

KINDERGARTEN
TWIN RIDGES HOME STUDY

NINTH LEARNING PERIOD
PART B
By Marguerite Vulfs

Science

Mathematics

Reading

May Day Celebration

SCIENCE

The next two weeks could be the most fun or the most difficult depending how you approach it and structure your time. Spring has sprung and your child will want to be outside. The solution to this is to have class outside.

This week is the perfect week to study the blooming trees - cherries, apples and pears are blooming right now. Plan to draw from Nature and, while you do this, introduce your child to the fruits if possible. Cutting an apple in half, you see the "star inside" which mimics the blossom. Have your child draw both. This is also a good moment to develop a better sense of smell, as the spring time smells especially good. Smell blossoms together and see if they smell like the fruit!

In the garden, make time to discover all the crawling creatures. In addition, keep up your garden preparation and planting. You might also want to do a bit of an experiment and measure a stand of grass, taking daily measurements to see how fast it grows and how long it takes to get tall.

The birds are busy building nests and watching how they gather twigs and grasses can be a very fun afternoon. Be sure to look up. We were delighted in the Monday group to see a pair of Red Tailed Hawks right above the school on Earth Day calling to us.

Saving and recycling interesting glass jars right now can help with crafting later next month and into the summer. Plan to up your recycling footprint these next two weeks. This is a good moment to teach the importance of recycling properly.

MATHEMATICS

With your child wanting to be outside, use this moment to study the blossoms of nature from a geometric viewpoint. You will not want to come right out and say these words, but noticing how many petals there are on the flowering trees and on the flowers that are blooming right now, is a lesson in geometry. The older six year old child might be very ready to see this. Children do become naturally aware of geometry in their drawings at this age and introducing them to the world of flowers is another way to reinforce this inner awareness.

You may also want to create some geometric drawings for them to color in. Only do this if your child loves to color and separate the colors. You might have to draw first and explain how to do this.

Another way to work with this is cutting the shapes out like a puzzle and have your child create with them. Using brightly colored paper helps with this and keeps the shapes separated nicely.

We have a number of geometric pattern blocks at the school for check out. Be sure to browse through the math section of the Reference Library at Twin Ridges Home Study to introduce your child to something new to explore.

READING

Many families ask about reading from a Waldorf perspective. This especially begins to be thought of now as your child approaches the next set of skills in preparation for Grade 1.

In most Waldorf schools, whether private or public, the letters are typically introduced in Grade 1. There are exceptions to this in some areas of the country where public schools formally introduce them in Kindergarten.

They are introduced through stories, many of which have been shared and some created by a teacher. It is a wonderful introduction. But what if your child is already reading in Kindergarten? Or what if they have absolutely no interest at all? Both situations are valid and common.

For the child who is already reading, it never hurts to reinforce the letters. Look over that part of the curriculum and see if it fits your child and if it is something you would like to teach them. Also, look to see, as they have "quickened" themselves with reading at age 5 or 6, if there is an area that needs attention? Most likely there is. You do not want to dampen a naturally enthusiastic reader, but make sure there is balance.

For the child who has no interest at all, keep reading to them. For them, I would wait to introduce the letters until after the Summer when you are into a true "Grade 1" moment. But do introduce them. A child who prefers play needs the discipline in Grade 1 to ignite curiosity in order to begin the steps to reading. Many people make the assumption in Waldorf that they will eventually read. The curriculum is designed in a sequence to meet the child's development. It is important to not leave out steps.

MAY DAY CELEBRATION

The next part of this learning period is a good time to prep and learn about May Day which is typically celebrated on May 1st or the first week of May. In many parts of the world, this is celebrated by creating flower hair wreaths and dancing around a flower and ribbon strewn May Pole.

Another fun activity is to make May Baskets or cones filled with flowers which are delivered to the doors of friends and neighbors. My favorite is using water color paper which has been painted during the days leading up to May Day. Once dried, twist into a cone and staple. You can also add a ribbon for hanging. Using a plastic bag, gently place it in the cone and add water to keep the flowers wet but not so much that it is heavy. Add your assortment of flowers and hang on your friends' door. Many families make this an annual event in their neighborhoods.

Making hair wreaths is also fun. You can twist willow branches and add flowers and leaves or use the floral tape and wire method. In Bali, many men wear flowers in their hair and your young boy might like that as well. If not, using leaves is also very nice. You can also finger knit a circle that fits the head of your child and weave flowers into it. All children seem to like the ribbons that flow behind them when they run.

This activity is also fun to create as you have been telling the story of the "Twelve Dancing Princesses" by the Brothers Grimm during this learning period.

May 1st is also the date of Twin Ridges Home Study 40th Anniversary Celebration at Pioneer Park in Nevada City where there will be a May Pole to dance around.

"Here's a branch of snowy May, a branch the fairies gave me,
Who will come and dance today with a branch the fairies gave me?
Dance away, dance away, holding high a branch of May,
Dance away, dance away, holding high a branch of May."

Enjoy this most beautiful time of year!

Created by Marguerite Vulfs April 2019