

# First Grade April

## Weekly Planner Version

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### April

## Snapshot of the Month & Weekly Themes of the Month

### April Weekly Themes

**Week One:** Jokesters and Pranks (Holiday: April Fools)

**Week Two:** Herbs (Holiday: Easter)

**Week Three:** The Earth (Water and Mud) (Holiday: Earth Day)

**Week Four:** Recycling (Continue Earth Day Celebrations)

2014: April 20

2015: April 5

2016: March 27

2017: April 16

2018: April 1

You can take the week of Easter out of this schedule and put it in the appropriate week if you want by exchanging it with another week. Since Easter varies from year to year it is impossible to place it in the correct week each year.

### About Molla Nasrudin & April Fool's Day

In honor of April Fool's day I always like to share Mulla Nassuridin stories with the kids. For the preschoolers I introduce only a couple very short stories. There are also so many other wonderful trickster stories from around the world! They are always favorites in the classroom. For the preschool age, however, I try to stay away from the trickster stories that teach a complex lesson because the lesson is often difficult to understand. Even the simplest ones, I have found, over the years, completely draw a blank stare from the class. I focus, instead on simple stories that are silly or involve a trick from a fairy or other storybook character.

He was a great "jokester" in the Eastern cultures but was also wise and his stories and jokes usually taught a lesson and were not "cruel" as many April Fool's jokes can be. I think his stories are the best way to celebrate April Fool's day!

Hundreds and thousands of stories about Molla Nasreddin are enjoyed throughout the world, not just among Turkish speakers where the anecdotes originated. Azerbaijanis and Iranians know this comic sage as "Molla Nasreddin." Turks and Greeks call him "Hoja Nasreddin." Kazakhs say "Koja Nasreddin;" Arabs, "Juha;" and Tajiks, "Mushfiqi." (Spellings sometimes vary: Nasreddin can be found as Nasrudin, Nasr eddin and Nasr al-din; Molla is also written as Mulla; and Hoja as Khoja.)

Molla Nasreddin stories are eternal; they deal with social issues which are fundamental to human nature—social injustice, class privilege, selfishness, cowardliness, laziness, incompetence, ignorance, narrow-mindedness and all kinds of fraud. Though most of the stories are set in 13th century teahouses, bath houses, caravansarai and market places, Molla's observations about human nature are so insightful and told so cleverly that they have the power to entertain and mesmerize us centuries later.

From the Magazine, "Molla Nasreddin," July 7, 1906: "He was a great advocate of women's rights. Molla's observations involve people from all walks of life, from beggar to king, politician to clergy, and scholar to merchant. His wife and his donkey (not necessarily in that order) are among his most constant companions. His stories often point to an obvious truth which has been taken for granted and usually include an unexpected twist that make his ideas witty and fresh. Though Molla often appears as a fool, he usually is the one who cleverly exposes other people's foolishness."

Some say Nasreddin is a legendary figure. Others insist that he was a real person though the exact details of his actual life have not been proven. It is generally accepted that he was born in a Turkish village in 1208 and died around 1284. Every year, an "International Nasreddin Hoja Festival" is held between July 5-10 in the town where he was buried in Turkey, giving writers and artists a chance to present their works of drama, music, paintings, films and animation and keep the memory of Nasreddin alive.

Azerbaijanis are extremely fond of Molla Nasreddin anecdotes and entertain one another by telling them at parties and family gatherings, injecting Molla's humor and wit into the natural flow of conversation just as they do with proverbs and jokes. Many people have a large repertoire of Molla stories to draw upon and can introduce them into real life situations at the appropriate moment.

A sampling from the great treasury of Molla Nasreddin stories follows. Since these anecdotes have been passed down orally, generation after generation, considerable variations may exist in the way they are told through time and space. Despite the differences, or perhaps even because of them, Molla Nasreddin is esteemed as the most popular satirical comic character of all Eastern folk literature.

## **Main Lesson Block of the Month: First Grade Language**

Note that we have tried to put notes for the teacher and assignments in blue font so you can easily find the instructions and projects among all the background and supportive content. If we have missed “blue fonting” anything let us know! We have also left blank lines in your schedule so you can fill in extra lessons, lessons for other students you may have or notes.

### **First Grade Language Block**

This month and next we will be either introducing, reviewing or expanding on the first grade child’s language experience. Where your student will be will depend on many factors. If you have multiple children in the same grade you may even find they fall at different places in the spectrum of first grade language knowledge at this time.

When we started the year with the first grader we started with very simple stories, verses and fables to introduce them to the alphabet. We did some movement, we found the alphabet in nature, we drew letters in sand, shaped letters in bread, and wrote letters in the main lesson book. Now that the first grader has grown we will go through the alphabet again. However, this time we will use more advanced fairytales, we will write more and we will include a theater and storytelling component to enrich and deepen their language experience.

If you already used fairytales in your first “round” of language learning that is fine. You can introduce new fairytales for this “second round”. A first grader can never hear too many fairytales. I’ve spent years telling them to my own classrooms and the only response I have ever heard was “More, please!”

We have chosen two fairytales each week for your class. You can choose to use only the first fairytale for all the letters or you can use both of them. This will depend on then needs of your class and their temperament. We also have a large library of alternate fairytales on the First Grade Enrichment page on the website. These volumes include additional possible fairytales and are indexed by letter so you can easily find a substitute if you want (although keep in mind that the index can be adapted to your needs. For example, in the Egyptian Cinderella story we use “River” instead of “Nile” as our letter word). You do not need to use these resources if you do not want to. However, they are there for you if you want to use additional fairytales or make substitutions.

However, how you proceed with each of the lessons listed below will depend on where your student is in the language learning process. The instructions below will help you decide:

## ~ Level One: A Child's First Introduction to the Alphabet ~

1. **First Introduction:** Is this your child's first introduction to the alphabet? This may be you if you are in the Southern Hemisphere, if you started the year later or if your child was not ready for the alphabet at the beginning of first grade. If this is your student then you should follow the lessons below with the following method. Note that to fit in more letters each week we may do more than one letter on one day. This will happen during some weeks but not all weeks. This usually happens when the letters look very similar.
  - a. **Day One:** Tell the fairytale with the letter(s), draw the letter(s) on the board as a character or object in the story (this is indicated in the schedule – some weeks have one letter and some have two), have the child shape the letter in dough, draw it in sand, draw it on a small chalk board or other “hands-on” method. Trace over your chalk board drawing where you have drawn the letter and then guide the student into re-creating your drawing in their Main Lesson Book.
  - b. **Day Two:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. Then have the child write the letter(s) in their Main Lesson Book over, using block crayons to create the lines they will write on in the book. This is different than making the letter into a picture. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the beginning child just have them recite the tongue twister as fast as they can.
  - c. **Day Three:** Tell the fairytale again or tell the provided new fairytale with the letter(s), draw another letter(s) on the board as a character or object in the story, have the child shape the letter(s) in dough, draw it in sand, draw it on a small chalk board or other “hands-on” method. Trace over your chalk board drawing where you have drawn the letter(s) and then guide the student into re-creating your drawing in their Main Lesson Book.
  - d. **Day Four:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter(s) you are learning in the verse. Then have the child write the letter(s) in their Main Lesson Book, using block crayons to create the lines they will write on in the book. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the beginning child just have them recite the tongue twister as fast as they can

- e. **Day Five:** Repeat one of the fairytales. Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. Then have the child draw a picture of the letter(s) and/or write the letter(s) in their Main Lesson Book, using block crayons to create the lines they will write on in the book.
- f. **Nature Walks Daily:** Since this is your child's first introduction to letters simply have them find things that start with the letter or point things out to them that start with the letter.

### ~ Level Two: A Child's Second Introduction to the Alphabet ~

- 2. **Review:** Is this your child's second lesson in language? This may be you if you have already introduced your child to the alphabet through the lessons in August and September Earthschooling first grade, the first grade language block or another method. If this is your student then you should follow the lessons below with the following method:
  - a. **Day One:** Tell the fairytale with the letter(s). Since your child has already drawn the letter before have them write the letter in their main lesson book instead. Then have them play one of the theater games to get warmed up and then tell you (or the class) a story based on the fairytale you have just told using one of the prompts provided. Since the child is familiar with the letters we are focusing on the benefits of storytelling, theater and fairytales in language this week along with some writing review and practice.
  - b. **Day Two:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the child that has already finished the alphabet have them choose one of the verses or tongue twisters (after reciting it) and write one or more of the words in their main lesson book all in capital letters.
  - c. **Day Three:** Tell the fairytale again or tell the provided new fairytale with the letter(s). Then have the student(s) play one of the theater games to get warmed up and then tell you (or the class) a story based on the fairytale you have just told using one of the prompts provided. Since the child is familiar with the letters we are focusing on the benefits of storytelling, theater and fairytales in language this week along with some writing review and practice. If they do not want to tell a story again today they can simply play the theater game.
  - d. **Day Four:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and

then point out the letter(s) you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year.

- e. **Day Five:** Repeat one of the fairytales. Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the child that has already finished the alphabet have them choose one of the verses or tongue twisters (after reciting it) and write one or more of the words in their main lesson book all in capital letters.
- f. **Nature Walks Daily:** Since this is your child's second introduction to the alphabet have them do more advanced activities in nature with the alphabet like creating the letters out of sticks or leaves or drawing them in the sand or mud with a stick.

### ~ Level Three: The Alphabet and the Advanced Child ~

3. **Expansion:** Is your child already skilled at writing the alphabet and bored with the prospect of learning more about the alphabet? Are they ready to start writing? If this is your student then you should follow the lessons below with the following method:
  - a. **Day One:** Tell the fairytale with the letter(s). Since your child can already write have them play one of the theater games to get warmed up and then tell you (or the class) a story based on the fairytale you have just told using one of the prompts provided. Since the child is familiar with the letters we are focusing on the benefits of storytelling, theater and fairytales in language this week along with some writing review and practice.
  - b. **Day Two:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the child that is already skilled at writing have them write the entire verse or two of the tongue twisters in their Main Lesson Book.
  - c. **Day Three:** Tell the fairytale again or tell the provided new fairytale with the letter(s). Then have the student(s) play one of the theater games to get warmed up and then tell you (or the class) a story based on the fairytale you have just told using one of the prompts provided. Since the child is familiar with the letters we are focusing on the benefits of storytelling, theater and fairytales in language this week along with some writing review and practice. If they do not want to tell a story again today they can simply play the theater game. If your child can already write they are also welcome to write their fairytale

down today – or at least the beginning of it. Another option is for them to draw the fairytale in their Main Lesson Book next to the title they have given it.

- d. **Day Four:** Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter(s) you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the child that is already skilled at writing have them write the entire verse or two of the tongue twisters in their Main Lesson Book.
- e. **Day Five:** Repeat one of the fairytales. Write the verse for the letter(s) of the day on the board (this is the same verse we had in August and September for those that already did this once) and have the child recite it with you and then point out the letter you are learning in the verse. We also provide tongue twisters for the children at this point in the year. For the child that is already skilled at writing have them write the entire verse or two of the tongue twisters in their Main Lesson Book.
- f. **Nature Walks Daily:** Since your child is already familiar with the letters on a more advanced level do more challenging activities with them in nature this week such as trying to find as many things as they can that have the letter IN it (even in the middle or end of it – not just the beginning of it).

## Basics of Language

If you have already done the August and September plans or the Sixth Sense Language ABC book this will be familiar to you. However, it is always good to refresh our memories before we venture into this new adventure with the children. Please read this again for review (or for the first time if you just started) to gain insight into how language is taught in Waldorf schools.

Learning the alphabet using all six of our senses creates a more holistic experience. These lessons are based on the Waldorf method of learning the alphabet, but that that method deeper, but emphasizing the use of all six senses. These are some of the ways in which you can guide your child into using their senses with the alphabet.

**Hearing:** Listening to stories and verses with the letter.

**Touch:** By finding the letters in nature, drawing the letters, painting the shapes, touching the shapes in nature, shaping the letters in dough and tracing the shapes.

**Smell:** Did you know that memory is retained largely through the sense of smell? I always try to find some way I can associate what the children are learning with a smell. Of course not everything works this way, but it is very effective when it does! For the alphabet you may come up with your own ideas. Some of mine are – shaping the letters in dough and baking and eating the bread, adding spices like cinnamon to the bread on

letter-shaping days, shaping letters with dough scented with essential oils, or to smell things in nature and around the home that start with the letter. You would be surprised how many things we don't usually smell actually do have a smell! Like paper, crayons and desks.

**Sight:** Watching the teacher write the letters on paper or on the blackboard, seeing the letters as they are shaped in nature or in dough. Looking through the Main Lesson Book after lessons are done is also a good way to see the letters.

**Taste:** Eating foods that start with the letter, shaping the letter in bread dough and drinking teas or juices that start with the letter are all ideas we have used.

**Intuition:** The more you use the other five senses to learn something, the sharper your intuition becomes. Look for ways in which your child seems to "learn things instantly" – this is the intuitive part of learning. A child that is given time and space in which to learn, and one who has a lot of time for creativity and free play will be able to use the tool of intuition more effectively.

We are doing this lesson twice during the year – at the beginning and at the end of the year. Over this span of time make sure you do the following with each letter at least once:

1. Find the letter in nature
2. Shape the letter in dough
3. Shape the letter in modeling wax
4. Shape the letter in bread dough
5. Trace the letter with your fingers
6. Create a picture from the letter
7. Create the letter as a movement. For example a "W" can be waves rushing and an "S" can be the movement of the wind while the "Z" can be the movement of the shuttle while weaving.

In Waldorf education the letters are presented as pictures, which appeal to the child's imagination. In reality, the letter is clothing in the picture...the picture is the key. All letters of the alphabet were once pictures themselves. Because we start the child with this intuitive association to the alphabet we start with capital letters and do not introduce lower case letters until the second year.

### **How to Create a Letter Picture**

When I create a letter picture for the children I start with a fable, fairytale or verse and then draw the letter picture on the board in chalk. I then have the child copy the picture from the board into their Main Lesson Book. After they are finished I allow them to create additional pictures if they want to. Some children may create their own pictures from the letters beyond what you provide them with. This should be encouraged but is not required.

I usually try to keep the letter pictures simple. Easy pictures to draw usually come from an object or animal in the story. Scenery and people are usually too difficult for this age of child. Each teacher may choose a different image from the story. If you have an image you want to use you can even add it into the story. For example, if you really want to draw a fish for the letter F and the story does not have a fish in it, you can add a fish into the story by mentioning it in some way. Some ideas could be: someone eating a fish, someone has a fish as a pet, one of the characters in the story could be changed to a fish, the characters could see a fish in the stream, or they could be wearing a magical pendant with the image of a fish on it.

Eileen Hutchins, in her article "The Teaching of Language" says, "As far as the pictures are concerned, every teacher should make his own, but it is better, I think, to give those which imply movement than those that are static. The snake, the fish and the wave are all good from this point of view. For "R" the picture of a horse is more alive than that of a house, although it is very tempting to draw a pretty little cottage with two high chimneys. For "G" a goose looking back over its tail is more comical and appealing than an open gate leading into a garden."

We have provided poems, tongue twisters, movement verses, fairytales and fables for all of the letters of the alphabet in the Earthschooling curriculum. However, you can find additional fairytales on the First Grade Enrichment pages if you want additional stories. You can even use some of these stories as bedtime stories.

The verses we have provided may seem short but they are purposely short so that you can spend time reciting them, perhaps memorizing them and really feeling the letters in the verse. Towards the end of the year the child may even be able to write the verse. The movement verses are meant to be experienced as gestures. Create your own movements to go with these verses based on how they sound to you or your child. In some cases we have suggested movements.

Another important aspect of learning the alphabet is understanding the importance of storytelling in Waldorf education. You may have already read this article on our blog. If you have you can review it now. If not, take some time to read it before you start your language block. *This is especially important later in the year as we will be focusing on the benefits of storytelling, theater and fairytales in language learning rather than focusing exclusively on the letters themselves.*

# Storytelling in Waldorf Education

## Introduction

One of my favorite memories from a parent-child class we attended in the Chicago area at a Waldorf School was the first time I saw storytelling come to life with the figures on a table colored with silk scarves.

It was magic. The teacher told a fable to the two to five year-old class called “The Golden House on the Hill”. It was enchanting, colorful and magical. She had set up a table covered with green silk to represent the farm down below the hill and of golden colored silk to represent the sun reflecting on the hill above. I think she used large bunches of wool under the silk to create the hill. At the top of the hill was something shiny. At the bottom of the hill was a charming little wooden boy.

Now anyone who knows the fable, “The Golden House on the Hill” knows that there is a beautiful moral to the story. However, the teacher did not share the moral, nor was that what was the focal point of the story. The preschoolers only saw the small charming boy, the beautiful green meadows, the shiny house reflecting the rays of the sun, the journey he took to the top of the hill and the gentle voice of the teacher telling them a simple, short tale.

They were enchanted imagining that perhaps they were that boy and making a journey to the top of a hill to see something shiny. Perhaps some of them were recalling beautiful days spent in the garden with mother when the teacher talked about the boy’s life as a farmer.

Or, as the Fahkwang Waldorf Preschool in Thailand describes the experience, “When we tell a fable to children, we will use a smooth tone with acting by using our doll as an actor. not tell a fable by opening from Fable book. The teacher has to remember the whole story and intend in that fable to make the student more imaginative.”

Years later, when we worked on the Fable Block we told the same story, but this time it was experienced in a much different way. I told the story to my student, I drew a picture of the story in chalk on the board, and they copied picture of the fable in their Main Lesson Book.

The process of drawing the fable, rather than using the figures was one thing that brought the story more into the moral realm for the student, but it was also their age. For the second grade student’s heart needs to hear stories of saints, heroes and stories with morals and lessons. Since their heart craves this kind of story, this is what they will hear when the story is presented.

The process of drawing the story also made the same story a much different experience for the child. When we watched the teacher telling the story with ethereal silks, a gentle

voice and gentle movements and colors it was enchanting and dreamy. When we picked up our block crayons and put colors and images on paper it was something solid and stable – like the moral itself.

In her evaluation of Steiner kindergarten classrooms, Waldorf teacher, Mary-Jane Drummond says, “...constructing an account of a children’s imaginative play, around the idea of a doorway, or rather doorways....through a third door, children pass into a world that they will share with a wider society than that of their intimate friends. Here they become part, as and when they choose, of their whole society’s enduring stories. Through this door traditional stories, poems and songs that communities have shared together over the centuries. This is the door that opens whenever an educator brings children together to tell them a story, implicitly inviting them to recognize the role of myth, fable, and story in humankind’s search for meaning, implicitly inviting them to join that search. The themes of these important stories appear again and again in the observations in my notebooks.” (4)

### **Appropriate Years for Story Genres**

In each grade there is a recommended focus for the Main Lesson in the classroom. You can see those recommendations on the Earthschooling website under the category “Waldorf 101”. Ask us if you cannot find this resource.

However, as teachers we need to remember that there is a big difference between learning and play, direction and curiosity, and spirit and formula.

When we teach and follow the recommendations of a Waldorf-inspired curriculum we are teaching the child, guiding them and providing them with the age-appropriate tools for their growing spirit. We provide direction and learning and there is a formula set out to assist us in that journey.

However the direction, learning, and formula mean nothing without play, curiosity and spirit. When lessons are not being taught the child needs time to play and explore their own curiosity and interests. If this means that the Kindergartener wants to try to weave a Native American basket with their fourth grade sibling or participate in Roman historical play with their sixth grade sibling that is all part of their normal play and curiosity cycle. They are not being given a *lesson* in these topics. They are being allowed to *play* and be *curious* about the world around them. And if a preschooler or kindergartener listens to a fable or fairytale they are not having a *lesson* about fables and morals or a lesson about fairytales. They are simply being told and experiencing these stories within the *spirit* of their age.

Why to we hear stories differently at different ages?

## Can I Tell a Fairytale to My Preschooler?

*Can I tell fables to my kindergartener or first grader?*

*Can I tell an Aboriginal myth to my first grader?*

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, the author of *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, says, “We all begin the process before we are ready, before we are strong enough, before we know enough; we begin a dialogue with thoughts and feelings that both tickle and thunder within us. We respond before we know how to speak the language, before we know all the answers, and before we know exactly to whom we are speaking.”

As a graduate of Anthropology with a minor in linguistics I took many classes on folktales, fairytales and fables. The one thing that all cultures have in common is that they tell stories to their children from the time they are born. These stories are often told in groups so that multiple ages of children and adults are listening at the same time. The fascinating thing is that many of these stories have the same lessons and characters but each different culture has their own version. For example, there are over twenty stories of “Cinderella” around the world including one from Native American literature and another from Persia.

The other thing that runs as a constant across all tales across the world is that the secret to telling a good story to the right audience is not in the story itself but in the *storyteller*.

Rudolf Steiner realized this when he recommended that fables and fairytales be used as “gentle reminders” for children that had behavior issues (1) – for children of *any age*. Although he recommended focusing on different genres of stories at different times in the child’s life he did not restrict the telling of different genres of stories for discipline or other reasons.

He knew, as all great storytellers do, that it is the *telling* of the story that contains the key – and that there is a difference between the physical practice of something and the spirit behind something. This is why he gave so many lectures to his teachers. He wanted them to understand the spirit behind his recommendations rather than handing out a ‘raw curriculum’ to their students based on a set list of requirements like was traditional in public schools then and now.

As teachers we don’t want to lose the meaning behind why we are telling the stories and we need to make that the central focus of our lesson.

In preschool and kindergarten children are experiencing the magic and fantasy realm of early childhood. Dreamy colors, gentle voices and stories they can relate to are repeated or include repetition. This being said, can you tell fables and fairytales to preschoolers and kindergarteners? Of course! Can you tell ANY fable and fairytale to preschoolers and kindergarteners in any manner you wish? No.

When telling fables and fairytales to early childhood classes they must be chosen carefully. For example, a gentle story of *The Three Bears*, modified for an early childhood classroom can be very successful. And as we have seen above, a fable can be told in a magical “early-childhood” manner.

The children around about seven years should have the concentration to build their own vivid inner pictures when being told a story, and through such imagery will continue learning in the following years. Fairy tales are told by the teacher then retold and dramatized by members of the class. This cultivates the children’s imagination.

Some parents, looking ahead in the curriculum ask me questions like, “Can I tell Native American stories to my child now?” or “Australia requires that we study aboriginal culture at this age.” A standard reply given to them by someone following an “abstract list” would be “No, those stories are for fourth grade.”

However, in keeping with the spirit of the first grade year you can, indeed, tell such stories to the first grader! There are many fairytales contained in Native American and Aboriginal literature and they can easily be told with the spirit of the first grader in mind. They can then be re-told in a different way, with different lessons when fourth grade arrives. In fact, there are so many wonderful stories from the Native American and Aboriginal culture that you would not even need to repeat stories when the “appropriate time” arrived if you didn’t want to.

### **Fables in First Grade**

The subject of fables will often come up in first grade as well. Steiner recommended using them for discipline, they are popular in many children’s books (mainstream and Waldorf), and they are part of the daily many cultures around the globe. So is it OK to tell first graders a fable? Of course!

However, when telling the story to a first grader, it is told in a different way than it is in second grade. When telling a fable in first grade we usually focus on the beauty of the simplicity of the story and what it can teach us about language. A first grader is learning the alphabet and is just starting to read. We use fairytales to teach the letters of the alphabet but we can *also* use simple fables to expose the child to a few sentences (most fables are one paragraph long) they can use to easily recognize letters and sounds.

Hearing fables at this age is a practice in language learning. It is a way to provide a child with a short bit of text that is far less daunting than the text of an entire fairytale. It does not cancel out the fairytales we tell to teach letters. It is a wonderful supplement and tool. And, just as we did with the preschooler, we tell the fable in a way that is suited to the first grader and we carefully choose our fables. For example, a fable about an animal wanting some grapes is simple and can be adapted to the first grader. However, a fable about an animal learning a harsh lesson through death or injury would

not be suited to this age. Steiner actually encouraged using short fables for children ages 7-14, not as stories to teach (that was for second grade), but as a good way to practice sounds and language learning (2)

The Westside Waldorf School in California embraces this usage of fables. On their website they state that, "Learning is allowed to unfold, and early academics are not pushed. In First Grade, each letter of the alphabet is taught through images discovered in fables..."

### **What About Frightening or Graphic Stories?**

First graders traditionally hear many fairytales during their first grade year and many teachers rely on *The Brother's Grimm* for these tales. But what do you do with a tale that is graphic or potentially frightening to the child? This question comes up most often in first grade. However, it could also be in issue in other grades.

Second graders are at the age when they begin to have strong likes and dislikes. Eight year olds react strongly to imagery in the fables and in stories of saints. They hear fables and stories of legendary characters such as saints. These stories teach of human fallibility and present a model for overcoming adversity. Some of these stories can also be very graphic or contain strong subject matter. In addition, fairytales continue to be told in second grade.

Why?

They are not usually used for the Main Lesson (although some well-chosen and thematic ones can be) but this does not mean they are forbidden to a second grade child. Second graders love fairytales as much as we all do. It would be a tragedy to the genre of fairytales to limit them to only one year in a person's life. It would also detract from their power and purpose.

By the third grade, children are beginning to comprehend the difference between self and other and wonder where in the scheme of things they belong. To fortify their growing personal identity, they read creation and Old Testament stories. These also have strong themes. In each grade there is a recommended focus for the Main Lesson in the classroom. However, as teachers we need to remember that there is a big difference between learning and play, direction and curiosity, and spirit and formula.

*So what should a teacher do with all these strong themes?*

The first thing to remember is the reason the story is being told. You can re-visit the page "Rhythms and Stages in Waldorf Education" on the "Waldorf 101" page on the website.

In first grade, for example, children around seven years of age have the concentration to build their own vivid inner pictures. So, in first grade fairytales are told to help cultivate

the imagination. It is also important that the children are introduced to one of the core storytelling archetypes of “good overcoming evil”. One cannot illustrate this archetype without including a bit of the “evil” in the story. However, how much you include is up to you, as a teacher.

Jens Bjorneboe writes, in the *Waldorf Journal: Project 8*, “When a fairy tale is told properly, fear begins to move. It remains for awhile in the form of uneasiness, fright, and then the excitement intensifies, their mouths open, their eyes become larger and then, then the troll is killed and the evil is once again removed from the surface of the earth. Until the next time the world is a safe home, a place where goodness always conquers.”

Being raised in a society that is surrounded by books we often forget that these stories do not really come from books. Many people have collected these stories over the years, but the real stories can never be captured on paper. The real stories must always be told.

In fact, did you know that the written version of Grimm’s Fairytales was originally published for adults? In fact, Grimm’s Fairytales didn’t belong to the Grimm’s brothers in the same way that Aesop’s Fables didn’t really belong to Aesop.

In a classic publication of Aesop’s Fables from 1912, G.K. Chesterton explains this quite eloquently when he says, “Aesop embodies an epigram not uncommon in human history; his fame is all the more deserved because he never deserved it. The firm foundations of common sense, the shrewd shots at uncommon sense, that characterize all the Fables, belong not him but to humanity. In the earliest human history whatever is authentic is universal: and whatever is universal is anonymous.”

Chesterton goes on to explain that Aesop’s Fables, just like the Grimm’s Fairytales were collected works and in the collection process they changed. Because his introduction is part of the public domain I have included the entire excerpt below, after my list of references. I highly recommend reading what he has to say.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes, an expert in storytelling says, “In our family, which is a deeply ethnic family, who mostly couldn’t read or write, we had an oral tradition, which is to tell stories. They not only told stories; they didn’t tell them the way one finds them in old books written about stories. The Grimm brothers, as you know, took stories from storytellers who were exactly like the family I grew up in...The tellers were unschooled people, often farmers or what they used to call “peasants” back in the 1800s and 1900s. So the Grimm brothers and others from the upper classes went to the homes of the old tellers, asked after and listened to their stories, and wrote them down. Then they took them back home and rewrote the farm people’s stories according to their religious and socio-economic beliefs and ideas of the time. So a reader of Grimm’s gets a literally “Grimm version” of the fairy tales. But, if you hear them from living old people from the

Old Countries, especially people who come right off the dirt, off the ground where you pull your food out of the ground every day, the stories are slightly different to a great deal different, for story is a living, growing thing in and of itself.”

### **Telling Stories in Different Ways**

One of my favorite examples of how storytelling can be different comes from Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés. She explains how her family tells one classic story in a different manner than we are most familiar with

She says, “That’s why I like this story *The Emperor’s New Clothes*. But, the story is often told in a disparaging manner, like this: “The Emperor was conceited, so these guys came to him saying, ‘We’re going to make you a beautiful suit of clothes...and the Emperor is shown to be a fool. That is how the story is usually told. In our family, *The Emperor’s New Clothes* is told with the emphasis on the fact that people are afraid. That it isn’t conceit of the Emperor that causes him to go blind to those who take advantage of him and who actually cut off his avenues to showing his true gifts. Rather, it’s fear of being thought inferior and it’s fear of being criticized. It’s fear of being found wanting, inadequate. Our family story of the *The Emperor’s New Clothes* tells that the Emperor actually sees and is a wonderful, delightful, jovial person and full of life... but he has taken on the trappings of being “the Emperor.” But when he is in his private chambers, he is funny and fun and silly and creative and inventive--constantly making things up and making people laugh and enjoying himself and having all kinds of wonderful plans for how the kingdom would be one day if he could only get people to agree with him.”

In another beautiful article she talks about how many people see Little Red Riding Hood as a tale that is meant to scare children from talking to strangers and illustrate the fragility of the young girl, but that it is really a tale of feminine wisdom and power. Reading examples like these from *The Emperor’s New Clothes* and *Little Red Riding Hood* can help inspire teachers to find their own voice when telling fairytales, fables and other stories to their students.

Maria Tartar, the author of *Enchanted Hunters: The Powers of Stories in Childhood* says, “I am deeply committed to the idea of our creating our own versions of these stories. That is, if you’re not comfortable with Gretel getting behind the witch and pushing her into the oven, tell it in a different way, or rewrite it. Or you know, look at another cultural production that takes the story in a different direction....And so there is a certain kind of wisdom encapsulated in the tale. But for centuries I think we’ve made the mistake of trying to pin a single message or moral on the story....Yeah, Charles Perrault did this in France. He ended each story with a moral. William Bennett did this in *The Book of Virtues*...”

Ullrich Heiner, in his book, *Rudolf Steiner*, says, “The Waldorf curriculum is not intended to be a mechanical aggregate for different series of content that stand in relation to the child’s development. Rather, the long-term organic structuring of content through the

teacher is to ensure that ‘the child does not experience individual areas of knowledge as separate, but as a wonderfully, ordered, unified, cosmos (3).’

- (1) Steiner, Rudolf. “Faculty Meetings with Rudolf Steiner: 1919-1922”
- (2) Steiner, Rudolf, “Discussions with Teachers, August – September 1919”
- (3) Heiner, Ullrich, “Rudolf Steiner”
- (4) Drummond, Mary-Jane. “Another Way of Seeing: Perceptions of Play in a Steiner Kindergarten.”

## **On Aesop’s Fables**

By Chesterton, G.K.

Aesop embodies an epigram not uncommon in human history; his fame is all the more deserved because he never deserved it. The firm foundations of common sense, the shrewd shots at uncommon sense, that characterize all the Fables, belong not him but to humanity. In the earliest human history whatever is authentic is universal: and whatever is universal is anonymous. In such cases there is always some central man who had first the trouble of collecting them, and afterwards the fame of creating them. He had the fame; and, on the whole, he earned the fame. There must have been something great and human, something of the human future and the human past, in such a man: even if he only used it to rob the past or deceive the future. The story of Arthur may have been really connected with the most fighting Christianity of falling Rome or with the most heathen traditions hidden in the hills of Wales. But the word "Mappe" or "Malory" will always mean King Arthur; even though we find older and better origins than the Mabinogian; or write later and worse versions than the "Idylls of the King." The nursery fairy tales may have come out of Asia with the Indo-European race, now fortunately extinct; they may have been invented by some fine French lady or gentleman like Perrault: they may possibly even be what they profess to be. But we shall always call the best selection of such tales "Grimm's Tales": simply because it is the best collection.

But whatever be fairly due to Aesop, the human tradition called Fables is not due to him. This had gone on long before any sarcastic freedman from Phrygia had or had not been flung off a precipice; this has remained long after. It is to our advantage, indeed, to realise the distinction; because it makes Aesop more obviously effective than any other fabulist. Grimm's Tales, glorious as they are, were collected by two German students. And if we find it hard to be certain of a German student, at least we know more about him than we know about a Phrygian slave. The truth is, of course, that Aesop's Fables are not Aesop's fables, any more than Grimm's Fairy Tales were ever Grimm's fairy tales. But the fable and the fairy tale are things utterly distinct. There are many elements of difference; but the plainest is plain enough. There can be no good fable with human beings in it. There can be no good fairy tale without them.

Aesop, or Babrius (or whatever his name was), understood that, for a fable, all the persons must be impersonal. They must be like abstractions in algebra, or like pieces in chess. The lion must always be stronger than the wolf, just as four is always double of two. The fox in a fable must move crooked, as the knight in chess must move crooked. The sheep in a fable must march on, as the pawn in chess must march on. The fable must not allow for the crooked captures of the pawn; it must not allow for what Balzac called "the revolt of a sheep" The fairy tale, on the other hand, absolutely revolves on the pivot of human personality. If no hero were there to fight the dragons, we should not even know that they were dragons. If no adventurer were cast on the undiscovered island—it would remain undiscovered. If the miller's third son does not find the enchanted garden where the seven princesses stand white and frozen—why, then, they will remain white and frozen and enchanted. If there is no personal prince to find the Sleeping Beauty she will simply sleep. Fables repose upon quite the opposite idea; that everything is itself, and will in any case speak for itself. The wolf will be always wolfish; the fox will be always foxy. Something of the same sort may have been meant by the animal worship, in which Egyptian and Indian and many other great peoples have combined. Men do not, I think, love beetles or cats or crocodiles with a wholly personal love; they salute them as expressions of that abstract and anonymous energy in nature which to any one is awful, and to an atheist must be frightful. So in all the fables that are or are not Aesop's all the animal forces drive like inanimate forces, like great rivers or growing trees. It is the limit and the loss of all such things that they cannot be anything but themselves: it is their tragedy that they could not lose their souls.

This is the immortal justification of the Fable: that we could not teach the plainest truths so simply without turning men into chessmen. We cannot talk of such simple things without using animals that do not talk at all. Suppose, for a moment, that you turn the wolf into a wolfish baron, or the fox into a foxy diplomatist. You will at once remember that even barons are human, you will be unable to forget that even diplomatists are men. You will always be looking for that accidental good-humour that should go with the brutality of any brutal man; for that allowance for all delicate things, including virtue, that should exist in any good diplomatist. Once put a thing on two legs instead of four and pluck it of feathers and you cannot help asking for a human being, either heroic, as in the fairy tales, or un-heroic, as in the modern novels.

But by using animals in this austere and arbitrary style as they are used on the shields of heraldry or the hieroglyphics of the ancients, men have really succeeded in handing down those tremendous truths that are called truisms. If the chivalric lion be red and rampant, it is rigidly red and rampant; if the sacred ibis stands anywhere on one leg, it stands on one leg for ever. In this language, like a large animal alphabet, are written some of the first philosophic certainties of men. As the child learns A for Ass or B for Bull or C for Cow, so man has learnt here to connect the simpler and stronger creatures with the simpler and stronger truths. That a flowing stream cannot befoul its own fountain, and that any one who says it does is a tyrant and a liar; that a mouse is too weak to fight a lion, but too strong for the cords that can hold a lion; that a fox who gets most out of a

flat dish may easily get least out of a deep dish; that the crow whom the gods forbid to sing, the gods nevertheless provide with cheese; that when the goat insults from a mountain-top it is not the goat that insults, but the mountain: all these are deep truths deeply graven on the rocks wherever men have passed. It matters nothing how old they are, or how new; they are the alphabet of humanity, which like so many forms of primitive picture-writing employs any living symbol in preference to man. These ancient and universal tales are all of animals; as the latest discoveries in the oldest pre-historic caverns are all of animals. Man, in his simpler states, always felt that he himself was something too mysterious to be drawn. But the legend he carved under these cruder symbols was everywhere the same; and whether fables began with Aesop or began with Adam, whether they were German and mediaeval as Reynard the Fox, or as French and Renaissance as La Fontaine, the upshot is everywhere essentially the same: that superiority is always insolent, because it is always accidental; that pride goes before a fall; and that there is such a thing as being too clever by half. You will not find any other legend but this written upon the rocks by any hand of man. There is every type and time of fable: but there is only one moral to the fable; because there is only one moral to everything.

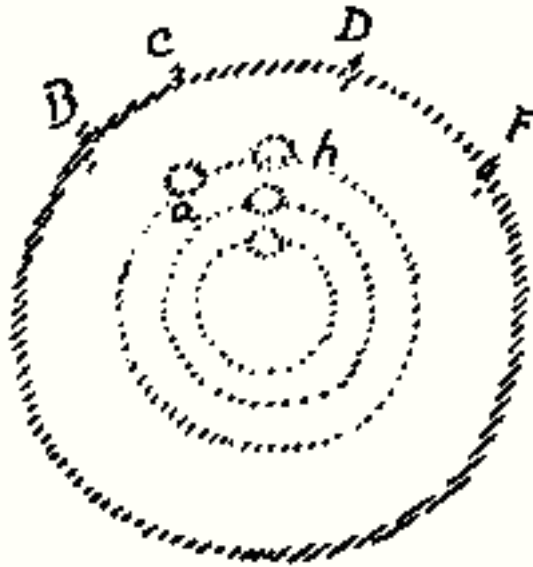
### **What Does Steiner Say About Teaching the Alphabet?**

We have included full texts of these lectures on the Teacher Support Package page. Below we have extracted some paragraphs from each lecture to highlight some of the most important things you need to know about the alphabet. This condenses your reading from about sixty pages to about seven.

#### **From “The Alphabet” by Steiner, 1921**

- In very ancient times, speech was something that Man formed out of himself as his most primal ability; how, with the help of his organs of speech he was able to manifest the divine spiritual forces living within him. I also referred to how, in the transition from the Greek culture to the Roman-Latin culture, that is to say in the fourth Post-Atlantean period, the single sounds in language lose their names and, as in contemporary usage, merely have value as sounds. In Greek culture we still have a name for the first letter of the alphabet but in Latin it is just ‘A’.
- In passing from the Greek to the Latin culture something living in speech, something eminently concrete changes into abstraction. It might be said: as long as Man called the first letter of the alphabet ‘Alpha’, he experienced a certain amount of inspiration in it, but the moment he called it just ‘A’, the letters conformed to outer convention, to the prosaic aspects of life, replacing inspiration and inner experience...men of culture became estranged from the spiritual world of poetry and entered into the prose of life.
- If one seeks the nearest modern words to convey the meaning of Alpha, these would be: ‘The one who experiences his own breathing’. In this name we have a direct reference to the Old Testament words: ‘And God formed Man ... and breathed into nostrils the breath of life’.

- H is not actually a letter like the others, H imitates the rotational movement, the circling around. And the single planets in their revolutions are always the individual vowels which are placed in various ways in front of the consonants.



- If you imagine the vowel A to be placed in here (see diagram) you have the A in harmony with B and C, but in each vowel there is the H. You can trace it in speaking — AH, IH, EH. H is in each vowel. What does it signify that H is in each vowel? It signifies that the vowel is revolving in the cosmos. The vowel is not at rest, it circles around in the cosmos. And the circling, the moving, is expressed in the H hidden in each of the vowels.
- In primeval times, when in the Mysteries the cosmic name of a person was found in accordance with what he experienced as he descended to earth, when with his being he created vowels with the planets and added them to the consonants of the Zodiac.
- Considered from this point of view, what was the alphabet? It was what the heavens revealed through their fixed stars and through the planets moving across them. When the alphabet was spoken out of the original, instinctive, human wisdom it was astronomy that was expressed.

## **Speech and Song by Steiner, 1922**

- It is similar in the case of speech. The language which we speak here on earth is, of course, essentially adapted to earthly conditions. In the first place it is an expression of our earthly thoughts. These earthly thoughts contain earthly information and earthly knowledge; and to all this our speech or language is adapted during our life on earth. But in the pre-earthly life as I have already explained, man has a very different language — one which does not go from within outwards, which does not mainly follow the out-breathing process, but the spiritual in-breathing or inspiration (which we observe to correspond to breathing in the pre-earthly life). ..This too we lose when we descend on to the earth.
- If we take speech as we have it to-day, we find in it two essential elements — consonant and vowel, All that we bring forth in speech is composed of a consonantal and of a vowel element. Now, the consonantal element is in reality entirely based upon the finer plastic structure of our body. Whether we pronounce a B or a P, an L or an M, in each case it rests upon the fact that something or other in our body has a certain plastic form.
- And the vowel element — in this we have the soul which plays upon the instrument. The soul provides the vowel nature. Thus when you embody in speech the consonant and vowel elements, you have in every manifestation of speech or of song a self-expression of the human being. The soul of the human being plays in vowels upon the consonants of the musical instrument — the human body.
- The vowel can be taken by itself. The consonant on the other hand is perpetually longing for the vowel, tending towards it. The plastic instrument of the body is in fact a dead thing until the vowel nature — the soul — strikes its chords.
- We may say therefore: — Here on earth we have our body. The vowel sound strikes into it. Yonder in the spiritual world we have the vowel sound; and the soul strikes into it, and lives in it, so that the sound becomes the body for the soul. You are immersed in cosmic music, cosmic song; you are within the creative sound — within the creative Word.

## **A Lecture on Eurythmy by Steiner**

- It is through speech that man is able to reveal his inner being outwardly to his fellow-men. Through speech he can most easily disclose his inmost nature.
- Speech is a universal means of expression for the human soul.
- Those who enter deeply and without prejudice into this matter will gradually realise that the breath which we expel from our lungs, our organs of speech and song, when vocalised and given form by means of the lips, teeth and palate, is

really nothing else than gesture in the air.

- Now all that can be perceived by super-sensible vision, all that can thus be learned about the nature of these forms and gestures of the air, can be carried into movements of the arms and hands, into movements of the whole human being. There then arises in visible form the actual counterpart of speech. One can use the entire human body in such a way that it really carries out those movements which are otherwise carried out by the organs connected with speech and music. Thus there arises visible speech, visible music — in other words, the art of Eurythmy.
- True speech, however, is born from the whole human being. Let us take any one of the vowels. A vowel sound is always the expression of some aspect of the feeling life of the soul. The human being wishes to express what lives in his soul as wonder — Ah. Or the holding himself upright against opposition — A; or the assertion of self, the consciousness of ego-existence in the world — E. Or again he wishes to express wonder, but now with a more intimate, caressing shade of feeling — I.
- The character of the sounds is of course slightly different in the different languages, because each individual language proceeds from a differently constituted soul-life. But every vowel sound does in its essence express some shade of the feeling-life of the soul; and this feeling only has to unite itself with thought, with the head system, in order to pass over into speech.
- Let us now consider the consonants. The consonants are the imitation of what we find around us in external nature. The vowel is born out of man's inmost being; it is the channel through which this inner content of the soul streams outwards. The consonant is born out of the comprehension of external nature; the way in which we seize upon external things, even the way in which we perceive them with the eyes, all this is built into the form of the consonants.
- If we utter the sound EH, and take this out-going stream of the breath as the prototype for the Eurythmic movement, we find that this breath stream reveals itself to our imagination as flowing in two crossed currents. This is how the Eurythmic movement for EH is derived. All these movements are just as little arbitrary in their nature as are the sounds of speech, or the tones of music.
- All that I have been describing can be conjured up in imaginations, in the same way as speech itself once came forth from the world of imagination. One who has this imaginative vision perceives how the E sound (as in me). always calls up in the soul a certain picture, a picture which expresses the assertion of self and shows how this self-assertion must be expressed through the stretching of the muscles, in the arm for example. Should anyone be able to use his nose in a skilful manner, he could also make an E with his nose! An E can also be shown by the direction of the glance of the eye; but because the arms and hands are the most expressive part of the human body, it is more natural to make an E with the arms and it has a more beautiful effect. But the essential thing is that the stretched, penetrating feeling should really come to expression in E.

## Curative Eurythmy: Lecture 2, Steiner

- Consonants describe more that which is outwardly objective. When we remain within the realm of speech, these two statements are valid: vowels, more expression, revelation of the inwardness of feeling; we reveal ourselves to an extent in the vowel, that is to say, we reveal what we feel towards an object.
- Now we must realize that when we pronounce vowels we omit the movement and make the vowel inward. In speaking of vowels today, we will speak purely of the meaning of that which is eurythmically vocalized in movement.

### **I (sound of EE)**

Practically demonstrated (Mrs. Baumann): a distinct “I” made by stretching both arms. This stretching should be carried out in such a way that one then returns (to the rest position; the ed.) and performs the same movement somewhat lower, returns again, and does it with both (arms) horizontal. Now we go back and, if you had the right forward at first, now, as you go lower, you must take the right to the back, and now to the front, now a bit back again, and then somewhat deeper. Now I don't want to trouble you further with that, but if one wanted to carry it out, one could make it more complicated by taking more positions; one would then start with the “I”, return, do it a little further on, go back, a bit further on, and so forth, so that one has as many “I”-positions as possible, carried out from above to below, always returning (to the rest position; the ed.). When these movements are performed, they are an expression for the human being as a person. The entire individual person is thereby expressed.

### *With the Legs*

In certain forms of hygienic eurythmy it would be good to have the movements — which are carried out with the arms only in artistic eurythmy — done with the legs as well where possible, only somewhat less forcefully, as I am about to describe. Now you will ask how one can make an “I”, for example, with the legs? It's very easy. One must only stretch out the leg and feel the stretching in it

### **U (Sound of OO)**

Now Mrs. Baumann will demonstrate an “U”-exercise for us. The arms quite high up, and back to the starting position, now a bit lower, back again, a little lower, now horizontal, back again, now below, back again, and again below; that is the principle of it. And now do it straightaway so that you start above maintaining the “U” as you move downwards; and now do it increasingly quickly so that at last you reach quite a speed.

### *With the Legs*

In certain forms of hygienic eurythmy it would be good to have the movements — which are carried out with the arms only in artistic eurythmy — done with the legs as well where possible, only somewhat less forcefully, as I am about to describe. The “U” would be simply to stand with full awareness on both legs, so that one has a distinct stretching feeling in both.

### **O (Sound of OH)**

Now please do the “O”-movement: quite high up and back (to the rest position; the ed.) and now somewhat lower, back again, lower still, and so on. Now do it so that you make the “O”-movement above; feel distinctly the rounding of the arms within the movement as you glide down. When you glide down with the “O”-movement it must remain an “O”. Now increasingly faster.

#### *With the Legs*

In certain forms of hygienic eurythmy it would be good to have the movements — which are carried out with the arms only in artistic eurythmy — done with the legs as well where possible, only somewhat less forcefully, as I am about to describe. “O” with legs must be learned, however. One should really accustom the people with whom one finds it necessary to do the “O”-exercise in the manner that I have described, to do the “O” with the legs as well. That consists in pointing the toes somewhat, but only very slightly, to the outside and then trying to stand in this manner and hold one's position. One must thereby stand on tiptoe, however, and bend outward, remain so standing a moment and then return to the normal position; then build it up again and so on.

### **E (Sound of EH)**

Now Mrs. Baumann will make an “E”-movement, quite high above. It is a proper “E”-movement only when this hand lies on the other so that they touch. Now return (to the rest position; the ed.), then somewhat lower, the right hand over the left arm, and then, so that it is really effective, we will do it so that it lies increasingly further back and now again from above to below; then the “E” must be done so that it penetrates thoroughly. And now, in bringing it down, you must move (the crossing) further back, so far that you split the shoulder seam at the back. Now this is the exercise that will be especially advantageous for weaklings, that is to say, for thin people rather than fat people, for those people in whom the weakness comes distinctly from within, but is organically conditioned. It must be organically caused.

#### *With the Legs*

In certain forms of hygienic eurythmy it would be good to have the movements — which are carried out with the arms only in artistic eurythmy — done with the legs as well where possible, only somewhat less forcefully, as I am about to describe. It will also be especially effective to do the same in connection with the “E”-exercise for the feet, by really crossing the feet. But one must stand on tiptoe and lay one leg over the other so that they touch. Again, one-third, and placed, if possible, in the middle.

### **A (Sound of AH)**

Now we want to make an “A”: we return (to the rest position; the ed.), now we make an “A” somewhat lower, return again, make an “A” horizontally, back, make an “A” somewhat lowered, back, an “A” very deep, back, then to the rear; that you need to do only once, but return first (to the rest position; the ed.). And now make the “A” above

and without changing the angle bring it down, and, again without the feeling that you change the angle, to the back.

### *With the Legs*

In certain forms of hygienic eurythmy it would be good to have the movements — which are carried out with the arms only in artistic eurythmy — done with the legs as well where possible, only somewhat less forcefully, as I am about to describe. “A” (with the legs; the ed.) is also necessary; I have already demonstrated it to you yesterday. It consists in assuming this spread position while standing insofar as it is possible on tiptoe. That should also be introduced into the A-movement and it will be particularly effective there.

You will profit further by coming to terms with the following: the “I” reveals man as a person, the “U” reveals man as man, the “O” reveals man as soul, the “E” fixes the ego in the etheric body, it permeates the etheric body, strongly with the ego. And the “A” counteracts the animal nature in man.

### **In What Order Should I Teach the Letters?**

The wonderful thing about homeschooling is you can choose to teach using the method that works best for your child or classroom. We will discuss some of the different ways of learning the alphabet below so you can make an informed decision. In the weekly planner version of first grade we have made this choice for you based on our preferences. You can choose to teach the letters in a different order if you want to. There are three traditional ways to organize the letters of the alphabet that you may already be familiar with.

### **Sound**

In Waldorf education the vowels are taught after the consonants and are taught in a more multi-dimensional manner as they can all form more than one sound. This method helps the child hear and see the letters with similar sounds or speech patterns together. This method emphasizes the importance of speech and the spirit of the sounds before writing. This works with the organic development of the alphabet and the movement lessons and the “sense” of each letter. Using this method “K” and “C” may be done at the same time.

In her article, “The Teaching of Writing”, Eileen Hutchins says, “Picture, movement and sound—all these lie behind the letters which have now become conventional signs, and children should feel the presence of these powers when they learn to write. ...In teaching writing we should concern ourselves not so much with the shapes of the individual letters as with the powers of understanding and movement that are called forth. We need to consider what happens in the soul life of the child when it is shown a number of meaningless signs and is told that these stand for well-known words... Speech and thought precede the written word and different qualities of thought or

speech find different degrees of expression in the various alphabets.”

According to Steiner we can organize the letters in many different ways. Here are some examples of how he suggested teachers organize the letters:

Labial Sounds: V, M, B, P, F and R

Dental sounds: D, T, S, Sh, L, (Th), N and R

Palatal sounds: G, K, Ch, Ng and R

Breath Sounds V, F, S, Sh and Ch

Plosive Sounds: B, P, M, D, T, N, and then perhaps G and K.

Vibratory Sound: R

Undulant Sound: L

Earth: T, D, B, P, G, K, N, M

Earth sounds interrupt the flow of breath

Water: L

Air: R

Fire: V, W, H, F, Sch, Ch, S, Z

The fire sounds stream the flow of breath

He also said, “Then the children learn the consonants in this order: M.B.P.D.T.L.N; — there should also be an NG here, as in sing, it has not yet been made —; then F.H.G.S.R. R, that mysterious letter, which properly has three forms in human speech, is the last one for children to do perfectly. There is a lip R, a palatal R, and an R spoken right at the back (Tr: a guttural R). This can be made into the list below...

Labial Sounds: M, B, P

Dental Sounds: D, T, L, N

Palatal Sound: NG

Labial Sound: F

Sounds: H

Palatal Sounds: G

Dental Sound: S

Sound: R

Labial Sound: V

Palatial Sound: K

Keep in mind the following:

- C is the same as K or S and can be taught at the same time as either of those
- J is the same sounds as G and can be taught at the same time as that letter
- Q is like K and U so can be taught with the K sound (King and Queen)
- Y is the same sound as EE but can be brought in later since when we are teaching vowels at first we are just teaching the sounds.

- X is often pronounced the same as KS (a K and S) so it can be taught as such
- W: wuh: Labial Sound
- Z: zzz : Dental Sound

## **Alphabetical**

This is the manner in which letters are learned in the public school system. The positive aspect of this is that it teaches the child an inherent sense of ‘alphabetical order’, which is something that presents a challenge to many children. This method is not as conducive to focusing on the sound of each letter rather than the symbol. Inherently, when one is teaching in alphabetical order, one tends to focus on the form of the letter. However, with effort this can be overcome. If your child has already learned the alphabet before you started teaching them or is transitioning from a public school environment you may feel more comfortable teaching them the alphabet ‘in order’. In our book, *Sixth Sense Language ABCs*, which this lesson is based on, and in most Waldorf alphabet books, the letters are listed in alphabetical order for the benefit of the teacher. So you may find lessons listed in alphabetical order, however, this does not mean you need to teach them in alphabetical order.

## **Shape**

This is another popular method and helps the child learn similar shapes together. It also allows the child to learn the easier shapes first and then progress to more difficult ones. We use a combination of the sound and shape method in Earthschooling. You will notice this in the lessons below. Although in Waldorf education “speech, sound and understanding of language precede writing”, this method can also be compatible with Waldorf education as it mimics the development of language itself and can reflect the lessons of form drawing that you are doing or have done in the past. A teacher using this method should not get the child involved in the “why” of this order. The “why” is an advanced concept meant for the teacher only. If you are using the shape method of teaching the alphabet you will want to start with letters that are less complex and then move on to letters that are more complex. This order follows the order of your form drawing lessons:

Straight Lines: L, I, J, T

Curved Lines: C, O, Q, U

Straight Lines and Curved Lines: B, D, G, P, R

Running Shapes and Forms: M, N, S, W, Z

Symmetrical Letters and Shapes: A, H, V, Y

Crossing Lines: E, F, K, X

As you may notice some letters can fit into more than one category.

Our lessons, as I mentioned before, focus on a combination of sound and shape. This is the method I have found most useful in our classroom. If you wish to do the letters in a

different order you can simply switch the weeks around or work directly from the book, “Sixth Sense Language ABCs”. If you feel the child needs more practice they can work into the summer and you can take each lesson at a slower pace. We will be learning the letters in this order:

Week One: B, P, and R

Week Two: D, L, H

Week Three: C, K, Q, X

Week Four: E, F, S, Z

Week Five: G, J, T

Week Six: M, N, V, W

Week Seven: A, E, I

Week Eight: O, U, Y

### **How Should I Teach the Vowels?**

Although we will not be focusing on the vowels until May I will provide a bit of an introduction here and then a full lesson in the May curriculum for first grade. This information can also be found in the e-book “Vowels and the Alphabet Teacher Guide” if you want to read everything at once. On the Teacher Support Page you will find the following articles by Steiner that will help you more deeply understand how to teach language. You can also find these articles online:

*The Alphabet*

*Speech and Song*

*Currative Eurythmy Lectures*

This document condenses some of the information in those lectures and provides a short guide to working with vowels. Some important things to know when working with vowels are:

### **Teach Vowels By Sound**

The Vowels should be taught by sound only at first and not by writing the vowels. I have seen some pictures where the actual letter is written into the picture. This is confusing for the child since the original gestures and Eurythmy sounds were in German which is different from English. Additionally, different forms of English (British, Australian, American) pronounce some words differently as well. So the focus should be on the SOUND at first and not the letter. When you have the child draw the sound or shape the sound with their body do not write the English letter next to it initially. Leave that until later.

Kristina Hamilton, a Eurythmist describes this concern when she says, ‘Imagination’, being able to see pictures or images of the spirit, usually comes before being able to ‘hear’ the harmony of the spheres. I believe the vowels belong to this higher faculty and should be allowed to remain free of image. When vowels are intoned in the Eurythmy lesson and their true gestures revealed then these ‘Angel sounds’ are gently brought into the child’s earthly experience. It must be an excruciating experience for the child’s soul to open arms towards the heavens in wonder and vulnerability in the Eurythmy gesture of ‘Ah’ and then think it’s called ‘A’, the name of the first letter of the alphabet whose sound calls for just the opposite gesture, a closing and protective crossing of the arms. Too often I see in the Eurythmy class that, because a child has an inner picture of the name and shape of the letter, the soul gesture is confused.”

I think as a teacher we can all relate to that because I remember being confused when first studying the vowel sounds in Waldorf education. It was so hard for me to wrap my head around the letter “A” being an “AH” and the letter “I” being an “EE”. But when I let go of the depictions of the letters all was at peace, once again, in my heart and mind.

### **Draw the Eurythmy Gestures**

Some Waldorf teachers feel that the child should not do the Eurythmy gestures or draw pictures at this time, but that the child should draw the sound, instead. This is each teacher’s choice.

Kristina Hamilton, a Eurythmy teacher in Australia says, “The vowels are the breath of life. In ancient times they were never written down. Only the consonants were allowed to be written. In Hebrew times it was forbidden to write the word for Jehovah, ‘Jahve’, with the vowels. The vowels are the secret, magical messengers of the spirit, the breath of life, like a wind that can’t be seen. One can only see its effect, such as leaves rippling. Therefore I feel vowels do not need any pictures at all when presented to the children in Class I. The consonants need pictures, formed images, but the vowels need tone.”

This reminds me of when I learned Arabic and the classes I teach to introduce children to Arabic. I always ask them to imagine if they could read a book with all the vowels taken out. Most of them laugh, and reply “no”. However, Arabic is often written without the vowels. The vowels are added as markings later. And when I “test” the children on their ability to read sentences without vowels they always understand them one hundred percent. This is because, as Steiner says, “The consonant is always seeking the vowel”. The heart and mind know what sound belongs there.

### **Angel Sounds**

Although these sounds are called, “Angel Sounds” it is not necessary to draw angels for each of these sounds. Many Waldorf teachers believe It is best to simply use a child as the drawing with a simple face and arms. The child may be drawn to look like a child in the class. The sounds are often called “Angel Sounds” because Steiner said the sounds

expressed man's inner soul. However, Steiner did not depict pictures of angels in teaching children about vowels.

Although some Waldorf teachers do use depictions of angels in their language lessons we use the method of avoiding depictions of angels in the language lessons. We believe that since children at this age have been close with angels since they were born that to suddenly bring angels into the physical realm by drawing them as part of a solid concept – a language Main Lesson - is not necessarily the best way to portray angels to the young child.

Helmut Von Kugelgen says, "In the first three years of life, before the child is so engrossed in material life, it has a close relationship with the angels. At night, while asleep, the children meet their angels. They dream of them or have other experiences of them. As we grow up, the qualities of our childhood mature and develop in us and can evolve as imagination, inspiration and intuition.

Deborah Craydon says, "Rudolf Steiner said that by the end of the 20th century, a new stream of children coming to Earth would have what he called 'the fifth chamber of the heart' in seed form. This new heart chamber is etheric in nature, not physical. It's been present since the 1980s in children and before that in many adults. It's that place in the heart where you know everything. And more and more children know everything. In particular, they know what you're thinking and if what you say is true or not. Unless they become damaged, this faculty is there because they are using the heart, not the head, as their organ of cognition. This new etheric chamber in the heart contains an opening into the spiritual world. When this gateway opens, the Angels are there on the other side."

## **The Order of the Vowels**

Children should learn the vowels as:

EH, OH, EE, AH, and OO (there are also AU and AI)

This helps the children learn the sounds and also the color order of the vowels. Children should not learn A, E, I, O, U as this sequence is not in order and has nothing to do with the pronunciation of the vowels.

Here are some traditional drawings by Steiner that show the forms. I have included quotes by him and additional information from his writings below each form. Keep in mind that the traditional drawings you see and the lovely wooden figures he created are based on the German vowels. This is another reason why it is so important to focus on the sound first. Later you can bring in what the vowel looks like. And in English we all know this can be very confusing since each vowel can have so many different sounds –

and the letter “E” can even be silent!

Because of this I usually present the vowel sounds first, THEN the consonants and THEN the written vowels. You can find the written consonants and vowels in the first grade monthly lesson plans or in the book, *Sixth Sense Language*.

We must also keep in mind that the student’s grasp of the written vowel will be developed over first and second grade. Remember how long it took you to grasp the “silent E” and the different sounds that “l” could make? It took me a while! I still remember.

Once again, Eurythmist Kritsina Hamilton, has some wonderful insight into a good reason why we can leave the writing of the vowels until last. She says, “The children need to learn to write, of course, but I do not believe they need an image associated with the vowels as they do for the consonants. Having learned to form the consonants, the mechanical skill required to write a vowel should not be a problem.

<b>Week One</b> <b>Jokesters</b> <b>B, P, and R</b>	<b>Monday</b> Purple - Rice	<b>Tuesday</b> Red – Barley	<b>Wednesday</b> Yellow - Millet	<b>Thursday</b> Orange - Rye	<b>Friday</b> Green - Oats
Morning A Breathing Out	Ring Around the Rosie	Repeat verses and movement	Repeat verses and movement	Repeat verses and movement	Repeat verses and movement
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries – something seasonal	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Greek Easter Bread &amp; Snack</b> Millet w/ nuts banana, squash zucchini, pear, mango	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together
Morning D Breathing In	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson: Tell the story: The Firebird and Princess Vassilissa – B and P, Draw B & Theater	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Verse for B - Write B and Tongue Twister for B	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Repeat Story or tell new story: Egyptian Cinderella: Draw P & Theater	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Verse for P – Write P and Tongue Twister for P	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson: Repeat Story 1 or 2: Draw and/or write the Letter R and Tongue Twister for R & Play of the Month: Mouse Deer

Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> <a href="#">Geometry in Nature</a> <i>G1 and Up:</i> <a href="#">B in Nature</a>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: P</i> <a href="#">in Nature</a>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: R</i> <a href="#">in Nature</a>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up:</i> <a href="#">B, P, R in Nature</a>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up:</i> Science lesson theme <a href="#">B, P, R in Nature</a>
Lunch Breathing In	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together
Afternoon A Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <a href="#">Tell the Story: The Dandelion: Collect in Nature</a>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <a href="#">Make Nature Table Cloth</a>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <a href="#">Repeat the Story and Lay Out Nature Table on Cloth</a>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft <a href="#">Start Bell Ornament</a>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <a href="#">Work on Bell Ornament</a>
Afternoon B Breathing In	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <a href="#">Learn: Jack Frost Page 3</a>	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <a href="#">Practice: Jack Frost Page 3. Play Entire Song</a>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <a href="#">Continue Working on Bell Ornament</a>
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>

## **Verses**

*Remember that we are learning one verse a week because each week you will add another verse. So, for this first week you will sing one verse only. You can also include recitation of some of the letter verses and tongue twisters if you want more to do during circle time this first week. The second week of circle time you will recite the first week's verse AND second week's verse and so on. By the end of the month you will be singing four verses for circle time. You may also choose to drop one or more of the verses at the request of your students.*

## **Ring Around the Rosie**

*This verse has an MP3*

*Do each action as you are moving in a circle singing the verse.*

**Ring** (walk in a circle) around the Rosie

Pocket full of Posie

Ashes Ashes

We all fall down

**Skip** around the Rosie

Pocket full of Posie

Ashes Ashes

We all fall down

**Hop** around the Rosie

Pocket full of Posie

Ashes Ashes

We all fall down

**Run** around the Rosie

Pocket full of Posie

Ashes Ashes

We all fall down

## **Eurythmy Inspired Movement**

*This is all about acting and experiencing the sound and spirit of the letter.*

### **Verse for B**

*As the children are saying the B sound have them press their lips together firmly and really "act out" that firm B sound.*

B is firm and says "time to come inside and eat your lunch"

Time to stop swinging. B B B B B. Be good and listen to the teacher!

**Verse for P**

*P is said with your lips pressed tightly together.*

Pursed lips they are! P...ursed! P....ursed! P....ursed! Pursed lips. But P can also fly off the lips like P-ing, P-ing, P-ing like when you play ping-pong.

**Verse for R**

R is like a ROAR or a growl...can you sound this as you crawl through the jungle and look for food? RRRRRRRRRRRRRR....

R can also R-ing a bell or R-oll the tongue. Can you rrrrrrrrrrr-ing? Can you rrrrrrrrrrrrr-oll your tongue? (hint: this is easier after chewing gum).

**Day One Main Lesson Story and Letters: B****The Firebird and Princess Vassilissa**

B = Bird

P = Princess

R = Ride, River, Red Sun

Once upon a time a strong and powerful Tzar ruled in a country far away. And among his servants was a young archer, and this archer had a horse--a horse of power--such a horse as belonged to the wonderful men of long ago--a great horse with a broad chest, eyes like fire, and hoofs of iron. There are no such horses nowadays. They sleep with the strong men who rode them, the bogatirs, until the time comes when Russia has need of them. Then the great horses will thunder up from under the ground, and the valiant men leap from the graves in the armour they have worn so long. The strong men will sit those horses of power, and there will be swinging of clubs and thunder of hoofs, and the earth will be swept clean from the enemies of God and the Tzar. So my grandfather used to say, and he was as much older than I as I am older than you, little ones, and so he should know.

Well, one day long ago, in the green time of the year, the young archer rode through the forest and across the river on his horse of power. The trees were green; there were little blue flowers on the ground under the trees; the squirrels ran in the branches, and the hares in the undergrowth; and the fish swam in the river; but no birds sang. The young archer rode along the forest path and listened for the singing of the birds, but there was no singing. The forest was silent, and the only noises in it were the scratching of four-footed beasts, the dropping of fir cones, and the heavy stamping of the horse of power in the soft path.

"What has come to the birds?" said the young archer.

He had scarcely said this before he saw a big curving feather lying in the path before him. The feather was larger than a swan's, larger than an eagle's. It lay in the path, glittering like a flame; for the sun was on it, and it was a feather of pure gold. Then he knew why there was no singing in the forest. For he knew that the firebird had flown that way, and that the feather in the path before him was a feather from its burning breast.

The horse of power spoke and said,--

"Leave the golden feather where it lies. If you take it you will be sorry for it, and know the meaning of fear."

But the brave young archer sat on the horse of power and looked at the golden feather, and wondered whether to take it or not. He had no wish to learn what it was to be afraid, but he thought, "If I take it and bring it to the Tzar my master, he will be pleased; and he will not send me away with empty hands, for no Tzar in the world has a feather from the burning breast of the fire-bird." And the more he thought, the more he wanted to carry the feather to the Tzar. And in the end he did not listen to the words of the horse of power. He leapt from the saddle, picked up the golden feather of the fire-bird, mounted his horse again, and galloped back through the green forest till he came to the palace of the Tzar.

He went into the palace, and bowed before the Tzar and said,--

"O Tzar, I have brought you a feather of the fire-bird."

The Tzar looked gladly at the feather, and then at the young archer.

"Thank you," says he; "but if you have brought me a feather of the fire-bird, you will be able to bring me the bird itself. I should like to see it. A feather is not a fit gift to bring to the Tzar. Bring the bird itself, or, I swear by my sword, your head shall no longer sit between your shoulders!"

The young archer bowed his head and went out. Bitterly he wept, for he knew now what it was to be afraid. He went out into the courtyard, where the horse of power was waiting for him, tossing its head and stamping on the ground.

"Master," says the horse of power, "why do you weep?"

"The Tzar has told me to bring him the firebird, and no man on earth can do that," says the young archer, and he bowed his head on his breast.

"I told you," says the horse of power, "that if you took the feather you would learn the meaning of fear. Well, do not be frightened yet, and do not weep. The trouble is not now; the trouble lies before you. Go to the Tzar and ask him to have a hundred sacks of maize scattered over the open field, and let this be done at midnight."

The young archer went back into the palace and begged the Tzar for this, and the Tzar ordered that at midnight a hundred sacks of maize should be scattered in the open field by the river.

Next morning, at the first redness in the sky, the young archer rode out on the horse of power, and came to the open field. The ground was scattered all over with maize. In the middle of the field stood a great oak with spreading boughs. The young archer leapt to the ground, took off the saddle, and let the horse of power loose to wander as he pleased about the field. Then he climbed up into the oak and hid himself among the green boughs.

The sky grew red and gold, and the sun rose. Suddenly there was a noise in the forest round the field. The trees shook and swayed, the river stumbled over the rocks, and almost fell. There was a mighty wind. The sea piled itself into waves with crests of foam, and the firebird came flying from the other side of the world. Huge and golden and flaming in the sun, it flew, dropped down with open wings into the field, and began to eat the maize.

The horse of power wandered in the field. This way he went, and that, but always he came a little nearer to the fire-bird. Nearer and nearer came the horse. He came close up to the firebird, and then suddenly stepped on one of its spreading fiery wings and pressed it heavily to the ground. The bird struggled, flapping mightily with its fiery wings, but it could not get away. The young archer slipped down from the tree, bound the fire-bird with three strong ropes, swung it on his back, saddled the horse, and rode to the palace of the Tzar.

The young archer stood before the Tzar, and his back was bent under the great weight of the fire-bird, and the broad wings of the bird hung on either side of him like fiery shields, and there was a trail of golden feathers on the floor. The young archer swung the magic bird to the foot of the throne before the Tzar; and the Tzar was glad, because since the beginning of the world no Tzar had seen the fire-bird flung before him like a wild duck caught in a snare.

The Tzar looked at the fire-bird and laughed with pride. Then he lifted his eyes and looked at the young archer, and says he,-- "As you have known how to take the fire-bird, you will know how to bring me my bride, for whom I have long been waiting. In the land of Never, past the river, on the very edge of the world, where the red sun rises in flame from behind the sea, lives the Princess Vasilissa. I will marry none but her. Bring her to me, and I will reward you with silver and gold. But if you do not bring her, then, by my sword, your head will no longer sit between your shoulders!"

The young archer wept bitter tears, and went out into the courtyard, where the horse of power was, stamping the ground with its hoofs of iron and tossing its thick mane.

"Master, why do you weep?" asked the horse of power.

"The Tzar has ordered me to go to the land of Never, past the river and to bring back the Princess Vasilissa."

"Do not weep--do not grieve. The trouble is not yet; the trouble is to come. Go to the Tzar and ask him for a silver tent with a golden roof, and for all kinds of food and drink to take with us on the journey."

The young archer went in and asked the Tzar for this, and the Tzar gave him a silver tent with silver hangings and a gold-embroidered roof, and every kind of rich wine and the tastiest of foods. Then the young archer mounted the horse of power and rode off to the land of Never. On and on he rode, many days and nights, and came at last to the edge of the river and then the edge of the world, where the red sun rises in flame from behind the deep blue sea.

On the shore of the sea the young archer reined in the horse of power, and the heavy hoofs of the horse sank in the sand. He shaded his eyes and looked out over the blue water, and there was the Princess Vasilissa in a little silver boat, rowing with golden oars.

The young archer rode back a little way to where the sand ended and the green world began. There he loosed the horse to wander where he pleased, and to feed on the green grass. Then on the edge of the shore, where the green grass ended and grew thin and the sand began, he set up the shining tent, with its silver hangings and its gold embroidered roof. In the tent he set out the tasty dishes and the rich flagons of wine which the Tzar had given him, and he sat himself down in the tent and began to regale himself, while he waited for the Princess Vasilissa.

The Princess Vasilissa dipped her golden oars in the blue water, and the little silver boat moved lightly through the dancing waves. She sat in the little boat and looked over the blue sea to the edge of the world, and there, between the golden sand and the green earth, she saw the tent standing, silver and gold in the sun. She dipped her oars, and came nearer to see it the better. The nearer she came the fairer seemed the tent, and at last she rowed to the shore and grounded her little boat on the golden sand, and stepped out daintily and came up to the tent. She was a little frightened, and now and again she stopped and looked back to where the silver boat lay on the sand with the blue sea beyond it. The young archer said not a word, but went on regaling himself on the pleasant dishes he had set out there in the tent.

At last the Princess Vasilissa came up to the tent and looked in.

The young archer rose and bowed before her. Says he,--

"Good-day to you, Princess! Be so kind as to come in and take bread and salt with me,

and taste my foreign wines."

And the Princess Vasilissa came into the tent and sat down with the young archer, and ate sweetmeats with him, and drank his health in a golden goblet of the wine the Tzar had given him. Now this wine was heavy, and the last drop from the goblet had no sooner trickled down her little slender throat than her eyes closed against her will, once, twice, and again.

"Ah me!" says the Princess, "it is as if the night itself had perched on my eyelids, and yet it is but noon."

And the golden goblet dropped to the ground from her little fingers, and she leant back on a cushion and fell instantly asleep. If she had been beautiful before, she was lovelier still when she lay in that deep sleep in the shadow of the tent.

Quickly the young archer called to the horse of power. Lightly he lifted the Princess in his strong young arms. Swiftly he leapt with her into the saddle. Like a feather she lay in the hollow of his left arm, and slept while the iron hoofs of the great horse thundered over the ground.

They came to the Tzar's palace, and the young archer leapt from the horse of power and carried the Princess into the palace. Great was the joy of the Tzar; but it did not last for long.

"Go, sound the trumpets for our wedding," he said to his servants; "let all the bells be rung."

The bells rang out and the trumpets sounded, and at the noise of the horns and the ringing of the bells the Princess Vasilissa woke up and looked about her.

"What is this ringing of bells," says she, "and this noise of trumpets? And where, oh, where is the blue sea, and my little silver boat with its golden oars?" And the Princess put her hand to her eyes.

"The blue sea is far away," says the Tzar, "and for your little silver boat I give you a golden throne. The trumpets sound for our wedding, and the bells are ringing for our joy."

But the Princess turned her face away from the Tzar; and there was no wonder in that, for he was old, and his eyes were not kind.

And she looked with love at the young archer; and there was no wonder in that either, for he was a young man fit to ride the horse of power.

The Tzar was angry with the Princess Vasilissa, but his anger was as useless as his joy.

"Why, Princess," says he, "will you not marry me, and forget your blue sea and your silver boat?"

"In the middle of the deep blue sea lies a great stone," says the Princess, "and under that stone is hidden my wedding dress. If I cannot wear that dress I will marry nobody at all."

Instantly the Tzar turned to the young archer, who was waiting before the throne.

"Ride swiftly back," says he, "to the land of Never, where the red sun rises in flame. There--do you hear what the Princess says?--a great stone lies in the middle of the sea. Under that stone is hidden her wedding dress. Ride swiftly. Bring back that dress, or, by my sword, your head shall no longer sit between your shoulders!"

The young archer wept bitter tears, and went out into the courtyard, where the horse of power was waiting for him, champing its golden bit.

"There is no way of escaping death this time," he said.

"Master, why do you weep?" asked the horse of power.

"The Tzar has ordered me to ride to the land of Never, to fetch the wedding dress of the Princess Vasilissa from the bottom of the deep blue sea. Besides, the dress is wanted for the Tzar's wedding, and I love the Princess myself."

"What did I tell you?" says the horse of power. "I told you that there would be trouble if you picked up the golden feather from the firebird's burning breast. Well, do not be afraid. The trouble is not yet; the trouble is to come. Up! into the saddle with you, and away for the wedding dress of the Princess Vasilissa!"

The young archer leapt into the saddle, and the horse of power, with his thundering hoofs, carried him swiftly through the green forests and over the bare plains, till they came to the edge of the world, to the land of Never, where the red sun rises in flame from behind the deep blue sea. There they rested, at the very edge of the sea.

The young archer looked sadly over the wide waters, but the horse of power tossed its mane and did not look at the sea, but on the shore. This way and that it looked, and saw at last a huge lobster moving slowly, sideways, along the golden sand.

Nearer and nearer came the lobster, and it was a giant among lobsters, the Tzar of all the lobsters; and it moved slowly along the shore, while the horse of power moved carefully and as if by accident, until it stood between the lobster and the sea. Then, when the lobster came close by, the horse of power lifted an iron hoof and set it firmly on the lobster's tail.

"You will be the death of me!" screamed the lobster--as well he might, with the heavy foot of the horse of power pressing his tail into the sand. "Let me live, and I will do whatever you ask of me."

"Very well," says the horse of power; "we will let you live," and he slowly lifted his foot. "But this is what you shall do for us. In the middle of the blue sea lies a great stone, and under that stone is hidden the wedding dress of the Princess Vasilissa. Bring it here."

The lobster groaned with the pain in his tail. Then he cried out in a voice that could be heard all over the deep blue sea. And the sea was disturbed, and from all sides lobsters in thousands made their way towards the bank. And the huge lobster that was the oldest of them all and the Tzar of all the lobsters that live between the rising and the setting of the sun, gave them the order and sent them back into the sea. And the young archer sat on the horse of power and waited.

After a little time the sea was disturbed again, and the lobsters in their thousands came to the shore, and with them they brought a golden casket in which was the wedding dress of the Princess Vasilissa. They had taken it from under the great stone that lay in the middle of the sea.

The Tzar of all the lobsters raised himself painfully on his bruised tail and gave the casket into the hands of the young archer, and instantly the horse of power turned himself about and galloped back to the palace of the Tzar, far, far away, at the other side of the green forests and beyond the treeless plains.

The young archer went into the palace and gave the casket into the hands of the Princess, and looked at her with sadness in his eyes, and she looked at him with love. Then she went away into an inner chamber, and came back in her wedding dress, fairer than the spring itself. Great was the joy of the Tzar. The wedding feast was made ready, and the bells rang, and flags waved above the palace.

The Tzar held out his hand to the Princess, and looked at her with his old eyes. But she would not take his hand. "No," says she; "I will marry nobody until the man who brought me here has done penance in boiling water."

Instantly the Tzar turned to his servants and ordered them to make a great fire, and to fill a great cauldron with water and set it on the fire, and, when the water should be at its hottest, to take the young archer and throw him into it, to do penance for having taken the Princess Vasilissa away from the land of Never.

There was no gratitude in the mind of that Tzar.

Swiftly the servants brought wood and made a mighty fire, and on it they laid a huge cauldron of water, and built the fire round the walls of the cauldron. The fire burned hot and the water steamed. The fire burned hotter, and the water bubbled and seethed.

They made ready to take the young archer, to throw him into the cauldron.

"Oh, misery!" thought the young archer. "Why did I ever take the golden feather that had fallen from the fire-bird's burning breast? Why did I not listen to the wise words of the horse of power?" And he remembered the horse of power, and he begged the Tzar,-  
- "O lord Tzar, I do not complain. I shall presently die in the heat of the water on the fire. Suffer me, before I die, once more to see my horse."

"Let him see his horse," says the Princess.

"Very well," says the Tzar. "Say good-bye to your horse, for you will not ride him again. But let your farewells be short, for we are waiting."

The young archer crossed the courtyard and came to the horse of power, who was scraping the ground with his iron hoofs.

"Farewell, my horse of power," says the young archer. "I should have listened to your words of wisdom, for now the end is come, and we shall never more see the green trees pass above us and the ground disappear beneath us, as we race the wind between the earth and the sky."

"Why so?" says the horse of power.

"The Tzar has ordered that I am to be boiled to death--thrown into that cauldron that is seething on the great fire."

"Fear not," says the horse of power, "for the Princess Vasilissa has made him do this, and the end of these things is better than I thought. Go back, and when they are ready to throw you in the cauldron, do you run boldly and leap yourself into the boiling water."

The young archer went back across the courtyard, and the servants made ready to throw him into the cauldron.

"Are you sure that the water is boiling?" says the Princess Vasilissa.

"It bubbles and seethes," said the servants.

"Let me see for myself," says the Princess, and she went to the fire and waved her hand above the cauldron. And some say there was something in her hand, and some say there was not.

"It is boiling," says she, and the servants laid hands on the young archer; but he threw them from him, and ran and leapt boldly before them all into the very middle of the cauldron. Twice he sank below the surface, borne round with the bubbles and foam of

the boiling water. Then he leapt from the cauldron and stood before the Tzar and the Princess. He had become so beautiful a youth that all who saw cried aloud in wonder.

"This is a miracle," says the Tzar. And the Tzar looked at the beautiful young archer, and thought of himself--of his age, of his bent back, and his gray beard, and his toothless gums. "I too will become beautiful," thinks he, and he rose from his throne and clambered into the cauldron, and was boiled to death in a moment. And the end of the story? They buried the Tzar, and made the young archer Tzar in his place. He married the Princess Vasilissa, and lived many years with her in love and good fellowship. And he built a golden stable for the horse of power, and never forgot what he owed to him.

### **Main Lesson Advanced Activity Day One: Theater**

If you read the introduction to these lessons you will know that we have included some theater and storytelling activities this week for your more advanced students. Students who are learning the alphabet for the first time may find these activities challenging. However, if they do want to do the activities you can adapt them for a less experienced student. We also feel that learning the alphabet for the first time and doing these advanced activities is too much for one day. However, each child has different needs so we leave the choice up to you - wise teacher.



Stella and Lily tell a story with puppets

### **Theater Game: What Are You Doing?**

In a circle the first person starts miming an activity. If you want to tie this into the alphabet lesson more you can specify that the miming activity or object in the mime must start with one of the letters of the week. If you do not have more than one child in your class you can do this activity as a teacher-child activity. This activity is also suitable for multiple ages so this is a good chance to get all the kids involved if you are running a mixed-age program. The person miming the activity or object has to keep miming the activity.

The second person or person next to them in the circle asks, “What are you doing?” and the person miming should answer incorrectly. So, for example, if they are eating then they can say something like, “playing the piano”. Once they reply the second person has to guess what they are really doing. Once they guess the mime activity passes to them and they must do what the other person answered. So they start playing the piano.

Then the next person takes their turn (this may be the first person again if you only have two people in the class) and says, “What are you doing?” This person must also answer incorrectly. Then, whatever their answer is will be what the next person has to do. This game should continue until you run out of activities that start with the letters you are trying to practice.

### **Storytelling Topic**

This activity is for the student that has already learned the alphabet and is at level two or three. You *can* choose to do this activity with a child who is just learning the alphabet however many children will find this to be too much for one day’s lesson. As the teacher you will need to make this choice for your class/student. This is also a good activity to involve multiple ages in so you can do this activity with all the children in your class – no matter what age they are. Storytelling is suitable for ages three through adult. This is also a great way to get a spouse, friend, or relative involved in homeschooling with your kids if they want to get involved but are either at work most of the time or not sure how to get involved.

To do this activity you first need to establish the storytelling level of your student(s). For a student that loves to talk you may want to set a timer or use a small hourglass style timer (3-minute or 5-minute) to set a limit on how long the student (or each student) talks. If you have a student that has trouble thinking of what to say next in the story you can do this activity as a “group story” where you, as the teacher, start the story, and then you pass the story around the circle and have each student add a sentence to the story. If you have only one student you will go “back and forth” with them. You can choose to write the story on the board for extra visual practice, however, it is not required and sometimes writing it down can distract from the focus on the telling.

### **Topic for Today**

For today you can start by telling the first lines of one of this week’s fairytales and then make it clear to the students that they can change it. Some students may feel more comfortable re-telling the story at first but will, over time, become more creative with the process.

Alternately, you can choose one of the following plots and write them on the board to remember and guide you:

Being Rescued: The imprisoned, the key holder and the rescuer

Crimes Being Punished: The criminal, the person being hurt, and the “police”

### **Story Starters with B**

You can choose one today or you can read them all to your student(s) so they can choose.

Back, far back, in the mists of time when the world was very young...

Back in the days when animals could talk...

Back when the world was young, and the humans and the animal people could speak to each other...

Before the beginning of time, before the beginning of everything, before there was a beginning...

Before the world came as it was today...

Beyond the woods, beyond the seas, beyond high mountains lived a frightful dragon...

### **Story Endings with B**

You can choose one today or you can read them all to your student(s) so they can choose.

Be bow bendit, my story's ended. If you don't like it, you can take it to Wales and buy some nails and mend it.

But do you want to know something interesting? The entire story took place in one afternoon!

But that is another story...

But the prince and his wife lived together long and happily and ruled their people well.

### **Afternoon Craft or Handwork and/or Story for the Week: The Dandelion**

#### *A Chippewa Legend*

When the Earth was very young, says the Chippewa Grandmother, Mudjekeewis the Mighty kept the West Wind for himself and gave the three other winds to his sons. To Wabun he gave the East Wind; to the rollicking Kabibonokka he gave the Northwest Wind. But he made the lazy Shawondasee ruler of the South Wind and of the Southland. And very sad was Shawondasee to leave the cool and pleasant Northland, and, sorrowing, he set out on his way.

"Farewell, Brother," roared the Northwest Wind Kabibonokka. "Many's the time in your hot land you will long for my cooling breath." But the lazy Shawondasee gave no answer, and slowly making his way to the Southland, built his lodge of branches. There in the flowery tangle of the forest, he sat sleepy and lazy in his lodge. He did not see the bright birds and flowers. He did not feel the fragrant airs, but ever he looked toward the North, and longed and sighed for its people and cool hills.

And when he sighed in the Springtime, flocks of eager birds flew northward to feast in the grainfields. In the Summer when he sighed the hot winds rushed to the

North to ripen the waiting ears of corn and to fill meadows and woods with flowers. And in the Autumn when he sighed a golden glow drifted northward, and the purple haze of Indian Summer draped the hills. But Shawondasee, too lazy to follow in the paths of birds and winds, lay in his lodge and sighed with longing.

One Spring, while looking northward, he beheld a slender maiden, standing in a grassy meadow. Her garments were green and waving, and her hair was as yellow as gold. And each night Shawondasee whispered, "To-morrow I will seek her." And each morning he said, "To-morrow I will win her for my bride." But always on the morrow he looked and sighed and said, "To-morrow I will go." But, sleepy and lazy, he never left his lodge to travel northward.

One morning as he gazed he saw that the maiden's hair was no longer yellow, but her head was white like snow. Full of grief, he gave out many short and rapid sighs. Then the air was filled with something soft and silvery like thistledown, and the slender maiden vanished forever. And Kabibonokka, the Brother Northwest Wind, came rollicking southward. Jolly and brisk was he, and laughing loudly.

"Ho, lazy one!" cried he, as he blew around the lodge of Shawondasee. "It was no maiden that you gazed upon, but a *Meadow Dandelion!*"

### **Nature Table Cloth**

Use the instructions below to create one or more cloths for your nature table. If you already have a classroom or home nature table this can be used by a student so they can have their own nature table. It is often fun for a student to have their own table along with the classroom table.

1. Using any hand-stitch you have learned earlier in the year (or reference the My Waldorf Year Book on the Essential Teacher/Parent Guide Page) sew around the edges of a cotton, wool or silk white cloth that will fit a small table in your home/classroom.
2. Take a nature walk and gather colorful leaves, berries, moss, flowers and bark. You can also use food items such as onion, carrot or potato peels.
3. Soak the cloth in a fixative for one hour. A simple fixative is four parts cold water to one part vinegar.
4. Rinse and dry the cloth.
5. Lay out the items on the cloth to make a design. Using waxed paper over the top of the items hammer over these items until the color (and sometimes the imprint) comes out on the fabric. Let this sit overnight and then rinse off any extra debris.

## **Main Lesson Activity Day #2: B**

B is for butterfly

The butterfly balances on a bud

A blossom blooms nearby

## **Tongue Twisters of the Week**

### *Level One*

Busy Buzzing Bumble Bees

The bun is better buttered

A big blue bucket of blue blueberries

### *Level Two*

Blake the baker bakes black bread

Bad black bran bread,

A big black bat flew past. A big brow bat flew past. Did the big black bat fly past faster than the big brown bat flew past?

### *Level Three*

Pass the big black blank bank book back. If you won't pass the big black blank bank book back then pass the small brown blank bank book back.

Once upon a barren moor, there dwelt a bear, also a boar. The bear could not bear the boar, the bear thought the boar a bore. At last the bear could not bear no more that boar that bored him on the moor. And so one morn he bored the boar. That boar will bore no more!

## **Afternoon Music Lesson for the Week**

At this point in the year student will have already had basic instruction in the pentatonic recorder and learned some simple songs. Last month they practiced some more complex songs. This month we will continue practicing more songs. If your student needs review you can open the individual files for the Pentatonic Recorder Main Lesson Block to see all the lessons from beginning to end. Because the music prints smaller in this book I have provided an enlargement of the bottom code to help you:



chil-	-dren	say	Oh	oh	oh
B	A	A	A	B	D
1	1	2	2	2	3

Old Jack  
 Frost  
 Page 3  
 Copyright  
 Earthschooling

## Special Bread of the Month

### Greek Easter/Spring Bread Recipe

I always make “Easter/Spring Bread” the entire month of April because the spring season just makes us feel like celebrating and these breads are all special in some way. This is our favorite spring bread. The kids always ask if we can make this our daily bread. The only reason I say “no” is because it has so much sugar and because I want to keep it as a special bread.

1 Pkg. Dry Yeast  
½ C. Warm Water  
½ C. Boiling Water  
1 tsp. Cinnamon  
¾ C. Sugar  
3 Eggs  
¼ C. Butter, melted  
½ C. Warm Milk  
1 tsp. Baking Powder  
½ tsp. Salt  
5 C. Flour (All-purpose or your own mix – gluten free is acceptable)  
1 Egg yolk, beaten  
Sesame Seeds  
Optional: 5 Eggs, hard-cooked, unshelled, and dyed red

Soften yeast in warm water and set aside. Combine boiling water and cinnamon, set aside. Combine sugar and eggs, beat well. Add melted butter to egg mixture and beat again. Skim off ¼ cup clear cinnamon water and add along with yeast and milk to egg mixture, blending well.

Combine dry ingredients and add to the batter. Knead dough until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Shape dough to fit into two greased eight-inch round pans or have students each shape their own mini-bread. Crisscross two strips of dough over each loaf. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk. Brush loaves with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes until brown. Push dyed eggs into bread immediately when loaves are removed from oven (optional).

### **Main Lesson Activity Day #3: P: The Egyptian Cinderella**

P=Pharaoh and Princess

R = River

Long ago in the land of Egypt, land of the green Nile River and the blue Mediterranean and the rising sun, there lived a slave girl named Rhodopis. Rhodopis was born in Greece, but had been kidnapped by pirates and sold into Egyptian slavery. The man who bought her was a kind old man, but he spent most of his time sleeping and never saw how much Rhodopis suffered at the hands of his other servants, who teased her endlessly. Their hair was straight and black and elegant; her hair was golden, curly and coarse. Their eyes were brown and black and deep, but hers were green and bright. Their skin glowed like copper and bronze and sand, but Rhodopis had fair skin that burnt in the sun. They made her do all their work while the old man slept.

“Go to the river and wash the clothes,” “Mend my robe,” “Chase the geese from the garden,” “Bake the bread,” they would shout at her.

Rhodopis had only animals for friends. She had trained the birds to eat from her hand, a monkey to sit on her shoulder, and the old hippopotamus would slide up on the bank out of the mud to be closer to her. At the end of the day if she wasn't too tired she would go down to the river to be with the animals, and if she had any energy left from the hard day's work she would dance and sing for them.

One evening she had more energy than usual, as the day had been particularly cool. Even her master had been enjoying the fine weather, and had fallen asleep under a tree near the river. When the day was done, Rhodopis went down to the river near her animals, and danced and sang so lightly and so well that her feet barely touched the ground, and the old man woke from his sleep and listened to her singing. He admired her dancing, and felt that one so talented should not be without shoes. He ordered her a special pair of slippers. They were soft and a delicious rose-red color. Now the servant girls teased her even more, so jealous they were of her beautiful red slippers.

A little while after this, word arrived that the Pharaoh was holding court in Memphis and all in the kingdom were invited. There was to be dancing and singing and feasting for days on end, and naturally Rhodopis wanted to go, to dance and sing with the others. But it was not to be. For as the servant girls prepared to leave in their finest clothes they turned to Rhodopis and gave her more chores to do before they returned, and it would be impossible for her to get them all done before the court began.

They poled their raft away leaving a sad Rhodopis on the bank. As she began to wash the clothes in the river she sang a sad little song—“wash the linen, weed the garden, grind the grain.” Rhodopis washed and beat the clothes harder than she ought, for she was very disappointed not to be going. The splashing of the water wet Rhodopis's slippers. She quickly grabbed them up, took them off and placed them in the sun to dry.

As she was continuing with her chores the sky darkened and as she looked up she saw a falcon sweep down, snatch one of her slippers, and fly away. Rhodopis was in awe for she knew it was the god Horus who had taken her shoe. Rhodopis tucked the other slipper away in her tunic and went back to work, wondering what Horus' appearance could mean.

Now the Pharaoh, Amasis, Pharaoh of all Egypt was just beginning to hold court, sitting on his throne looking out over the people, and feeling very bored. He much preferred to be riding across the desert in his chariot, and the dancing was uninspired. He longed for a distraction.

Suddenly the falcon swooped down and dropped the rose-red golden slipper in his lap. The Pharaoh caught up the slipper and examined it closely, for he knew this was a sign from the god Horus. He stared at the slipper until he had deciphered its meaning, and then sent out a decree that all maidens in Egypt must try on the slipper, and that he would take the owner to be his Queen, for so Horus had decreed. And so it happened that by the time the servant girls arrived the celebrations had ended, and Pharaoh had left by chariot in search of the owner of the red-rose slipper.

After searching all through the large cities and not finding the owner, Pharaoh he called for his barge and began to travel the Nile pulling into every landing, ordering maidens to try on the slipper. Soon he came to the house of Rhodopis' master, and when Rhodopis heard the sounds of the gong, the trumpets blaring, and saw the purple silk sails, she hid, fearful of what it could mean. The other servant girls ran to the landing to try on the shoe while Rhodopis hid in the rushes.

Of course, the moment that the other servant girls saw the show they recognized that it belonged to Rhodopis, but said nothing, such was their envy and hatred of her. Yet try as they might, they could not force their feet into the slipper. While they were failing and pretending to succeed, the Pharaoh spied Rhodopis hiding in the rushes and asked her to try on the slipper. She slid her tiny foot into the slipper and then pulled the other from her tunic.

Then Pharaoh knew that she had been decreed to be his wife by the Gods, and pronounced that she would be his queen. The servant girls cried out that she was a slave and not even Egyptian, and that her hair, eyes, skin and clothes were unsuitable; any of them would be a more fitting Queen.

But the Pharaoh said: "She is the most Egyptian of all...for her eyes are as green as the Nile, her hair like papyrus, and her skin as pink as the lotus flower."

## **Main Lesson Advanced Activity Day: Theater**

We have provided instructions for how to do this section in the introduction to the month as well as in the first day of theater lessons. Please refer back to one of those sections if you need help.

### **Theater Game: Mirroring**

Start this game by mirroring any motions. Pair up students in your class or do this activity as a teacher-student activity. One person should be the leader for a while and then you can switch to the other person being the leader. The leader should do a simple movement and then the second person should try to mirror it exactly. Some ideas for the leader are:

- \*Move your hands in large circles
- \*Move from side to side and up and down
- \*Knock on a door
- \*Combing your hair
- \*Climbing a ladder
- \*Dancing
- \*Walking a tightrope
- \*Brushing your teeth
- \*Tracing the letters of the week in the air

### **Storytelling Topic**

We have provided instructions for how to do this in the first day of theater lessons. Please refer back to one of those sections if you need help.

Pursuit: Person chasing and person being chased

Falling prey to misfortune: An unfortunate person, a misfortune or master, a savior or hero

### **Story Starters**

Once upon a time when princes still set out to seek their fortunes and when cranky old women still sometimes turned out to be witches...

Once upon a time, when the grass grew greener, the trees grew taller, and the sun shone more brightly than it does today, there was a...

Once upon a time, so long ago, nobody but the storytellers remember...

Once upon a time, in a time and place beyond measure...

Once upon a time, in a time and place beyond measure...

Once upon a time, a couple of days ago...

Once upon a time, and a time before that...

Once upon a time, in the long long ago...

One way-back day...

### **Story Endings**

A grief shared by many is half a grief. A joy shared is twice a joy (Vietnamese folk saying)

A mouse did run; my story is now done.

An' the wheel bend, an' the story end.

And as far as anyone knows, they are living there still to this day.

And ever since then, that is the way it has been.

And if they didn't live happily ever after, that's nothing to do with you or me.

### **Main Lesson Activity Day #4: P**

We have provided instructions for how to do this section in the introduction to the month as well as in the first day of these lessons. Please refer back to one of those sections if you need help.

P is a Panther.

Waiting to Pounce.

Pitter, Patter go his Paws

Waiting to trounce.

### **Tongue Twisters for P**

*Level One*

Pirates Private Property

People pledging plenty of pennies

Plain bun, plum bun, bun without plum

Pale pink plumage

*Level Two*

A pack of pesky pixies

Is a pleasant peasant's pheasant present?

### *Level Three*

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

## **Main Lesson Activity Day #5: R**

We have provided instructions for how to do this section in the introduction to the month as well as in the first day of these lessons. Please refer back to one of those sections if you need help.

R is for Rabbit  
Sniffing the air  
Ready to leap  
If there is a scare.

## **Tongue Twisters for R**

### *Level One*

Red Lolly, Yellow Lolly  
Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry

### *Level Two*

Raise Ruth's red roof  
Round and round the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran.

### *Level Three*

A right-handed fellow named Wright, in writing "write" always wrote "rite" where he meant to write right. If he'd written "write" right, Wright would not have wrought rot writing "rite".

## **Play for the Month**

Have students work on this play or another play all month and then perform it at the end of the month. We have chosen this story because it was always a class favorite and because it can be easily acted out by one person or by a group. The verse at the beginning is meant to be recited each time Mouse Deer tricks someone and can be recited by the person playing Mouse Deer or by everyone or by the audience as an audience participation story.

*I'm quick and smart as I can be.  
Try and try, but you can't catch me!*

Mouse Deer sang his song as he walked through the forest. He was looking for tasty fruits and roots and shoots. Though he was small, he was not afraid. He knew that many big animals wanted to eat him. But first they had to catch him! Then he heard

something. *Rowr!*

There was Tiger!

“Hello, Mouse Deer. I was just getting hungry. Now you can be my lunch.”

Mouse Deer didn't want to be lunch. He looked around and thought fast. He saw a mud puddle.

“I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his pudding.”

“His pudding?” said Tiger.

“Yes. There it is.” Mouse Deer pointed to the mud puddle. “It has the best taste in the world. The King doesn't want anyone else to eat it.”

Tiger looked longingly at the puddle. “I would like to taste the King's pudding.”

“Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry.”

“Just one little taste, Mouse Deer! The King will never know.”

“Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me.”

“All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now.”

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

“Imagine!” said Tiger. “The King's pudding!” He took a big mouthful.

*Phooey!* He spit it out.

“Yuck! Ugh! Bleck! That's no pudding. That's mud!”

Tiger ran through the forest. *Rowr!* He caught up with Mouse Deer.

“Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. But now you will be my lunch!”

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a wasp nest in a tree.

“I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his drum.”

“His drum?” said Tiger.

“Yes. There it is.” Mouse Deer pointed to the wasp nest. “It has the best sound in the

world. The King doesn't want anyone else to hit it."

Tiger said, "I would like to hit the King's drum."

"Oh, no, Tiger! The King would be very angry."

"Just one little hit, Mouse Deer! The King will never know."

"Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me."

"All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now."

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

"Imagine!" said Tiger. "The King's drum!" He reached up and hit it. *Pow.*

*Bzzzzzzzzzzzzz.* The wasps all flew out. They started to sting Tiger.

"Ouch! Ooch! Eech! That's no drum. That's a wasp nest!"

Tiger ran away. But the wasps only followed him! *Bzzzzzzzzzzzzz.*

"Ouch! Ooch! Eech!"

Tiger came to a stream. He jumped in—*splash!*—and stayed underwater as long as he could. At last the wasps went away.

Then Tiger jumped out. *Rowr!* He ran through the forest till he found Mouse Deer.

"Mouse Deer, you tricked me once. You tricked me twice. But now you will be my lunch!"

Mouse Deer looked around and thought fast. He saw a cobra! The giant snake was coiled asleep on the ground.

"I'm sorry, Tiger. I can't be your lunch. The King has ordered me to guard his belt."

"His belt?" said Tiger.

"Yes. There it is." Mouse Deer pointed to the cobra. "It's the best belt in the world. The King doesn't want anyone else to wear it."

Tiger said, "I would like to wear the King's belt."

“Oh, no Tiger! The King would be very angry.”

“Just for one moment, Mouse Deer! The King will never know.”

“Well, all right, Tiger. But first let me run far away, so no one will blame me.”

“All right, Mouse Deer, you can go now.”

Mouse Deer ran quickly out of sight.

“Imagine!” said Tiger. “The King’s belt!” He started to wrap it around himself.

The cobra woke up. Ssssssssssss. It didn’t wait for Tiger to finish wrapping. It wrapped itself around Tiger. Then it squeezed him and bit him. *Sstt!*

“Ooh! Ow! Yow! That’s no belt. That’s a cobra! Help! Mouse Deer! Help!”

But Mouse Deer was far away. And as he went, he sang his song.

*I’m quick and smart as I can be.  
Try and try, but you can’t catch me!*

## Week Two

Details will be uploaded between March 30 and April 1, 2015

<b>Week Two Herbs D, L, H</b>	<b>Monday</b> Purple - Rice	<b>Tuesday</b> Red – Barley	<b>Wednesday</b> Yellow - Millet	<b>Thursday</b> Orange - Rye	<b>Friday</b> Green - Oats
Morning A Breathing Out	<a href="#">Flora Day</a>	Repeat verses from week 1 & 2 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1 & 2 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1 & 2 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1 & 2 and movement
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries – something seasonal	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Shape Bread &amp; Lentil Soup</b> Millet w/ nuts, bananas, sweet squash, zucchini, pears, mango	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together
Morning D Breathing In	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson: <a href="#">Tell: The Lion on the Lane.</a> <a href="#">Draw the Letter D</a>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <a href="#">Verse for D.</a> <a href="#">Write the Letter D and Tongue Twisters for D</a>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <a href="#">Repeat story or tell new story: The Hut in the Forest. Draw Letter L</a>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <a href="#">Verse for L.</a> <a href="#">Write L. and Tongue Twisters for L</a>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <a href="#">Repeat Story 1 or 2: Draw Letter H and/or Write H and Tongue Twisters for H</a>

Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Fairy Stew & Herbs <i>G1 and Up: D in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: L in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: H in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: D, L and H in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: D, L and H in Nature</i>
Lunch Breathing In	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together
Afternoon A Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: Tell Story: The Flower's Lesson: Grate Beeswax	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: Make Lip Balm	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: Tell Story: The Sun and the Moon: Find & Grate Soap	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: Make Soap Baskets	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project Work on Bell Ornament
Afternoon B Breathing In	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music Learn: On the King's Highway: Part One	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music Practice: On the King's Highway Part One	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project – <i>Same as above</i>
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>

**Week Three**

Details will be uploaded between March 30 and April 1, 2015

<b>Week Three Earth C, K, Q, X</b>	<b>Monday Purple - Rice</b>	<b>Tuesday Red – Barley</b>	<b>Wednesday Yellow - Millet</b>	<b>Thursday Orange - Rye</b>	<b>Friday Green - Oats</b>
Morning A Breathing Out	<b>Six Little Ducks</b>	Repeat verses from week 1, 2 & 3 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1, 2 & 3 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1, 2 & 3 and movement	Repeat verses from week 1, 2 & 3 and movement
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries – something seasonal	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Shape Bread &amp; Bird Nest Treats</b> Millet w/ nuts bananas, sweet squash zucchini, pears, mango	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together
Morning D Breathing In	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Tell: Muchie Lei. Draw C and K	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Verse for K and C: Write K and C and Tongue Twister for C	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Tell: How Quetzcal Became the King of the Birds: Draw Q and Tongue Twister for K	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Verse for Q: Write Q and Tongue Twister for Q	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson Verse for X: Draw and/or Write Letter X and Tongue Twister for X

Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> <b>Texture of the Earth</b> <i>G1 and Up: C in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: K in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: Q in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: X in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: C, K, Q and X in Nature</i>
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
Afternoon A Breathing Out	<i>EC: Storytime</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <b>Tell Story: The King's New Turban: Start Finger-knitting</b>	<i>EC: Storytime</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft <b>Continue Finger-knitting</b>	<i>EC: Storytime</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <b>Re-tell Story and Double Finger-knit the yarn</b>	<i>EC: Storytime</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft <b>Finish Finger-knit basket</b>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <b>Finish Finger-knit basket</b>
Afternoon B Breathing In	<i>EC: Rest Time</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC: Rest Time</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <b>Learn: On the King's Highway: Part Two</b>	<i>EC: Rest Time</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: Continue Same Craft	<i>EC: Rest Time</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <b>Practice: On the King's Highway: Part Two</b>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<i>EC: Craft</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC: Craft</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC: Craft</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC: Craft</i> <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>

## Week Four

Details will be uploaded between March 30 and April 1, 2015

<b>Week Four Recycling E, F, S, Z</b>	<b>Monday</b> Purple - Rice	<b>Tuesday</b> Red – Barley	<b>Wednesday</b> Yellow - Millet	<b>Thursday</b> Orange - Rye	<b>Friday</b> Green - Oats
Morning A Breathing Out	<a href="#">Spring Song</a>	Repeat verses from this week and choose favorites from weeks 1, 2 & 3	Repeat verses from this week and choose favorites from weeks 1, 2 & 3	Repeat verses from this week and choose favorites from weeks 1, 2 & 3	Repeat verses from this week and choose favorites from weeks 1, 2 & 3
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries – something seasonal	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Shape Bread &amp; Make Homemade Graham Crackers</b> Millet w/ nuts bananas, sweet squash zucchini, pears, mango	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together	Prepare the table, eat & clean together
Morning D Breathing In	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <b>Tell Story:</b> <b>The Feather of the Finest.</b> <b>Draw E and F</b>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <b>Verse for E and F. Write E and F and Tongue Twister for E &amp; F</b>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <b>Tell Story:</b> <b>The Elves of the Millpond.</b> <b>Draw S</b>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <b>Verse for S. Write S and Tongue Twister for S</b>	<i>Early Childhood:</i> Free Play <i>G1 and Up:</i> Main Lesson <b>Verse for Z: Draw and/or write Z and Tongue Twister for Z</b>

Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> <b>Animal Homes</b> <i>G1 and Up: E in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: F in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: S in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: Z in Nature</i>	<b>Nature Walk</b> <i>Early Childhood:</i> Weekly Theme <i>G1 and Up: E, F, S and Z in Nature</i>
Lunch Breathing In	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together	Lunch prep and eating together
Afternoon A Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <b>Tell Story: The Three Wishes – Cut Wood</b>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft <b>Sand Wood</b>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft: <b>Re-tell story and Drill Holes</b>	<i>EC:</i> Storytime <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork or Craft <b>Sand Wood Again and Finish Wood</b>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <b>Re-tell Story and Play Handmade Tic-tac-toe Game and/or Work on/Finish Bell Ornament</b>
Afternoon B Breathing In	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: <i>Continue Same Craft</i>	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <b>Learn: On the King's Highway: Part Three &amp; Four</b>	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Handiwork, Craft: <i>Continue Same Craft</i>	<i>EC:</i> Rest Time <i>G1 and Up:</i> Music <b>Play Entire Song: On the King's Highway</b>	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<i>EC:</i> Craft <i>G1 and Up:</i> Catch Up	<b>Field Trip</b> or Knitting/Weaving Project <i>Same as above</i>