

# Earthschooling Preschool Sample

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*Includes One Week of August and One Week of May*

## **When you order the *Earthschooling Preschool Curriculum* You Also Receive...**

1. Chalk Drawing Instructional Video by Waldorf Teacher, Brian Wolfe
2. Five Parent/Teacher Tutorial Videos
3. Over Twenty Parent/Teacher Tutorial E-books
4. Additional Stories, Verses and Preschool Enrichment Activities (Beyond the Basic Curriculum Book)
5. Membership in the 24-hour Earthschooling Support Forum
6. Five Craft Tutorial Videos
7. Any Additions Made to the Curriculum Forever (and we add items often!)

## **The Preschool Day**

We have provided a daily schedule for your Preschool student(s). However, keep in mind that the life of the Preschool child should be largely filled with time spent outdoors, creative play with natural toys, modeling activities of the parent (helping them do dishes, cook, clean, care for siblings, and even teach the older or younger siblings lessons ;) Your family schedule should always be the priority. That is why I have not included times in the schedule below. The schedule below will let you know what verse, activity, snack and/or lesson you can be doing each day of the month and what order is ideal. You can choose to follow this schedule starting in the morning or starting later in the day. You can choose to follow this schedule exactly or to skip some items. However, we hope that this schedule can be your guide and be there for you when you need it as a support system for you and your early childhood angel!

We have so many support materials for you available so be sure to browse the teacher support materials (if you purchased all of them) or enjoy the materials we have provided below. You should also make sure to read the "*New Parent-Teacher Guide*" and "*How to Start*" articles on the website. They are very important! You will find most of the basic reference files you need in the book, *Waldorf Basics*. You should have this book available to yourself at all times (unless you are already experienced at bread-making, storytelling and other skills, which I know some of you already are).

Before you start we assume you have read the "*New Parent-Teacher Guide*" and the "*How to Start*" articles. These articles contain all of the articles we have referenced below. It will be much easier for you if you read the articles first. Then, when we refer to them below you will already know what we are talking about instead of having to back-track to find them. If you have a class or a family that is mixed with preschoolers and kindergarteners or you are wondering "why do the preschool and KG lesson plans look similar?" (chart omitted from this SAMPLE).

Here are some tips for each part of the day to help you through the schedule: [Anything in blue on the schedule will be found on the pages following the schedule in the order it is found on the schedule.](#) We may, from time to time, provide two stories to choose from. We also provide extra stories on the private member BLOG. [Anything in black on the schedule can be found in this introduction \(either described here or the recipe for it here, like the basic bread\).](#)

### **Morning A: Breathing Out: Circle Time**

The focal point of the morning is coming together in some way. At this age, no matter what you choose it should also involve some movement. This can be organized like yoga poses or it can be simply moving in beat to the verse or the music. You could also incorporate some simple stretches where the child touches their feet or stretches too the ceiling. You can also add prayer or classroom/family discussions to this part of the day. We have provided verses for each week. Depending on the needs/wants of your students you can change the verses each week according to what we have put down on the schedule or you can add to the collection you have each week. My classes always wanted to sing as much as possible so week one we would do the first three verses, then we would add three and so on. By week four we were singing about eight verses each morning (the kids would always have one or two they “kicked out” of the series).

There are MP3s for each verse in your files. However, I was often too busy to learn the “real” tune that went with a verse so I would make up my own or I would use a familiar tune (like the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star or another). Many verses – especially those with a lot of hand motions – are better chanted than sung. Not all verses have or need a tune. If you keep a harp on hand (even a cheap “fake” Lap Harp – you know the ones where you insert a paper under it to play a tune) tuned to the pentatonic scale it is actually surprisingly easy to make up tunes! Everything sounds good on a pentatonic harp. Also keep in mind that some of the songs may be long for some children (the ages and level of children varies widely in KG) so you may need to start the week by singing only the first part of the song or you may need to sing or chant the verse and have the student(s) join in on a chorus only. You can add the rest of the song during the course of the week or just leave the song shorter. It is up to you. Another thing I do with groups of children is I will sing the first couple lines and then have them repeat. I will then do this for the next line and so on.

### **Morning B: Breathing In: Snack Preparations**

You will be preparing a grain and a fruit for snack each day. For each grain that is listed you can make your own rotation substitute if your child/family has allergies or you can repeat one or two grains all week to accommodate special eating needs. You can choose how you want to make the grain. You can use the grain to make porridge (All grains are amazing when prepared like oatmeal!), the bread of the month, a simple basic bread, or flat bread. Basic bread recipes can be found in the *Waldorf Basics Book* and on page 11 below and the basic recipe for cooking grains into porridge is to cook them until they are soft. Times vary based on the method you use. We like to use a rice cooker. On ‘bread day’ we use wheat as well but you can also use a substitute. You can choose to make bread more than once a week. We often do. Porridge can

be topped with cinnamon, honey, other spices, butter, milk, almond, soy, rice, coconut milk or other toppings. Spreads can also be provided for breads at snack time. I allow the children chocolate spread on Fridays.

### **Morning C: Breathing Out: Eating Together and Table Preparations**

This part of the morning is very important. It is not “just to eat”. The child is learning about rituals, responsibility, preparation, coordination skills (pouring, etc..), organization skills, and much more. You can see our video *Making Bread* to see how important all the different steps of snack time are. This period of the day sometimes takes up to one hour. It is very important that the child set the table, enjoy the process of eating and clean up the table as well. Focus on the joy in the process and be sure to start each snack with a lit candle and a verse. Your mealtime verse can be found in the video or MP3 called *Basic Waldorf Verses*.

### **Morning D: Breathing In: Free Play**

This is an essential and important part of the day. For tips on why or how to set up a classroom see our articles in the series *Waldorf 101*.

### **Morning E: Breathing Out: Nature Walk**

It is important for the child to take the same nature walk for part of the week so they become familiar with how the “same” place changes with each time of day, season and other factors. This is an important part of their education. For a child to actually see and experience the changing of the seasons on a weekly basis using the same template every day is much more valuable than coloring worksheets that depict the seasons of the year!

### **Lunch: Breathing In: Eating Together**

### **Afternoon A: Breathing Out: Storytime/Puppet Show or Finger Play**

We have provided shorter stories as well as longer stories in parts for you to get more ideas for content. It is important that you tell the story and not read it. You can use props to help you. Wooden figures are very Waldorfy and ideal but you can also use different props or supplement wooden figures with rocks, stuffed animals, pinecones, scarves and other items. The teacher support materials include a very useful article on how to tell stories. If you are unsure of how to do this please read this article first. Towards the end of the week you will be telling a finger play as a story. The only props you need for this are your hands. These stories are usually very short so your child may want you to repeat them. For longer stories we have split them into two parts. The kids love the suspense of having to wait for the next day to see what happens next! Another really good tip is to focus on the progress of the story rather than the plot. You know how kids tell stories without ends? That is because the plot is not important to them – it is the journey. Breaking a story into parts and telling it over a few days will force you, the storyteller, to make each part more interesting. Along with what is provided to you in the stories below you can also add more colors, objects, details and names. Use your imagination and personalize the story when you can with places, people, names, foods, objects, flowers and other things familiar to the child.

## **Afternoon B: Breathing In: Rest**

### **Afternoon C: Craft**

It is important that the child do these crafts in small steps and does them with the parent or teacher. At this age modeling after the teacher/parent and helping the teacher/parent are very important to the child. It is also important that we realize the kindergartener's need to break things into smaller steps and to repeat activities. Rather than rushing them into a different craft each day, allow the child to experience the handwork, craft or lesson you are doing that week and break it into manageable steps for them. We have done that for you in the plans below. In some cases one craft is so large or has so many variations there is only one craft mentioned for that week. In other cases, there are two or three crafts for the week. As usual, each craft can tie into the theme of the week or the story.

### **Opening Songs**

Opening Songs: We had different opening songs depending on the time of day we had class and the age of the children. I tried to choose an opening song that would be the same for each age so as the child moved up in age they looked forward to a different opening song. And don't worry that they get tired of it! Some kids I had sang the same opening song for two years and still loved it! Choose what is appropriate for your family/group below and START your circle time with your chosen song every morning. You can see these verses being sung at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7b7tdyVGnU>. You can also see the same video on our website under the FREE: VIDEOS: MUSIC tabs. Another location you can hear these songs being sung is on the "radio" channel button within the Earthschooling mobile device App (available in all App stores). NOTE: Many of the verses were omitted for this SAMPLE

#### **Good Morning Dear Earth**

Traditional Waldorf Song

Good Morning dear Earth

(Thumb and middle finger pinch wrist and rock)

Good Morning Dear Sun

(Like a beam coming on me)

Good Morning Dear Trees

(Like Morning only hand stays up and fingers outstretch)

And the Flowers Everywhere

(Make fingers together at tips and brush across top of nose)

("A" rubs down the other "A" and then shake finger in air like "shame" only the other way)

Good Morning Dear Beasts

(Make like a monkey)

And the Birds in the Trees

(Make a beak twice)

Good Morning Dear You and Good Morning Dear Me.

(Hands reaching to each other, then hands cross over our chest)

Lo mas que nos reunimos, reunimos, reunimos  
Lo mas que nos reunimos, seremos felices  
Tus amigos son mis amigos y mis amigos son tus amigos.  
Lo mas que nos reunimos, seremos felices

### **I Greet the Noon**

Copyright Kristie Burns  
I greet the noon with open arms  
The sun has risen in the sky  
I spread my arms just like a bird  
I want to soar and jump and fly!  
Oh Sun...  
Play with me, Sing with me, Shine your lovely rays on me  
Oh Sun....  
Walk with me, Talk with me, Dance with me so happily!  
My friends and I we gather here  
And make a circle like the sun  
We play the afternoon away  
The Earth, the Heavens and we are one.  
Oh Sun...  
Play with me, Sing with me, Shine your lovely rays on me  
Oh Sun....Walk with me, Talk with me, Dance with me so happily

### **Transition Songs**

These songs can help you transition between activities throughout the day. We have created a supplemental MP3 for these songs in the Teacher Support File. Please e-mail us if you need a direct link to this MP3 file.

#### **Nature Walk Transition Verse**

*Leaving the Castle*

Pull on my shiny black boots (your shoes)  
Put on my red gold-buttoned coat (your coat or sweater)  
Sling my bag across my shoulders (get your nature bag)  
And cross the alligator-filled moat (over the front door step)

#### **Bread Making Verse**

The bread has risen oh so slowly  
Look how fat its belly has become!  
Let's wake it up with a gentle punch  
And tickle it tickle it thin...  
Then I will roll it and shape it  
Until it giggles with glee  
And pop it in the warm comfy oven  
And then into my tummy!

## **Clean up Verse**

Searching Searching Searching

For the little gnomes

Where could they be hiding?

In their little homes?

Could they be in the \_\_\_\_\_ (pick something up)

No, not in this space!

I with put this on the shelf

and look in another place.

Repeat...

You can also change it and even get silly with it...you can say you are:

- Searching for fairies
- Searching for unicorns
- Searching for sea monsters
- Searching for dinosaurs (In small places? So this gets silly!)

## **Storytime**

Fairies of the storytime

Come and share the story with me

We are listening with our ears

And we're sitting qui-et-ly

## **Basic Breads**

### **Bread One: Basic Yeast Bread**

This recipe is my favorite hand-made bread. I include this so you have the instructions on how to make bread by hand. You can use the ingredients in the other recipes and follow the instructions of this one to make the bread by hand. If you want to use the machine just follow the order of ingredients I have listed under the other recipes.

6 cups of warm water (potato water works the best for bread if you have it)

2 TBS. dry yeast

6 TBS. sugar or honey

3 TBS. salt

16 Cups various flours. My favorite combination is:

10 cups Whole Wheat,

2 cups oatmeal

1 cup bran

3 cups white

In a mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in 2 cups of warm water. Add the sugar and salt. Let it stand 5 minutes. Stir in 4 cups of water and 6 cups of flour. Beat well. Let stand for 30 minutes (this resting period is important to give extra rising to the bread). Add the remaining flour and knead 8 minutes or until dough is flexible but not sticky. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise (in a bowl) until it is tripled in size (6 hours?). Punch down, Make into loaves and put in loaf pans, let sit for 30 more minutes and then bake at 375 for 30-40 minutes.

### **Variation**

Roll out and spread with any filling like a jelly roll and roll up. Cut into rolls and put on a pan and bake for 20-30 minutes at 400 degrees.

### **Bread Two: Bread Machine Style**

The ingredients below are listed in the order you would put them into a bread machine on the dough setting only.

1 cup of water  
3 Tbs. Of Oil (Olive is the best)  
3 Tbs. Of Sugar (Pure cane and not white is the best)  
2 tsp. Salt  
4 cups of flour  
1 Tbs. of instant yeast

Put this all in the bread machine in order and turn it on dough-only cycle OR use the ingredients in the recipe instructions for number one.

# August: Snapshot of the Month

## Weekly Themes (weeks 2, 3 and 4 omitted from SAMPLE)

### Week One: Rhythm

*Student:* What is rhythm? Where do we find rhythm in nature? In the home? In music?

*Teacher: Cornerstones: Rhythm*

## Daily Themes & General Schedule

**Morning A:** *Breathing Out:* Circle Time: Three verses and movement every day.

**Morning B:** *Breathing In:* Snack preparations

1. Rice & Purple – grapes, blackberries, blueberries, etc....
2. Barley & Red - apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon, etc....
3. Millet & Yellow – banana, apple, sweet squash, zucchini, nuts, etc.
4. Rye & Orange – oranges, mandarins, melon, etc....
5. Oats & Green – wheatgrass, snow peas, apples, etc....

**Morning C:** *Breathing Out:* Eating together and table preparations

**Morning D:** *Breathing In:* free play with natural toys or in nature

**Morning E:** *Breathing Out:* Nature Walk

1. Theme of the Week in Nature
2. Changes of Seasons in Nature
3. Verse in Nature
4. Story in Nature
5. Field Trip or Change the Walk

**Lunch:** *Breathing In:* Preparing and Eating Together

**Afternoon A:** *Breathing Out:* Storytime/Puppet Show

1. Tell the story
2. Tell the story a second time perhaps adding personalization
3. Tell the story with the child perhaps acting it out or helping you tell it
4. Finger-play story
5. Child helps with finger-play story

**Afternoon B:** *Breathing In:* Blow out the story-time candle, put the toys in “bed”. Take a nap if needed. Take some time to look at a picture book or do something quiet. For 15 minutes to one hour (depending on the child/need).

**Afternoon C:** *Craft/Lesson*

1. Introduce the craft. Do part one
2. Craft part two
3. Craft part three
4. Watercolor story
5. Field trip today, free choice such as block crayon drawing, working with clay, visiting someone who does handwork, watching or “helping” mom, etc....

## **Daily Inner Reflections**

I like to start each day with an inner reflection that inspires me but also contains a theme I can integrate into the day for my child in subtle ways. The daily meditations I list for each day are repeated because they are ones that will guide us in many ways. They need to be reflected on more than once. You will also find that each time you reflect on the theme that you will have a different experience. This is an important part of the process for you and the child. It is important to see how these themes can apply to so many different areas of our lives. These themes rotate every two weeks. Post this list somewhere where you can see it every day. Add to the reflection themes as we post ideas in the forum or as others inspire you.

## **Week One**

Monday: We are all here for a reason – finding ways we are special and unique

Tuesday: There is potential in everything – find ways nature shows potential

Wednesday: Giving – the more you give the more you receive

Thursday: You can change the future – show ways that choices you made have helped

Friday: Work can be fun – don't fight life

Saturday: Intention and wishing can be powerful tools

Sunday: Enjoy life – detach in some ways and feel balanced about the good and bad.

## **Parent Craft**

This month you will be making finger-knitted flowers. The video for this is located on your preschool member page (it is also a free video on the free video page). The point of this craft is for you to create something beautiful for your nature table but also to become familiar with finger-knitting yourself and to have the children get introduced to it on a gentle level. This is a task that some children have a challenge with. However, if they have seen a parent or teacher do it at an early age and are already “familiar” with it, then the learning process in kindergarten or first grade is much more gentle and natural. Find a time in your schedule where you can sit with your students (you can substitute this for one of the story blocks on any day) and tell them this story. Let them see you finger-knit as you tell the story and allow the resulting finger-knitting to be part of the story. Plan it so that when the story ends they will see a string of finger-knitting. You can then, either with them watching, or on your own time, create the flowers from these strands of finger-knitting and can put them on the nature table.

Note that the instructions for finger-knitting are included below but I have also placed videos on your member page to make it easier for you to follow along.

## **The Shepherd and His Sheep**

A Story to Tell While Finger-Knitting

There was once an old shepherd, who had a large, energetic flock of sheep. Every morning he would take the flock of sheep up the mountain to a beautiful green meadow where the sheep would eat the delicious grass. But each day, when it came time to make the journey up the mountainside, the old shepherd would struggle to keep the whole flock of young, energetic sheep together. Some would run away to nibble grass, some to play under the trees, and others would wander off among the mountain flowers.

The poor shepherd wanted to keep them together for their safety, but he was too old to chase after them. And so he thought and thought about what he could do to keep all the sheep together so that they could get to the meadow safely. At last, he had an idea. And so, the old shepherd carefully built a little gate [make a slip knot in the yarn at this point in the story]. And the next morning, he showed each sheep how to go through the gate one at a time [draw a loop of yarn through the slip knot 'gate' for each sheep as he guides them, and pull tight], and when each sheep got to the other side, the old shepherd was delighted to see that they all were happy to stand one behind the other. [Show the children how the 'sheep' line up on the other side.]

And so, for a few days, that was how the shepherd went up the mountain with his sheep to get to the green meadow. After a few days, though, the shepherd noticed that it took a long time for each sheep to walk through the gate one at a time. And so he thought and thought about what he could do. [Put loop on index finger of left hand now]. Then the shepherd had an idea. He told each sheep to stand ready, and then, with the gate in front of them [at this point, place the long 'tail' of yarn over the same index finger, in front of the first loop], he showed the sheep how to jump over the gate [take back loop, pull it over the front piece of yarn and right off the finger, and then draw tight - not too tight though!]. As each sheep jumped over the gate, the shepherd was delighted to see that once again, the sheep were all happy to stand one behind the other. In this way, the sheep were gathered for their journey much more quickly. And so, from that day forward, the old shepherd never had to worry about his sheep again, and they all went easily and happy to the green meadow together every day.

### **Instructions**

There are two ways to finger knit. One is to make a chain. Start by making a slip-knot at the beginning of a ball of yarn (leave a tail of about 6"). Then pull the loop of the slip-knot out large enough to easily insert your thumb and first finger through. Pinch the yarn between your thumb and first finger and pull a new loop through the first loop. Pull on the new loop until the original loop is fairly snug around it. Continue to pull a new loop through the previous loop and to pull up the slack in the old loop. Keep going until the chain is as long as you like. To end, cut the yarn and pull the tail through the last loop.

To knit a band four stitches wide, you must cast on around all four fingers of your hand. If you are right handed, wrap the yarn around the fingers of your left hand. If you are left handed, wrap the yarn around the fingers of your right hand. With your palm facing you, leave a tail of

yarn hanging behind your hand, between the thumb and first finger. Wrap the yarn in front of the first finger, then all the way around that finger to the front again. Next, wrap all the way around the second finger. Continue until all four fingers have a strand of yarn around them. Be careful not to make these wraps tight!

Now you are ready to start knitting. The yarn is hanging from the pinky finger. Wrap it around the back of the pinky and let it hang down between the pinky and the ring finger, over the palm of the hand. Lift the old strand from the back of the pinky finger, over this new strand, and off over the end of the finger. Wrap the yarn behind the ring finger, and let it hang down the palm between the ring finger and middle finger. Lift the old strand on the ring finger over this new strand, and over the tip of the finger. Do the same for each finger, across the hand. You've worked one row of four stitches. Now work across the hand from the first finger to the pinky, wrapping the yarn behind each finger, and lifting the old strand over the new and off the finger. Continue working back and forth like this, and you'll have a surprisingly long strip of knitting in a short time. To end, cut the yarn, and pull the end through all four stitches.

*A free instructional video is included on your preschool member page.*

<b>Week One Rhythm</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	Two verses & movement <a href="#">Sing in Rhythm</a>	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries – Choose something seasonal from your region all week ...	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Shape Basic Bread &amp; Snack</b> Millet w/ nuts bananas, sweet squash zucchini, pears, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with golden raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together
Morning D Breathing In	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <a href="#">Rhythms of Nature</a>	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Take a Field Trip or Walk a Different Way
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	<b>Storytime</b> Tell the story <a href="#">The Three Bears</a>	<b>Storytime</b> Tell the story with participation	<b>Storytime</b> Tell the story with participation	<b>Storytime</b> Finger Rhyme as a story or Finger Rhyme and a story: <a href="#">Red Hen</a>	<b>Field Trip,</b> read a picture book or repeat finger-rhyme or other story
Afternoon B Breathing In	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Craft Part One: <a href="#">Make Beeswax Crayons</a>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Craft Part Two <a href="#">Make Beeswax Crayons: Part Two</a>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> <a href="#">Beeswax Crayons: Part Three</a>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Watercolor Story – <a href="#">Color and Rhythm</a>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Field trip or choose from free style

## **Rhythm**

This is a long verse for the young ones so it will be the only verse we learn this week and we will only add one section each day. If this pace is too much for your class you can choose to use only the first part of the verse or extend this progression over the entire month. By the end of the week or month you will be singing all the verses together.

### **Day One**

If you want to sing in time,  
But you cannot quite,  
Find the beat in other things,  
Soon you'll get it right!  
Carpenters work all day long,  
Hear their hammers sing this song:  
Rap-tap, rap-tap,  
Rap-a-tap-tap, rap-tap-tap, Rap-tap, rap-tap,  
Rap-a-tap-tap-tap.

### **Day Two**

See how easy it can be;  
Take a look around.  
Can you find another thing  
With a rhythmic sound?

### **Day Three**

Think about the prancing horse,  
As she gallops 'round the course:  
Clip-clop, clip-clop,  
Clip-clop, clip-clop, clip-clip-clop,  
Clip-clop, clip-clop,  
Clip-clop, clip-clip-clop.

### **Day Four**

Now you've got the hang of it,  
Keeping time's a snap!  
This time when you hear the beat,  
Add a little clap.

### **Day Five**

Have you heard the summer rain  
As it hits the window pane?  
Drip-drop, drip-drop,  
Pitter, patter, drip-drip-drop,  
Drip-drop, drip-drop,  
Pitter, patter, drop!

## **Nature Walk Theme of the Week: Rhythms of Nature**

What rhythms do you hear or see in nature? Look for sound and visual patterns, repetitions of patterns, things that happen at the same time each day, etc.

### **The Three Bears**

*This is the quintessential “rhythm” story for early childhood. It illustrates the rhythm of the household (how they each have their own chair and their own bowl, have breakfast each morning and go for a walk each morning) and is also a highly rhythmic story in the way it repeats themes so the young child can follow along and become more involved in the story line. Of course I adapted the story a bit so it represents wildlife and children in a more accurate manner by removing all “evil” or “bad” labels for the child and/or bears. As an anthropologist and student of Steiner’s teachings I have studied the importance of the way fairytales and folktales are told and have learned it is important that labels not be included in the story because they are implied in the way the story is told combined with the child’s upbringing in the family and/or classroom.*

Once upon a time there were three bears who lived in a house of their own in a wood. There was a small, wee bear; there was a middle-sized bear, and there was a great, huge bear. They had each a pot for their porridge: a little pot for the small, wee bear; a middle-sized pot for the middle-sized bear; and a great pot for the great, huge bear. And they had each a chair to sit in: a little chair for the small, wee bear; a middle-sized chair for the middle-sized bear; and a great chair for the great, huge bear. And they had each a bed to sleep in: a little bed for the small, wee bear; a middle-sized bed for the middle-sized bear; and a great bed for the great, huge bear.

One morning the three bears left their breakfast porridge cooling in their porridge pots and they walked out into the woods, that they might not burn their mouths by eating it too soon. They also liked to take a nature walk each morning as bears often do.

And while they were walking, along came a little child to the house. S/he was just a small child and had not yet learned how to properly knock on doors (at this point you can pause to let your class shake their heads and smile because of course they all know how to do this! You can even ask them – you all know how to do that – right?). First s/he looked in the window, then she peeped in the keyhole, and then, seeing no one inside, she lifted the latch. Now, the door was not fastened, for the bears thought everyone in the world knew how to knock on doors like they did. So the little child opened the door and went in. S/he was well pleased to see the porridge on the table. If s/he had eaten breakfast before she went on her walk this morning she would have waited and asked leave of the bears before she tasted, but s/he was so terribly hungry, so s/he set about helping herself.

First s/he tasted the porridge of the great, huge bear and that was too hot for her.

Then s/he tasted the porridge of the middle-sized bear and that was too cold for her.

And then s/he tasted the porridge of the small, wee bear, which was neither too hot nor too cold, and so she ate it all up.

Then the little child went poking about the house to see what there was in it, and s/he came, all of a sudden, upon the three chairs. So s/he sat down in the chair of the great, huge bear and that was too hard.

And then s/he sat down in the chair of the middle-sized bear and that was too soft. And then s/he sat down in the chair of the small, wee bear, which was neither too hard nor too soft, and there s/he sat until the bottom of the chair came right out, and— plump—s/he fell upon the ground.

Then the little child went up the stairs to the bears' bed chamber. And first s/he lay down upon the bed of the great, huge bear, but that was too high at the head.

And next s/he lay down upon the bed of the middle-sized bear, but that was too low at the foot.

And last s/he lay down upon the bed of the small, wee bear, which was neither too high at the head nor too low at the foot. So s/he pulled the covers over her head and went fast asleep.

By this time home came the three bears to their breakfast. Now the little child had left the spoon of the great, huge bear standing in his porridge.

*(You can make these bears any kind of family to reflect your own family, classroom or community. The original story has all the bears as "he" so I've left it like that but you can change it).*

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN AT MY PORRIDGE," said the great, huge bear in his great, huge voice.

Then the middle-sized bear looked at his bowl.

*"Somebody has been at my porridge,"* said the middle-sized bear in his middle-sized voice.

Then the small, wee bear looked at his bowl, which was quite empty, and he said, in his small, wee voice:

"Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up."

Then the three bears, seeing that someone had eaten all the porridge of the small, wee bear, began to look about the house. Now the little child had left the hard cushion crooked in the chair of the great, huge bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN SITTING IN MY CHAIR," said the great, huge bear in his great, huge voice.

Now the little child had squatted down the cushion of the middle-sized bear.

*"Somebody has been sitting in my chair,"* said he in his middle-sized voice.

And you know what the little child had done to the third chair!

"Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has sat the bottom out of it," said the small, wee bear in his small, wee voice.

Then the three bears went upstairs to their bed chamber. Now, the little child had crumpled the pillow of the great, huge bear.

"SOMEBODY HAS BEEN LYING IN MY BED," said the great, huge bear in his great, huge voice.

And the little child had pulled the bolster of the middle-sized bear quite crooked.

*"Somebody has been lying in my bed,"* said he in his middle-sized voice.

And when the small, wee bear came to look at his bed, there was the pillow smooth and the bolster straight, but upon the pillow was the little child's head, which was not right, as s/he had no business there.

"Somebody has been lying in my bed, and here s/he is," said the small, wee bear in his small, wee voice.

When the little child heard the shrill voice of the small, wee bear s/he awoke at once. Up s/he jumped and when s/he saw the three bears looking at her/him from one side of the bed out s/he tumbled at the other side and she ran to the window for bears are very large and although they only eat fruits and vegetables and can look very cute they have very sharp claws and can easily hurt people even if they are just wanting to play.

Now the three bears, as good, tidy bears should, always opened the window of their bed chamber when they got up in the morning. Out the little child jumped and off through the woods s/he ran as fast as the wind. Where s/he went the bears never found out, but they hoped s/he learned to be a polite little child who never lifted other people's latches again and always ate her breakfast before leaving the house.

## **Make Beeswax Crayons**

This month we will focus on making some basic items for the classroom as well as learning some basic skills. These handmade crayons can be your official classroom crayons or they can supplement the crayons you already have. The results you get from these crayons will be similar to the ones shown on the chart below as the triangle shaped crayons.

WALDORF CRAYONS, CHALK  
& COLORED PENCILS SAMPLE CHART  
BY WWW.EARTHSCHOOLING.COM



DRAWINGS BY STUDENTS AT WWW.EARTHSCHOOLING.COM

### Materials

- 1 part grated soap
- 1 part beeswax
- Concentrated Food Coloring

### Directions

**Day One:** Grate the soap and the beeswax

**Day Two:** Melt your beeswax in a double broiler or if need be use a large two quart glass sauce pan and fill part way with water then place a glass mixing bowl on top put the beeswax inside the mixing bowl and turn the heat on medium. Slowly add the grated soap until the mixture is nice and smooth. Color the mixture with dry food coloring paste. Pour into lubricated aluminum foil molds. After testing the crayon, it can be melted again and more coloring added. Have fun and make lots of beautiful colors. You can get concentrated food coloring paste the same place you get your cake decorating supplies. The crayons are child safe and they blend well. Their color is almost as concentrated as the crayons made with artist's pigment.

**Day Three:** Have the children color with the crayons. Introduce them to the crayons by showing them the "Papa Bear" side (flat big side), the "Mama Bear" side (the long flat side) and the "Baby Bear" side (the pointed edge).

## **The Little Red Hen**

*Another quintessential story about rhythm this verse/story illustrates the concept that there is a rhythm to the process of making bread. This is a great verse/story to start the year with since we will be making and shaping bread all year. This story also illustrates the importance of community, helping and cooperation. Keep in mind that you can also change this story a bit based on what you are comfortable with. Some more modern versions of the story have the hen sharing even when everyone has refused to help. The idea is to teach children that they don't have to be selfish just because everyone else is. This is a nice concept but in telling the story this way one misses out on the lessons about the need to work together. Another thing to consider when telling the story is that the hen is asking for help but perhaps she needs to consider that helping her make the bread is not the only way to help. If using the modern version of the story I would always add in at least that the community DID help in their own way by bringing flowers, bringing jam and helping to set the table. This teaches that there is not just one way to help BUT it is still important to come together as a community. It also teaches that one should not always jump to conclusions – just because someone said they would not help with what you asked does not make them a bad person or mean that they won't help at all. So many possibilities with this story! It is your choice, as a teacher, how you want to present the lesson to the class.*

## **Rhyme**

Find the wheat (act as if you are looking around)

Plant the wheat (motion planting in the ground)

Bury it in the ground (motion burying it in the ground)

Cut the wheat (make a scissors motion with fingers)

Thresh the wheat (make a swinging motion like swinging a bat)

Take it to be ground (make a motion of putting it into the bag)

Mix some dough (mixing motion)

Knead some dough (kneading motion)

Shape it in a ball (make hands into a ball)

Bake it up (motion putting it in the oven)

Spread some jam (motion spreading bread with jam)

Then we eat it all (motion eating it up)

## Story

Little Red Hen found a grain of wheat.

"Who will plant this?" she asked. "Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the goose.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said Little Red Hen.

So she buried the wheat in the ground. After a while it grew up yellow and ripe.

"The wheat is ripe now," said Little Red Hen. "Who will cut and thresh it?" "Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the goose.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said Little Red Hen.

So she cut it with her bill and threshed it with her wings.

Then she asked, "Who will take this wheat to the mill?"

"Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the goose.

"Not I," said the rat.

"Then I will," said Little Red Hen.

So she took the wheat to the mill, where it was ground. Then she carried the flour home.

"Who will make me some bread from this flour?" she asked. "Not I," said the cat.

"Not I," said the goose.

"Not I," said the rat. "Then I will," said Little Red Hen.

So she made and baked the bread.

Then she said, "Now we shall see who will eat this bread."

"We will," said cat, goose, and rat.

"I am quite sure you would," said Little Red Hen, "if you could get it." Then she called her chicks, and they ate up all the bread. There was none left at all for the cat, the goose, or the rat.

## Watercolor Story: Color and Rhythm

For many of your classes this may be their first water coloring experience of the year. This lesson teaches (or helps them review) the basic concepts of holding the brush. Holding the brush properly and brushing it across the page smoothly is an important part of the rhythm of the lesson. For this lesson choose only one color (any color works) and have your students paint with only one color. Remind them of the basic concepts they need to be following in all water color painting: Holding the brush at an angle, making sure the brush part is always smooth (not smashed down from above onto the paper) and that their strokes follow the natural brush line. It is sort of like petting a kitten. You don't want to pet it "against the fur". In the same way you don't want to drag or push the brush so that the fibers spread. You always want to paint so the fibers stay flat and smooth. You can even have the children practice this on a pet (petting them so the fur stays smooth and flat) or a stuffed animal before this lesson.

*Every week of school year has a lesson block like this for your preschooler. We also provide extra stories and verses if you want to add more into your weekly schedule or "switch out" stories. Another sample week is below...*

# May: Snapshot of the Month

## May Weekly Themes

**Week One:** May Day – May Week – Song and Dance

## Daily Inner Reflections

I like to start each day with an inner reflection that inspires me but also contains a theme I can integrate into the day for my child in subtle ways. The daily meditations I list for each day are repeated because they are ones that will guide us in many ways. They need to be reflected on more than once. You will also find that each time you reflect on the theme that you will have a different experience. This is an important part of the process for you and the child. It is important to see how these themes can apply to so many different areas of our lives. These themes rotate every two weeks. Post this list somewhere where you can see it every day. Add to the reflection themes as we post ideas in the forum or as others inspire you.

## Week One

Monday: We are all here for a reason – finding ways we are special and unique

Tuesday: There is potential in everything – find ways nature shows potential

Wednesday: Giving – the more you give the more you receive

Thursday: You can change the future – show ways that choices you made have helped

Friday: Work can be fun – don't fight life

Saturday: Intention and wishing can be powerful tools

Sunday: Enjoy life – detach in some ways and feel balanced about the good and bad.

## Parent Craft for May

The video "Fairy Wings" on your curriculum page will teach you how to do this craft.

<b>Week One Song &amp; Dance</b>	Monday Purple - Rice	Tuesday Red – Barley	Wednesday Yellow - Millet	Thursday Orange - Rye	Friday Green - Oats
Morning A Breathing Out	Two verses & movement <b>Knock Knock, May There Always Be Sunshine</b>	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement	Two verses & movement
Morning B Breathing In	<b>Snack</b> Brown rice with grapes, blueberries, blackberries	<b>Snack</b> Barley with apple, raspberries, cherries, strawberries, watermelon	<b>Shape Basic Bread</b> Millet w/ nuts bananas sweet squash zucchini, pears, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Rye with oranges, tangerines, mandarins, melon, mangoes	<b>Snack</b> Oatmeal with golden raisins, grapes, wheatgrass, snowpeas, apples, pears
Morning C Breathing Out	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together	Prepare the table, eat together, clean together
Morning D Breathing In	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
Morning E Breathing Out	<b>Nature Walk</b> <b>Theme of the Week</b>	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Theme of the Week Repeat	<b>Nature Walk</b> Take a Field Trip or Walk a Different Way
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	<b>Storytime</b> Tell the story <b>Little Half Chick</b>	<b>Storytime</b> Tell the story a second time – add personalization	<b>Storytime</b> Child acts out the story or participates in some way	<b>Finger-Play</b> Tell as a story <b>Hen and Chicks</b>	<b>Finger-Play</b> Have child do the finger- play with you
Afternoon B Breathing In	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time	Breathing in Rest Time
Afternoon C Breathing Out	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Craft Part One <b>Prepare a Pot, Purchase Seeds</b>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Craft Part Two <b>Plant Seeds and Set in Window or Ground</b>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> <b>Alfalfa Sprouts</b>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Watercolor Story – <b>May Flower Yellow</b>	<b>Craft-Lesson</b> Field trip or choose from free style

## **Knock Knock**

Knock Knock

*(Knock on Child's Forehead)*

Peek In

*(Open child's eye)*

Open the latch

*(push tip of child's nose)*

And walk right in

*(Walk fingers to edge of child's mouth)*

How do you do Mr. Chin Chin Chin?

*(Tickle child's chin).*

## **May There Always Be Sunshine**

Russian. We have provided the Russian words but you do not need to include these as part of circle time unless you feel your student is able. Singing the Russian is a little above the level of most preschool students.

May there always be sunshine

May there always be blue sky

May there always be mama

May there always be me.

*Poost vseгда boodyet solnte*

*Poost vseгда boodyet nyeba*

*Poost vseгда boodyet mama*

*Poost vseгда boodoo ya.*

## **Nature Walk Theme of the Week**

Nature Walk Lesson: This month's nature walk lesson: have each child choose an animal and tell them to BE that animal on the walk. They can "crawl," "slither," "climb," "fly," whatever they need to do to be that animal. Afterwards they can tell stories about how that animal sees the world.

## Half Chick

*There are many versions of this story around the world and you may adapt this one to fit the area that you live in. We chose the Mexican version of the story for this month because where we live many people celebrate the Mexican "Cinco de Mayo".*

A long, long time ago, on a Mexican ranch, a mother hen was sitting on her eggs. One by one, the baby chicks began to hatch, leaving their empty shells behind. One, two, three, four ... twelve chicks had hatched. But the last egg still had not cracked open. The hen did not know what to do. The chicks were running here and there, and she could not chase after them because she was still sitting on the last egg.

Finally there was a tiny sound. The baby chick was pecking at its egg from the inside. The hen quickly helped it break open the shell and at last the 13th chick came out into the world.

Yet this was no ordinary chick. He had only one wing, only one leg, only one eye, and only half as many feathers as the other chicks. It was not long before everyone at the ranch knew that a very special chick had been born.

The ducks told the turkeys. The turkeys told the pigeons. The pigeons told the swallows. And the swallows flew over the fields, spreading the news to the cows grazing peacefully with their calves, the fierce bulls, and the swift horses.

Soon the hen was surrounded by animals who wanted to see the strange chick. One of the ducks said, "But he only has one wing!"

And one of the turkeys added, "Why, he's only a ... half-chicken!" From then on, everyone called him Half-Chicken. And Half-Chicken, finding himself at the center of all this attention, became very vain.

One day he overheard the swallows, who traveled a great deal, talking about him: "Not even at the court of the viceroy in Mexico City is there anyone so unique." Then Half-Chicken decided that it was time for him to leave the ranch. Early one morning, he said his farewells, announcing:

*"Good-bye, good-bye!  
I'm off to Mexico City  
to see the court of the viceroy!"*

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot. Half-Chicken had not walked very far when he found a stream whose waters were blocked by some branches.

"Good morning, Half-Chicken. Would you please move the branches that are blocking my way?" asked the stream. Half-Chicken moved the branches aside. But when the stream suggested that he stay awhile and take a swim, he answered:

*"I have no time to lose.  
I'm off to Mexico City  
to see the court of the viceroy!"*

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot. A little while later, Half-Chicken found a small fire burning between some rocks. The fire was almost out. "Good morning, Half-Chicken. Please, fan me a little with your wing, for I am about to go out," asked the fire.

Half-Chicken fanned the fire with his wing, and it blazed up again. But when the fire suggested that he stay awhile and warm up, he answered:

*"I have no time to lose.  
I'm off to Mexico City  
to see the court of the viceroy!"*

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot. After he had walked a little farther, Half-Chicken found the wind tangled in some bushes.

"Good morning, Half-Chicken. Would you please untangle me, so that I can go on my way?" asked the wind. Half-Chicken untangled the branches. But when the wind suggested that he stay and play, and offered to help him fly here and there like a dry leaf, he answered:

*"I have no time to lose.  
I'm off to Mexico City  
to see the court of the viceroy!"*

And *hip hop hip hop*, off he went, hippety-hopping along on his only foot. At last he reached Mexico City. Half-Chicken crossed the enormous Great Plaza. He passed the stalls laden with meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, cheese, and honey. He passed the Parian, the market where all kinds of beautiful goods were sold. Finally, he reached the gate of the viceroy's palace.

"Good afternoon," said Half-Chicken to the guards in fancy uniforms who stood in front of the palace. "I've come to see the viceroy." One of the guards began to laugh. The other one said, "You'd better go in around the back and through the kitchen."

So Half-Chicken went *hip hop hip hop* around the palace and to the kitchen door. The cook who saw him said, "What luck! This chicken is just what I need to make a soup for the vicereine." And he threw Half-Chicken into a kettle of water that was sitting on the fire. When Half-Chicken felt how hot the water was, he said, "Oh, fire, help me! Please, don't burn me!" The fire answered, "You helped me when I needed help. Now it's my turn to help you. Ask the water to jump on me and put me out." Then Half-Chicken asked the water, "Oh, water, help me! Please jump on the fire and put him out, so he won't burn me." And the water answered,

"You helped me when I needed help. Now it's my turn to help you." And he jumped on the fire and put him out. When the cook returned, he saw that the water had spilled and the fire was out.

"This chicken has been more trouble than he's worth!" exclaimed the cook. "Besides, one of the ladies-in-waiting just told me that the vicereine doesn't want any soup. She wants to eat nothing but salad." And he picked Half-Chicken up by his only leg and flung him out the window. When Half-Chicken was tumbling through the air, he called out: "Oh, wind, help me, please!" And the wind answered, "You helped me when I needed help. Now it's my turn to help you." And the wind blew fiercely. He lifted Half-Chicken higher and higher, until the little rooster landed on one of the towers of the palace.

"From there you can see everything you want, Half-Chicken, with no danger of ending up in the cooking pot." And from that day on, weathercocks have stood on their only leg, seeing everything that happens below, and pointing whichever way their friend the wind blows.

## **Planting Cotton**

*My favorite plant to grow with this age is cotton. The kids are so amazed when they realize they have grown something that they can wear! However, if you do not have access to cotton seeds you can do the same thing with green beans.*

A friend showed me some cotton plants she had planted one year in her front yard on a whim. She claimed they were easy to grow, required practically no care and produced real cotton in a short time. I was fascinated and so she gave me a couple "poof balls" of cotton that were mixed with the seeds and I took them home and planted them. I was amazed! These were better than the "green beans" I had planted as a kid. The traditional "first plant" seems to be beans because they are easy to grow, they grow quickly and you can use them afterwards. Cotton provides the same benefits. It is an amazing way to show kids about where cotton clothing comes from and also provides a wonderful lesson in planting and watching stages of a plant. Obtain some cotton seeds from a plant or from a store or order online. I have gathered the information below to enrich your experience. To plant the seeds simply use a LARGE pot (so no transplanting is needed) and plant 1-3 seeds about 1/4 inch under the soil. Follow directions for sunlight and water below.

## **The Plant**

Cotton is a natural fiber as it comes from a plant, and makes up nearly half of all the fiber sold in the world. The cotton grows on a plant that is a member of the Hibiscus family, botanically known as *Gossypium hirsutum*. There are many different varieties of cotton; the most common type grown in Australia is American Upland cotton. This is a leafy green shrub that produces cream and pink flowers that turn into the fruit or cotton bolls.

## **The Fiber**

Before it is processed, the cotton fiber is called lint. The lint grows inside the cotton bolls, which are the fruit of the plant. Inside each boll there are around 30 seeds.

## **The Seed**

Cottonseed looks a lot like coffee beans in both size and color. The seeds can be crushed to get the oil, which can be used for cooking and a wide range of other uses. The left over husks, or seed shells can then be fed to animals.

## **Where is cotton grown?**

Cotton is grown in over 90 countries around the world. Most of the cotton in the world (80%) is grown in China, USA, Uzbekistan, Pakistan and China. There are two ways in which cotton can be grown, either as dryland cotton or irrigated cotton. Dryland cotton is cotton grown on farms that only use the water from the rain to grow their plants. Irrigated cotton is grown on farms that use water from dams or underground rivers to grow their plants. The most common type of farm in Australia grows irrigated cotton. Cotton is grown mainly in central and northwestern NSW and central and southern Queensland.

## **What does cotton need to grow?**

Cotton, like all plants need sunlight, water and food (or nutrients to grow). To grow well cotton needs; a lot of sunlight, warm weather (an average of 16-21 degrees), and moderate but regular watering.

## **How does cotton grow?**

Cottonseed needs to be planted in damp soil (soil that has been watered), and it then takes about 4 to 14 days to burst out from under the soil. The cotton seedling grows into a young plant, sending down a long taproot to find water and nutrients.

The cotton plant produces 25 to 40 bolls, but only 10 to 30 bolls will survive on the plant to be picked. Each boll has about 35 seeds inside. The first bolls open on the lower branches, the last bolls open at the top of the plant.

## **Glossary**

**Boll:** Fruit of cotton plants. Holds the cotton fiber and seeds.

**Lint:** The white fluffy cotton fiber from cotton plants.

**Nutrients:** Food for plants and animals.

## **Cotton**

There are several species of "*wild cotton*" (cotton that grows uncultivated) in the world. They have been found in Australia, Africa, Arizona, Central America, Lower California, Brazil, Mexico and other tropical countries and islands. Because of problems related to their refinement, they are not economically feasible to use. Through genetic assistance and breeding, today's cottons have evolved from these "wild" sources and are more processing friendly.

Currently, there are five prominent types of cotton being grown commercially around the world. They are *Egyptian*, *Sea Island*, *American Pima*, *Asiatic* and *Upland*. Because of their need for a long, sunny growing period with at least 160 frost free days they are grown between latitudes 45 degrees north and 30 degrees south. The major producing countries within this region are the United States, Peoples Republic of China, India, Pakistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. Also, Brazil, Australia, Egypt, Argentina, Turkey, Greece, Syria and others produce significant, but lesser amount

In the U.S. there are fourteen major cotton growing states that produce Upland cotton. They are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Some cotton is also grown in Florida, Kansas and New Mexico. American Pima cotton is grown in Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. All of these states form a region in the United States known as the *Cotton Belt* and have three things in common, lots of sunshine, water and fertile soil, very important to growing a good cotton crop. Upland cotton being the most common type in the U.S. has a *staple length* (length of fiber) of 13/16 to 1 ¼ inches. The American Pima has a staple length of 1 5/16 to 1 ½ inches. These plant types grow and mature at different rates and lengths of time, but basically mature within a 30 day period of each other.

Cotton plants have a general time frame in which they grow and produce after *planting* (introducing the seed to moist soil). With ideal conditions, the planted cotton seed will *germinate* (to begin to grow) or sprout and emerge in about five to ten days. The first 2 leaves that are visible on the young cotton plant are seedling leaves called *cotyledons* (cot-a-lee-dons). They are useful for absorbing sunlight into the plant. The sunlight is then converted through a process known as *photosynthesis*, into nourishing carbohydrates that will help the plant grow.

In about two to four weeks they turn over the photosynthetic task to *true leaves* (leaves produced subsequent to the cotyledons) which continue the feeding process for the duration of the plants life. The plant continues to grow, adding leaves and height, and in approximately five to seven weeks, small flower buds called *squares* (a small flower bud covered with fringed leaf-like parts called *bracts*) will appear on the cotton plant. As this square develops, the bud swells and begins to push through the bracts until it opens into an attractive flower. Within three days, the flower will *pollinate* (the transfer of pollen from the anther to the stigma of the same or another flower) itself, change from a creamy white or yellow color to a pinkish red, and then wither and fall, exposing a small, green, immature cotton *boll* (a segmented pod containing 32 immature seeds from which the cotton fibers will grow). This boll is considered a fruit because it contains seeds. As the fibers continue to grow and thicken within the segmented boll, it enlarges until it becomes approximately the size of a small fig. Now, the cotton fibers have become mature and thickened with their primary growth substance, *cellulose* (a carbohydrate, the chief component of the cell wall in most plants). An average boll will contain nearly 500,000 fibers of cotton and each plant may bear up to 100 bolls. In about 140 days after planting or 45 days after bolls appear, the cotton boll will begin to naturally split open along the bolls segments or *carpels* and dry out, exposing the underlying cotton segments called *locks*. These dried carpels are known as the *bur*, and it's the bur that will hold the locks of cotton in place

when fully dried and fluffed, ready for picking. The growth cycle of the various cotton species vary in length, but the sequence of fruit production remain the same. Weather, insects and moisture can adversely affect optimum conditions for plant growth and it is the farmer's responsibility to adjust to these conditions to optimize yield.

## **Basic Bread Recipe**

This recipe is my favorite hand-made bread. I include this so you have the instructions on how to make bread by hand. You can use the ingredients in the other recipes and follow the instructions of this one to make the bread by hand. If you want to use the machine just follow the order of ingredients I have listed under the other recipes. The reason this recipe is so large is because I was making it for a class. However, you can make extra for a smaller family or class and freeze the leftovers to save time later. To thaw all you need to do is put it in the refrigerator overnight!

### **Ingredients**

6 cups of warm water - if you have boiled potatoes potato water works the BEST for bread.

2 TBS. dry yeast

6 TBS. sugar or honey

3 TBS. salt

16 cups various flours

(My favorite combination is 10 cups Whole Wheat, 2 cups oatmeal, 1 cup bran and 3 cups white)

### **Instructions**

1. In a mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in 2 cups of warm water. Add the sugar and salt. Let it stand 5 minutes.
2. Stir in 4 cups of water and 6 cups of flour. Beat well. Let stand for 30 minutes (this resting period is important to give extra rising to the bread)
3. Add the remaining flour and knead 8 minutes or until dough is flexible but not sticky.
4. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise (in a bowl) until it is tripled in size (6 hours?)
5. Punch down, Make into loaves and put in loaf pans, let sit for 30 more minutes and then bake at 375 for 30-40 minutes
6. OR: Roll out and spread with any filling like a jelly roll and roll up. Cut into rolls and put on a pan and bake for 20-30 minutes at 400 degrees. We often do this for a lunch or hearty snack. I love filling the bread with cheddar cheese and chives or mint and goat cheese!



Bread tray from Earthschooling parent-child class children ages 3-6

### **Alfalfa Seed Sprouts**

*Kids impatient to see their plants grow? Do this activity for a plant they will see results on only a few hours after planting!*

Sprouts, used for thousands of years around the world as a food source, are high in protein and other vitamins and minerals. In fact, a cup of sprouts has as much protein as one egg! A sprout is a newly germinated seed, bean or grain. You can use them in salads, in stir-fries, on sandwiches and even in an egg-salad or tuna-salad sandwich. Safia, my daughter, likes to eat them plain.

To make sprouts remember what seeds take to germinate in a garden – darkness (under the soil), moisture (watering cans and rain) and warmth (sunny growing months). When you do sprouting you are mimicking this in the kitchen.

*We will do step one in class. We will also create an “in-built” strainer and lid for the jar (see note at the bottom of the page) The rest the kids will continue at home (or continue to wait at home to see results if their home IS their classroom)*

1. Start by putting a small amount of seeds (they expand greatly so do not put too many) in a wide mouth jar. Fill the container with water and ignore it until the next day. Since this is a Sunday morning class you can do step two in the evening tonight or Monday morning.
2. The next step is to tip the “old” water out and add new water. Use the “old” water in a soup or to water plants because it has lots of vitamins and minerals in it. You can even use it to make bread with.
3. Immediately after adding the new water, strain that out too (you can use a tea strainer) and leave only what clings to the little seeds or beans or grains.
4. Now you have some wet seeds in a jar. Cover this jar loosely with plastic wrap and put your jar in a kitchen cupboard or in a dark counter in the kitchen. We put ours on top of the fridge so we can see it.
5. Twice a day “rinse” the sprouts as you did in step 2 & 3. If you forget then once a day is “OK”.
6. It will take 3-4 days for your sprouts to grow to maturity. When they are done – enjoy!

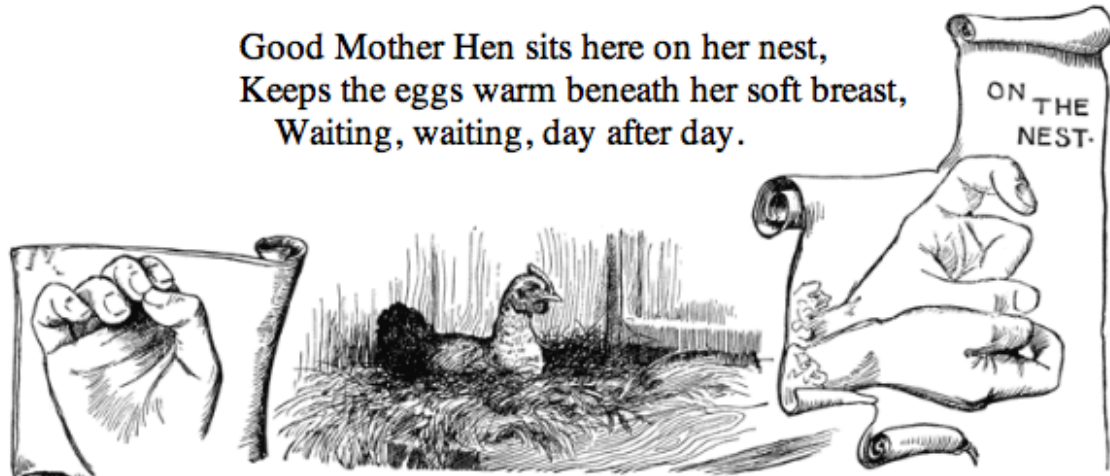
*If you had trouble here are some common things that can go wrong:*

1. Did you over-soak the seeds? Did you leave too much water in the jar? This can cause rot and mold to set in.
2. Did you keep the sprouts too long at a low (cold) temperature? This will cause slow germination and you just need to wait a couple more days. Did you keep the sprouts at too high a temperature? This causes sour and fermented sprouts.

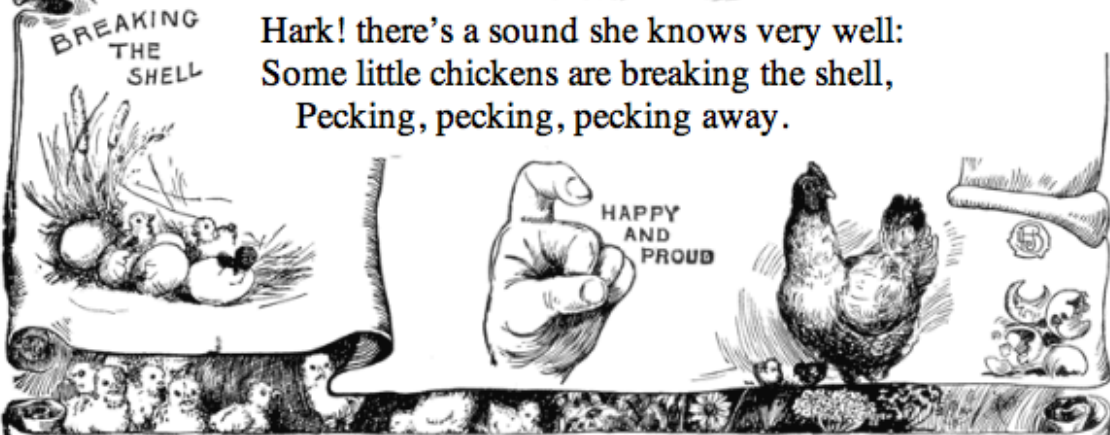
To Store: Put sprouts in a loosely tied plastic bag in the fridge for up to two weeks. We are going to poke small holes in the lids of the jars to create an “inbuilt” strainer. You should not have to cover the sprouts with plastic wrap if you keep this lid on and when you rinse all you have to do is pour the water out through the lid. The small sprouts should not go through the holes.

III.—THE HEN AND CHICKENS.

Good Mother Hen sits here on her nest,  
Keeps the eggs warm beneath her soft breast,  
Waiting, waiting, day after day.

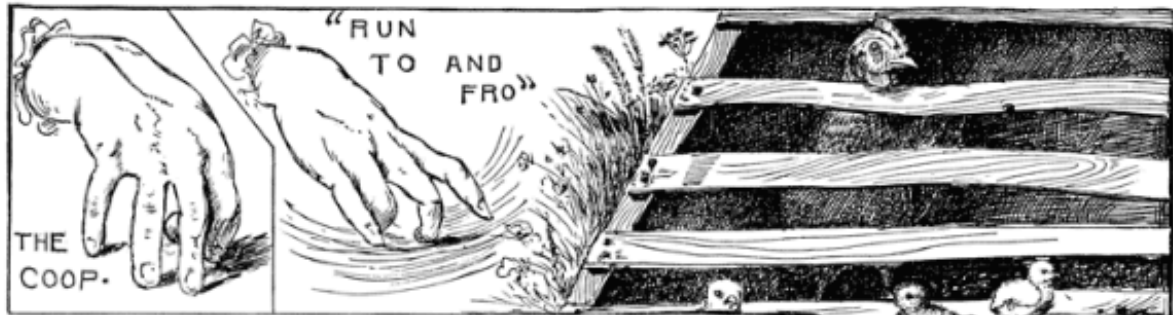


Hark! there's a sound she knows very well:  
Some little chickens are breaking the shell,  
Pecking, pecking, pecking away.



Now they're all out, Oh, see what a crowd!  
Good Mother Hen is happy and proud,  
Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck, clucking away.

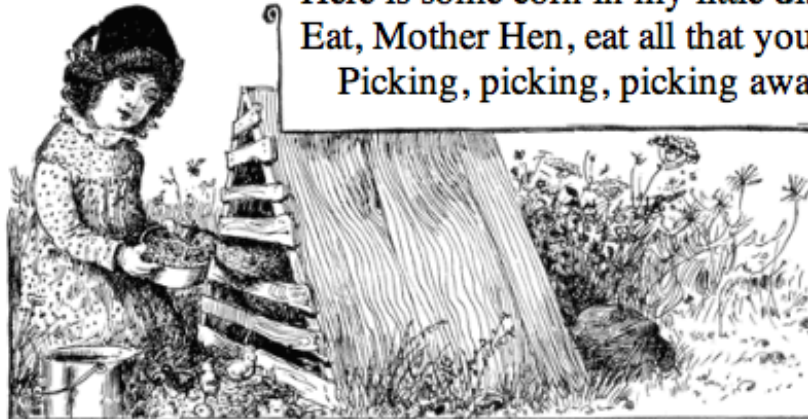




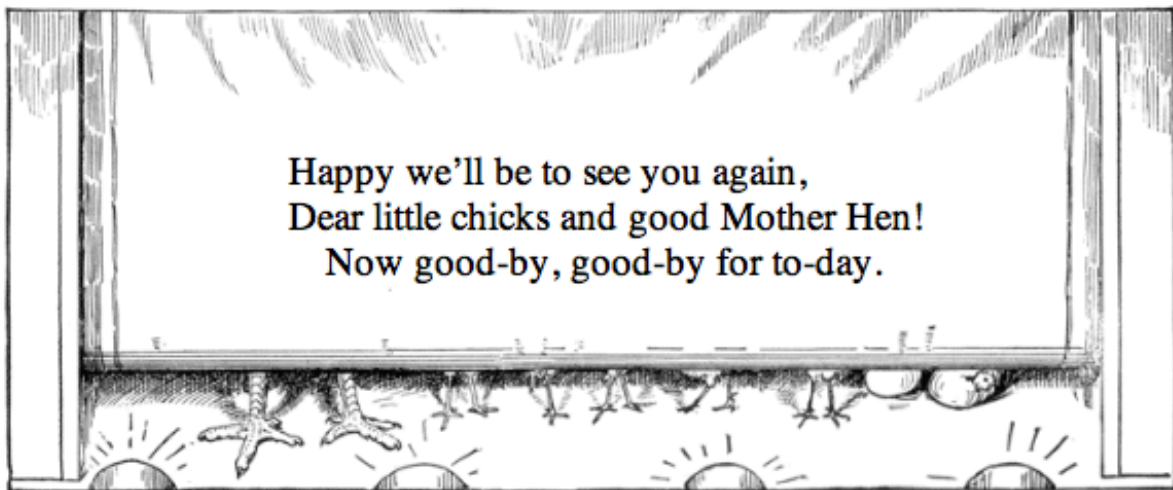
Into the coop the mother must go;  
But all the chickens run to and fro,  
Peep-peep, peep-peep, peeping away.



Here is some corn in my little dish;  
Eat, Mother Hen, eat all that you wish,  
Picking, picking, picking away.



Happy we'll be to see you again,  
Dear little chicks and good Mother Hen!  
Now good-by, good-by for to-day.



1. Good Moth - er Hen sits here on her nest,  
 2. Hark ! there's a sound she knows ver - y well:  
 3. Now they're all out, oh, see what a crowd!

Keeps the eggs warm be-neath her soft breast, Wait-ing, wait-ing, day af - ter day.  
 Some lit - tle chick - ens breaking the shell, Peck - ing, peck-ing, peck - ing a - way.  
 Good Moth-er Hen is hap - py and proud, Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck, clucking a - way.

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|--|--|
| 1. Good Mother Hen sits here on her nest,<br>Keeps the eggs warm beneath her soft breast,<br>Waiting, waiting, day after day.    | 2. Hark! there's a sound she knows very well:<br>Some little chickens breaking the shell,<br>Pecking, pecking, pecking away. |
| 3. Now they're all out, oh, see what a crowd!<br>Good Mother Hen is happy and proud,<br>Cluck-cluck, cluck-cluck, clucking away. |  |
| 4. Into the coop the mother must go;<br>While all the chickens run to and fro,<br>Peep-peep, peep-peep, peeping away.            | 5. Here is some corn in my little dish;<br>Eat, Mother Hen, eat all that you wish.<br>Picking, picking, picking away.        |

## **May Flower Yellow**

Watercolor Story of the Month

There once was a funny shaped yellow bulb who was sleeping in the cool cool dark yellow soil. One day she felt that it was warm so she peeked her long long yellow stem out of the soil and saw the yellow sun in the sky. She called to the sun – “Oh sun, come play with me!” The sun said, “I cannot play but I can send some of my children, the yellow sunbeams to play with you”. So the sun sent her yellow sunbeams down to the little yellow stem. And little yellow stem reached out taller and taller to kiss the sunbeams. When she was tall enough she suddenly POPPED! And out came a beautiful yellow tulip.