky and the night time stars.

From now until the end of school, help your child "discover" flowers. Plan to create a book of flowers filled with drawings or paintings. My first flower discovery is a violet. So that will go in my book first. Create a cover with a Title something like "Marija's (your own child's name) Book of Flowers". Every time your child discovers a new flower, have them draw it. Together, record on the back where you found it and the date. By the end of school, you should have a beautiful book that not only can be a record but a keepsake as well. Simply hole punching the pages and putting them in a notebook or tying them together will suffice.

Plan flower walks. Bridgeport is ideal. By starting now, you can see the beginnings of the moment from Winter to Spring. If you plan a once a week hike, that will be a fun way to observe the unfolding of Nature toward Spring. You can also plan to see the blooms of the desert or perhaps Carizzo Plains Ecological Reserve near San Luis Obispo. Discovering flowers can be a very rewarding way to spend the rest of your time in science. I also have reports that the almond trees are blooming in Chico - a short drive to discover something new!

Another journey is discovering whales. The Mendocino coast is less crowded than the Monterey area and provides a lot of fun excursions for whale watching. Google websites provide a lot of information. The toy store in the village also has a telescope for viewing and fun whale information.

Another path closer to home is discovering the birds returning to our areas. Walking and listening to the birds songs are a fun way to discover them. In my neighborhood, the robins and the red tailed hawks, whose distinct song is evident, have returned.

The weather patterns and clouds provide another opportunity for discovery. This could work in the Truckee area especially as you are experiencing so many snow storms. Observing clouds and drawing them, similar to what the children drawing flowers are doing, could be your way of observing the changes of nature now.

MATHEMATICS

The next two weeks will be spent entirely on learning the number 10. There are 10 days in the learning period and you will be developing ten different ways to discover number 10. Go back and look over the other numbers to glean ideas to introduce the number to your child. The easiest, of course, is counting fingers and/or toes. An abacus is also a fun way to count. The jump rope poem "Brinca, Brinca" (Learning Period #6B) can also be reinforced. An important goal is to establish the smoothness and ease of counting in a sequence that is correct. Take your time to get it right.

SEWING

This is a good moment in time to take up sewing again and reinforce good habits. Making a small treasure pouch is very rewarding. One way to gain material to sew with is to "felt" a sweater. A wool sweater that you shrink by washing in the washer and drying in the dryer makes great material to work with. You simply cut out the shape to include a flap. From the bottom, fold up to where you would like the flap to overlap. Have your child sew up each side. Fold the flap over and measure for the button. You can help your child braid a handle or attach a ribbon.

STORY

At the Nevada City site, the Pussy Willows are blooming down the street and the Crocus flowers have sprouted, only to have been squashed by the snow. In Oregon House perhaps there are flowers blooming and in Truckee all the families' homes are covered in snow. How to pick a story that will be appropriate for everyone? One answer is the all time favorite "Stone Soup"! Doing a bit of research, you will see how completely this story has captured the imagination of many cultures. Something about it rings true for this moment. The Nevada City site hosted a "Stone Soup" telling in January complete with soup. However the moment can be continued now. You could complete it by inviting friends over and each bringing something for the soup. A cozy way to share an evening with friends and to teach sharing at a moment where it feels a bit challenging outside.

Another story might be "Jorinda and Jorindel" by the Brothers Grimm. It is the story of an enchantment being broken by a flower. This is more appropriate for the older Kindergarten age child.

I have also created a story about King Winter and Lady Spring. This has been my answer to this season when we get Winter weather again after a most beautiful Spring like moment in the Sierra Nevada Foothills. I will be revealing this story for Learning Period #8.

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