



Primary Success

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Christmas and Miracles!

It is hard to believe. The year is whizzing by again and soon we will be deep into Christmas projects - a busy time at school and at home.

The one great bonus in these two months of little sunshine and the beginning of cold weather is what I call the 'November Miracle'. Suddenly, usually in early November, you will look at your class and see all these little children as capable students who understand your directions, who are beginning to read with more fluency, who are able to handle the work you give on their own. They have grown up in the two months and you can take the credit. What a miracle!

Have classroom fun in these months, and try to give yourself some breathing times in this busy time.

Jean



Most educators have bought into the myth that academic learning does not require discipline - that the best learning is easy and fun. They do not realize that it is fluent performance that is fun. The process of learning, of changing performance, is most often stressful and painful.

**Good teaching is
one-quarter preparation
and three-quarters theatre.**

Look for:

Tips -
the best ideas!

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Our Challenged Children

Almost every primary teacher has a group of children who do not learn to read as quickly as the others. The reasons for their lack of success may be varied. They may have had a lack of literature experiences and vocabulary at home in their pre-school years. They may simply have a lower IQ or capacity for learning. They may have learning disabilities, usually either visual or auditory.

It may take too long a time to discover the exact cause or causes for the problems - that may be something that you will work on all year. Here we are in November, and these children are not progressing as quickly as they should. What can we do?

Things to Ponder

.....



In Grade One

Teaching whole-class lessons gives the students more teacher time, but your slower learners may be left out if your whole class lessons are geared to the middle of your class. Take these students as a group and give them a different program than the others in the class so they cannot compare levels. For example, if you are doing guided reading lessons with literature experiences in levelled books with your class, give these special students specific teaching of sight words in a sequential program where the words are taught and then practiced extensively. These children need to feel success, and having reading experiences where they know all the words and can be successful is important. Teach phonics, too. You will find that your brighter kids will pick up sounds and blend them naturally, but the challenged students need to be led into blending and practice extensively. Give this group at least 20 minutes every morning, and make the lessons as vibrant and fun as you can.

Don't wait! I have heard Grade Two teachers talk about receiving children who know few words. There is no excuse for that unless the child is severely disabled - a rarity. Even your lowest student should know 50 to 100 words and be able to read simple material with these.

In Grade Two

Sometimes children get pushed into the next grade without the skills to cope with that grade's work and get left further behind. It is my opinion (for what it is worth) that the teacher should give the reading lessons to these children - and not have them sent out for learning assistance. If the children leave the classroom, you have no control over their progress and yet you have the responsibility.

Take a group of these kiddies and start from the beginning of Grade One again, with a 20-30 minute daily lesson. Obviously they have missed a lot of the concepts, and they will have huge holes in their knowledge. Use a semi-scripted program in phonics or sight reading, where there is complete sequence and specificity. Move them quickly in the beginning, and when you see the progress weakening, take more time with the concepts. You will likely find that they will move fairly quickly through the first half of the Grade One skills, but are now prepared for the more challenging work.

Keep these lessons brisk and fun, and keep every child involved at all times. After the group lesson, give them written practice at their level. If the Learning Assistance teacher or an experienced aide is willing to help, have these children oral read to her every day, using the same program material at the same level that you are using. This will cement your lessons and give extra practice.

In Grade Three

It gets more and more difficult to help the poor readers as they go up in the grades. Again, take a small group for daily lessons in a sequential program, beginning back where all are reading comfortably. Then, teach them words and decoding and push them as hard as you can. This is likely their last chance to have reading lessons specifically directed at the gaps in their knowledge. Give them oral reading practice, too, at their reading level. Let them read to an aide, insist that they read specific material at home, read to each other - read, read, read!

What do the others do? There should be no noise or disturbance while you teach this lesson. The other students can do a written exercise or silent reading - quiet and peacefully.

Creativity

There are conflicting views on what constitutes creativity. Teachers do not agree on the meaning of the word and what it entails. Some teachers feel that creativity is associated with different parts of the curriculum - writing or art. Some feel that students can be creative in all subject areas. Is creativity a talent that is instinctive or is it promoted from early childhood through experiences and the environment? Can it be taught or simply enhanced?

There is even confusion about what the word 'creativity' means. Is it imagination or problem-solving skills? Is it the ability to diverge from the common way of thinking? Is it the ability to think through a problem? Is it artistry in art or music? And who is the judge of creativity? What may be creative to one eye may not be so to another. Some people believe that small children are naturally creative, while others believe that there must be a base of knowledge in the skill to be truly creative. Certainly adult writers and artists must spend years learning their art and also have a talent to be creative in order to succeed.

Creative people usually have lots of ideas. They are able to brainstorm on a topic - they have a creative flow of ideas. Sorting these out and prioritizing is a different skill. These ideas are mostly dependent on prior learning and experience, the ability to imagine and the ability to express thoughts and feelings. Creativity is often thought of as originality, the ability to see things differently.



Through the curriculum:

There usually needs to be a framework of understanding and ability in order to produce creative thought and creative work.

In reading, the students will use creativity to predict, critique and extrapolate from the material they read. Without the ability to read fluently and with understanding, these are difficult to promote. Once the students are able to read, teachers can ask questions that have meaning to the children What may happen next? Why did this occur? Tell me about..... etc.

Writing is another skill that needs a firm foundation. Here's an example. Two Grade One classes are side by side. One teacher believes in the innate creativity of young children. She believes that writing rules stifle this creativity and she gets the children to let their ideas 'flow' on the paper, printing without lines. The other teacher insists on neat printing (on lines) and on the use of all the conventions of print. The students practice these daily. Which group of children will give the most imaginative writing? Yes, the second group! There is something about careless work that produces careless thought processes - that the work does not have value. Creativity in writing can be expanded, of course - encouraging imaginative thought and the use of vivid vocabulary to express thoughts.

In math the creative thinker can be encouraged see new ways of patterning numbers, to use shortcuts and alternate procedures. There is one right answer, but many ways to get to it. Problem solving skills involve visualization and the ability to think through a number story.

In art the students should be encouraged to use their own ideas, but strategies should be taught that the children can use as the basis of their creativity.

What can we do to promote creativity?

Children learn in a wide variety of ways, through listening, answering questions, following instructions, and practicing the basic skills. Creativity is enhanced when brainstorming, exploring ideas, designing and making, solving problems, using the imagination and expressing it in a variety of ways are added to the basic learning. Children should be encouraged to ask questions and think ahead.

Teach the basics well, and with this knowledge as the base, encourage creativity. Teachers should encourage the children to take risks, speculate, understand and respond in different ways. The quality of response is improved when teachers stimulate the conversations and there is discussion of thinking and feeling, allow lots of input from the children and ask challenging questions.

Sensory Processing Disorder

Sensations are flowing into our brain at a rapid rate from all five of our senses. There are messages from our eyes, ears, skin, mouth and nose. These sensations need to be acted upon, organized and co-ordinated. Many children, especially those with other disabilities (autism, Aspergers, ADHD, DCD, etc.) have sensory difficulties that accompany the disability. Sensory integration problems have reportedly been seen more often in children who were born prematurely or with a low birth weight or were deprived of sensations in early childhood. Problems may also occur in children who have had too much sensation in their early environment, such as in children suffering from abuse or Post Traumatic Stress. Many autistic children appear to have SPD based on their avoidance of sensation.

In the simplest terms, children with SPD either avoid sensation or seek it. The person is either under-processing information or over-processing (sensory overload). One doctor believes that 10% of the population have some form of SPD - which means at least two children in your classroom could be affected.

Visual Sensitivity - Over-Responsiveness

The child is over-sensitive to bright lights and may cover the eyes to shut out the light. He may be uncomfortable in places that are over-stimulating - and many classrooms fit that. He will have difficulty focusing on one thing and be very easily distracted. Bright colours or mess around him will be a problem. Small children will not like to go up or down stairs. They may avoid eye contact.

Visual Sensitivity - Under-Responsiveness

The child may have spatial difficulties and problems seeing the 'whole picture'. There may be letter reversals, untidy printing that tends to slope. The child may have problems with jigsaw puzzles and loses his place when reading or doing math.

Auditory Sensitivity - Over-Responsiveness

The child may be sensitive to background sounds that we ignore, and be frightened of loud noises - oddly, the toilet flushing in strange bathrooms is one. (My DCD grandson has almost all of these symptoms!) The child may have problems if the classroom is noisy. He will put his hands over his ears when noise is expected or when the levels are too high. He may not be able to pick one voice out of the background noise.

Auditory Sensitivity - Under-Responsiveness

The child may love loud music or make a lot of noise himself. He may have difficulty with spoken directions and say "What?" often.

Over-Sensitivity to Touch

These children will not want others to touch them and may lash back if another brushes against him. They may feel rough clothing as if it were sandpaper against their skin. This child will not want to be dirty and will not want to be messy in glue or finger-paint.

Under-Sensitivity to Touch

The child with under-sensitivity to touch may want to be hugged constantly, will need to touch everything and be touched and even may be self-abusive. They may have under awareness of pain or temperature.

Some children are frightened of movement and do not like their feet off the ground. They do not swing or climb on the playground. Other children crave it - and bounce, climb, swing often without thought of danger. There is also sensitivity to taste and smells - and others.

There is a good website with check-lists - they don't give you conclusions but may give you interesting insights.

<http://www.sensory-processing-disorder.com/sensory-processing-disorder-checklist.html>

SPD in the Classroom

We can't diagnose the children in our classrooms with sensory dysfunction, but you may notice that some of your children fit some of these categories. Children who have sensory problems live with stress, in many cases, and this is very difficult for them and certainly affects their learning. Here is how you can help these children cope with their disability.

Talk to the child about his discomfort, if it is obvious to you. Tell him that you understand and that you want to make things as pleasant as possible. Give the child options when his sensory levels are giving stress.

Keep the noise level as low as possible, and your voice at a mid to low pitch. If activities are planned that will be noisy and you know a child may be stressed - give the child an option to go to a quieter place for this time. If the fire bell is going to ring, you may want to tell the child ahead of time. Remember that if the classroom is noisy, that child may not be able to pick your voice out of the background noise.

Do not over-decorate the classroom. A wild profusion of bright colours makes it difficult for some children to concentrate. Mess is also very distracting. Keep the classroom tidy and organized. If a child has visual sensitivity problems and is not completing work because he is distracted, provide a desk or table with a bare 'office' surround facing away from the class, or let him go to a bare room nearby.

Some children have movement sensitivity, and will not want to do the same things in the gym or on the playground that the other children do.

Be aware of children who are acting out, and see if there could be some sensory trigger.

It is difficult to understand exactly what these children see, hear, or feel - unless you have some of these sensitivities yourself. But it is important to know that if a child is obsessing on something in the environment - he will not be working or learning to the best of his ability.

Things to Ponder



The Benefits of Play

How are children different now from what they were 60 years ago? Yes, they are different. Children in the past entertained themselves! There were toys, but they didn't DO anything - the child had to help the toys do things. Most children then had freedom - they played up and down the street - and on the street - with their friends every day, with a ball or a skipping rope or no props at all. They invented games, made up their own rules and played with imagination. Games were passed down through generations.

Children today are entertained by toys, TV and video games. Toys are frequently specific to one purpose and lead the play, rather than the child leading. Kids do not play with their friends as often after school hours, as they have 'play-dates' rather than neighbourhood play. The children make fewer independent decisions when not with their parents. Then there are the hours spent watching TV, video games or on the computer. They are hustled off to organized soccer or hockey practice or dance lessons, where they learn the game skills and get exercise but have little independent interaction.

Play is very valuable! Free play increases these necessary skills: imagination, creativity, problem-solving, abstract thinking, self-confidence, cooperation, sharing, conflict resolution, gross and fine-motor skills, and many more.

Today the children get fewer hours of free play each week. It seems that the parents feel neglectful if the children are not being entertained or trained in a purposeful way. And the children are missing all the great fun of just playing, by themselves or with friends. And the schools are cutting back the time of recess and lunch break, assuming that more time sitting in class is going to produce those good things that really come from play.

Now, we are trying to TEACH creativity, instead of letting the children bring it forth themselves. We teach cooperation and sharing and conflict resolution, instead of letting it happen naturally. We worry about children not getting necessary exercise and becoming overweight, and cut the playtime.

Sorry! I guess I am just missing the good old days! J

Reading Genres

We want our students to have an understanding that there are many different kinds of books on many different subjects, and that we can separate them into 'genres'.

This study begins with a lesson on real and imaginary. What kinds of books have real things? What ones have been 'made up' by the author? Teach the words 'fiction' and 'nonfiction'. There are many different kinds of books under those headings.....



Fiction:

Fantasy - where some or all of the story elements could not really happen - talking animals or animals behaving like people, magical happenings, etc.

Traditional fantasy / fairy tales - stories that have been passed down - folk and fairy tales, legends, etc.

Often they involve the triumph of good over evil, and while there sometimes is violence, it is not spelled out. Read the traditional fairy tales - Cinderella, The Three Pigs, Little Red Riding Hood, etc. These old stories have little descriptive scenes and the characters are not developed. Read the modern versions, too! *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (as told by the wolf) is fun. Read *The Paper Bag Princess* and compare it to the old fairy tales.

Modern magical fantasy - These books have a great amount of description and character development to make them seem real to the reader. *Harry Potter*, *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Lord of the Rings* take the reader into a magic world.

Other fantasy - Fantasy means that the characters and/or actions could not really happen. *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Dr. Doolittle* are fantasy books where animals or toys are given human characteristics.

Science fiction - These stories are fantasy, often with the exploration of futuristic strange worlds.

Realistic fiction - the character and happenings are invented by the author but they could happen. The *Ramona* books or *Anne of Green Gables* are examples. Realistic fiction takes the reader into the lives of other people.

Historical fiction - These books are the fictional account of another time period. *Little House on the Prairie* is an example. The younger students may need historical information, as they do not have the background information.

Mystery - Mystery stories have a puzzling event which is solved at the end of the book. It could be a crime or a puzzling event or situation that must be unraveled.

Non-fiction

Informational books - These books cover thousands of topics - science, history, geography, philosophy, and much more. There are many non-fiction books for every reading level and you will collect many that go with your science, social studies and theme units. Many have pictures to help inform the reader.

Biography / autobiography - Biographical books are written about the life of a person and auto-biographical books are, of course, about the life of the author. The students may be interested in books about explorers or astronauts or other famous people.

Other:

Poetry books - There are many books of poetry for children and poetry for adults, too. These include nursery rhyme books, books with humorous poetry and poems that paint pictures in the mind. Children love poetry, especially if it rhymes. Read poems aloud and memorize them, too....

Alphabet books - Make a collection. There are many different kinds - some in poetry, some with wonderful illustrations, some old and some new. Compare them.

Picture and Art books - In these books the illustrations or photographs are the important part of the book. If there is a story, it is simple and the pictures help to tell the story.

Reading Ideas

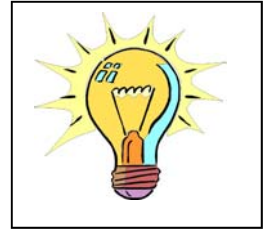
The Dolch Words

<http://www.mrsperkins.com/>

This is a good site to find the lists and there are also flash cards, phrases and more.

http://www.janbrett.com/games/jan_brett_dolch_word_list_main.htm

These lists have Jan Brett's great pictures.



Teachers who are using literature levels and guided reading usually also teach sight words. The Dolch lists are one tool to improve the children's reading vocabulary. The more words they can read - of course, the better readers they will be.

"I give my Grade Ones the first list of Dolch words to take home after we have gone over them at school. A week later I do individual tests, and if the child can read all the words they get to choose a special sticker for the page, and I staple another page behind that and they take both home the next week. I ask the parents to go over both lists every day and help the children remember the words. If they need extra, I send the flash cards home, too. As they know the lists I add another to the pile. I don't send one and then leave it, I want constant review of all the sheets they know, too. I find their sight word vocabulary is improving very quickly."

Testing

"My teaching partner equates reading fluency testing to a video game. You have to be very quick to win the game, and you get one point for every word you read, trying to read as many as you can before the teacher says 'stop'. If the child stops on a word, the teacher says it after 3 seconds and the child continues. It takes some practice, but the kids really understand the concept of quick reading when compared to a video game. Then they try to beat the last score."

"When I am testing fluency, I don't do the scoring with the child. Too often I find the child is put off by what I am doing. I have the students read into a tape recorder and I mark the reading later. This is also good because I can back up and hear the reading several times as I make notes."

"When I test phonics I like to use nonsense words, so the students won't be simply recalling the word. I have two bags containing letter cards, one with the vowels and the other with consonants. The child takes one vowel and two consonants and makes two C-V-C 'words' - reading them even when they don't make sense."

Phonics

Some consonants can be stretched when blending - f, h, l, m, n, r, s, v and z. All the rest cannot - and it makes blending very difficult if the students try to stretch these..... b, c, d, g, j, k, p, qu, w and y. Unless these are clipped short, a schwa sound is inserted into the word you are blending. For example, /b/ /a/ /t/ becomes buh a t - a double vowel sound. To get around the confusion between the two kinds of consonants, cut all the consonant sounds short - as short as possible. Pretend you have a pair of scissors with your first two fingers, and put these in front of the mouth as you practice the consonant sounds, cutting them as short as possible.

Teach the vowels as stretched sounds, so 'bat' is blended as b aaaaaa t with the b and t clipped short.

Phonetically Irregular Words

These words need to be taught as visual sight words in Grade One.

the to of was said put Mr. Mrs. you have are should could would they your what were two
do any many who some come here other mother brother another done one four eight father
where there does

Dictionary Skills

Pre-Dictionary Skills

1. Talk about the order of the letters in the alphabet. Play games; for example, give each child a letter of the alphabet and ask them to line up in the correct order, helping one another to find the place. Sing alphabet songs, too.
2. Ask questions..... what comes after 'r'? What comes before 'm'?
3. Learn the position of the letters in the alphabet. Is a letter in the beginning, middle or end? Say a letter, and ask where it 'lives'. Take a number line - 0 to 10, and say that if 'a' lives at zero and 'z' lives at 10 - where does 'h' live? Can the children come close to the position? What comes in the middle? What letters are near the beginning and what letters are near the end?
4. Use a picture alphabet book that has one page per letter, and ask the children to open it at the 'P' page, for example. How quickly can they find the page? We don't want them going through all the pages to find one.
5. Teach alphabetical order, first using just letters, then words beginning with different letters. You could do this weekly with the spelling words.
6. Teach alphabetical order when the words begin with the same letter - what happens then?



What is a dictionary?

1. Talk about what a dictionary is used for. It is a book of words. Why do we use dictionaries? Use a simple child's dictionary to begin the study.
2. The dictionary has so many words. How will we find the word we want? Talk about alphabetical order. Look at the book to see this.
3. We use dictionaries to find the spelling, the word meaning and the pronunciation of words, and how to break the word into syllables. Look at a simple word in the dictionary, and see where it tells the meaning. How does it show how the word is pronounced?

Learning to use the dictionary

1. It is helpful to begin with either a glossary or a very simple dictionary without too many pages.
2. Using a thicker set of dictionaries, practice opening the book at approximately the right letter. Think about where the letter comes in the dictionary and try to open the book near that letter. Why is this a smart thing to do?
3. There are words at the top of each dictionary page. These are called 'guide words'. Have the students discover why those two words have been chosen and how you can use them to find the word you want. Why are they called 'guide' words? What is a guide?

Dictionary Activities

1. Have a 'Word of the Day'. Choose a difficult word from the reading and have the students find it in the dictionary. Print the word, the page on which it is found and the guide words on that page. Write what the word means in your own words, put it in a sentence or draw a picture. Who can use the word in conversation, too?
2. Find a word that you would like to have as the word of the day. Why is that word special?
3. Create your own dictionary of words you need in your creative writing.
4. Play a game - see who can find the page a word is on first. How long did it take you?
5. What are the symbols used in pronunciation? Make a chart of them and use them to show the pronunciation of your spelling words.
6. Finally, look at on-line dictionaries.

Wonderful Words

If you do the 'making words' part of the Four Blocks, here is a tip. Go to Home Depot or other building store and buy a quantity of inexpensive white tiles, the tiny ones (one inch square). Then print lower case letters on them with indelible felt pen.

Another idea is to make a sheet of each letter on the computer and print it on cardstock. Some teachers put the consonants on white and the vowels on different colours. Cut the sheets apart and keep the letters in zip-lock bags or in fishing tackle trays.

Nouns and Verbs

"We have joined two subjects to make a 'Book of Nouns'. We were studying the school in Social Studies, too, so the children went around the school and took pictures with the digital camera of school people and places and things. We talked about nouns being people and places and things - so the two ideas came together well.

I 'pasted' the best pictures at the top of computer pages, and made a text box under each picture. Then the children sat by my computer and we decided what to print under each picture, talking about the nouns that we would use. I typed in the words as they told me what to say..... For example, 'This is Ms. Smith. Ms. Smith is the librarian. She works in the library. She helps us find books to read.' Then we talked about the nouns, and made the words 'Ms. Smith' and 'librarian', 'library' and 'books' bold and underlined.

They had pictures of rooms and places like the gym and the bathrooms, and things such as the secretary's desk and gym equipment.

We did this over several days, and they really began to understand what a noun was - and learned about the school, too!"

"I did a bulletin board display with verbs. I took pictures of my students doing things - printing, reading, running, climbing, talking, etc. and printed them - one for each child. Then that child wrote a sentence about what he/she was doing in the picture. 'I am Mary. Mary jumps. Jump is a verb.' I am Peggy. Peggy is printing. Print is a verb.' etc. They took the verb and decorated it separately under the sentence. It made a cute BB display, titled 'Grade Two Verbs'."

Adjectives

Collect adjectives! The things we read and the things we write would be very dull and boring without these words. There are many categories of adjectives. You can put up these headings, and the students can collect words and put them into the right category.

Colours: red, orange, yellow, etc.... and then scarlet, puce, indigo

Size: big, small, little, long, tall, short, heavy..... and then huge, tiny, enormous

How things look: pretty, ugly, interesting, gorgeous, short, tall.....

How things feel: rough, smooth, bumpy, wet, hot, cold, cool, soft, hard.....

How things taste: sweet, sour, spicy....

How things sound: loud, soft, whiny, squeaky, noisy, quiet.....

Feelings: happy, sad, angry, funny, kind....

Qualities: good, better, best, worst, kindest, crabby.....

Age: young, old, ancient, babyish.....

And many more!



Similes

Often we say that one thing reminds us of something else. The snow fell like feathers from the sky. He swims like a fish. This is as sour as a lemon. Be as quiet as a mouse.

Have the students brainstorm some, and then put one simile into each story that they write.

Writing

“I have my kids write every day, and I usually mark it with them and have them correct the errors. About one day each week I let them do free writing. Sometimes I give them a topic and sometimes just suggestions, but then there is no correction, except what the children can correct themselves.

I find that the best way to get them to see errors is to have them read what they have written aloud softly to themselves and then so someone else. Often they can see the mistakes as they do this. I ask the listening partner to ask the writer if all the punctuation and capital letters are correct.”

“It is a puzzle whether to have the kids recopy the writing and how often. I find that most children don’t like to recopy, so I usually only have them make a good copy when the writing is going into a book or being displayed on a bulletin board. Otherwise I am not sure about the purpose for rewriting.”

“Every Friday I ask my children to read through all their week’s writing (Grade One) and choose the one they think is best and most interesting. They bring it to me and I print it with the computer onto the bottom half of a page and print it. Then they illustrate it nicely and we put these in a folder to make a lovely collection. They also put in stories where they print a good copy. At the end of the year I choose one page from each student and make up a book for the parents, and then I bind each child’s collection into a book to take home.”

“My students only illustrate the good copy, not the daily writing. I do this because I have found that some children rush the writing to get to the drawing when they are allowed to draw every day, and others draw a sloppy picture because they do it too often.”

“I never put incorrect work up on a bulletin board or in a class book. I think that the material that the kids read should have correct spelling and punctuation and capital letters. And, of course, real authors have editors to help them make the work perfect, too.”

Celebrating Writing

1. We occasionally invite another class in and the children read their stories to a buddy from the other class - or they read to their big buddies.
2. In the spring we have a tea and parents and grandparents come in and hear the favourite writing.
3. I have a bulletin board in the hall and writing goes up there. I try to change it as often as I can (not as much as the parents would like.....)
4. One class has an open house evening and the children read their stories from a podium.
5. I put one student’s story photocopied into each week’s class newsletter.
6. We have an author’s chair every two weeks, and the students read one story to the rest of the class. There is polite applause, and the class asks the author sensible questions about the writing.
7. We make lots of class books, and the students love to read them in silent reading time.
8. Have a bulletin board that celebrates writing that is especially good (for each individual child).



Descriptive Writing

“We practice describing things. Instead of sharing time I have each of my students take a day in turn and bring an interesting object to school. Then we talk about the object and brainstorm a list of words to describe it. We use the five senses and list how it looks and feels and sometimes smells and tastes. After the first week, the students really try to bring in something that is different and interesting. Then together we write a short paragraph describing the object. After all the students have had a turn bringing in objects, then I bring in at least one each week and the students are to write a descriptive paragraph about it. Their descriptive writing has really improved!”

Spelling

Sing your spelling!

For 3 letter words - This Old Man, Jingle Bells, Three Blind Mice

For 4 letter words - YMCA, Twinkle Twinkle little Star, Skip to my Lou, Are You Sleeping?

For 5 letter words - Row, Row, Row your boat, BINGO 'There was a class that learned to spell; And this is what they sang-o', You Are My Sunshine

For 6 letter words - This old man, Jingle Bells, Happy Birthday, Michael Row Your Boat Ashore, The Farmer in the Dell, Skip to My Lou

For 7 letter words - She'll Be Coming Around the Mountain When She Comes, My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean, Twinkle, Twinkle, Willoughby Wallaby Woo, Go In and Out the Window

For 8 letters - We Wish You a Merry Christmas, For He's a Jolly Good Fellow

For 9 letters - I'm A Little Teapot

For 10 letters - Row, Row, Row your boat, You Are My Sunshine

For 11 letters - If You're Happy and You Know It

For 12 letters - Ten Little Indians



Ways to Practice Your Spelling Words

If you can have many different ways for the children to practice their words, spelling time becomes a lot more fun and the spelling aptitude will increase. Try a different way each day!

Make a word search with a friend, then trade and solve.

If you are right-handed, write with your left, or vice versa.

Write your words on graph paper and outline in colours.

Write a story with as many of your words as you can.

Draw a picture and write your words in the picture.

Write your words replacing all vowels with a line.

Use a tape recorder and record your words and their spelling.

Write your words replacing all consonants with a line.

3D words - use modelling clay rolled thinly to make your words.

In a darkened room, use a flashlight to draw letters in the air.

Use a spelling word to create a new word by changing one letter at a time as many times as possible.

Make rainbow words - write your words in three colours or in all the colours of the rainbow.

Make silly sentences using as many spelling words in each as you can.

Scramble your words – write your words, then write them again with the letters mixed up.

Write your words by cutting out letters in a newspaper or magazine and gluing them on a paper.

Pyramid words - write your words adding or subtracting one letter at a time. The shape is a pyramid.

Words-in-words - write your word and then write at least two words made from each.

Clean words – write your words in shaving cream on your desk or table top.

Edible words - write your words by arranging alphabet pasta or Alphabits. Glue them on paper.

Magazine words - use an magazine or newspaper and find your word. Cut it out and glue it on paper.

Cheer your words - pretend you are a cheerleader and call out your words!

Criss-cross words - write two words having one common letter so they criss-cross.

Telephone words - translate your words into numbers from a telephone keypad.

Give each letter a number, 1 to 26 in alphabetical order. What are the spelling words worth?

Number the alphabet from 1 to 26, then convert your words to a number code.

Use magazines or newspapers to cut the letters of the spelling words and glue them onto paper.

Assign every letter of the alphabet a number. Then write the numbers that correspond to the letters of the spelling word. The student must use the number clues to write the spelling word.

Write your spelling words 4 times each.

Write a sentence for each of your words.

Write your words in alphabetical order.

Dirty Words - write your words in mud or sand.

Make words using popsicle sticks.

Solve a pre-made word search puzzle.

Write a short story using all your words.

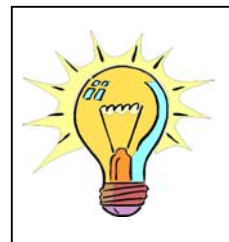
Make a word search using your spelling words.

Go to <http://www.puzzlemaker.com/> and make different puzzles with this week's spelling words.

Tips from Teachers

“This is a tip for using the homework calendars. We have given each student a looseleaf scribbler with a computer graphic and title : **My Homework Calendar** glued onto the front of it. At the end of each month the student brings in this scribbler, which we peruse (semi-mark, as it must go home that night). This has brought up the rates of student participation in the program, and keeps all their work in one spot!”

Karey



“I put my students extra supplies in a large Ziploc (which they bring from home) labeled with their name. This holds it all in one place. I then store the bags in a box, in an easy to reach location, and the students can either get their own, so I get it for them. They have to ask my before they go into the box. I have done this for the past 3 years, with great success!”

Colleen

“I make small name tags for my students by backing small sticky note paper with manilla tag, laminating them, and gluing magnets on the back. I print the child's name on his/her tag and place all the name tags on a table for the beginning of class. When the children enter the classroom in the morning, they need to find their name on the table and place their name tag on the magnetic white board I have attached to a bulletin board. This helps them learn to recognize their name and others in the class. It is also a quick way to determine who is absent before I do a formal attendance. On the white board, I will print words, such as ‘Boys’ and ‘Girls’ under which they need to correctly place their names. They soon learn to recognize these words and develop some graphing skills as we talk about the number of children under each category. I also use these name tags when the children choose which center to go to. I use a large pocket chart with the name of each center in a different pocket. Students must place their name tag beside the center name of their choice. When a center has four name tags beside it in the pocket chart, the students know that center is full and they need to choose another one. This method also helps me quickly locate a student who did not clean up a center when it is clean up time.”

Nicole

“When I am organizing my Grade 1 classroom in August, I make a box of materials that I might need when I get a new student during the year. I put in any notebooks or workbooks that we use throughout the year. I add all the notes that I send home in September about reading, writing, spelling, Math and the reading program that I have set up in my classroom. I add blank name cards, birthday cards etc. so that everything is in one place when the new student arrives. This is a simple thing that takes no time to organize but can save a person time and frustration later in the year.”

Kathy

“I have a class mother. I choose a mom that will be reliable and has time to do the tasks throughout the year or will delegate. This mom calls other parents to help with parties and field trips, or other volunteering jobs. We have a reading afternoon, and this mom calls the others to make sure that every child has a parent or other adult to read with.”

Cathy



“I make privacy ‘offices’ for my kids. I glue two file folders together overlapped about six inches. Then I glue a number line to 20 and an alphabet to the inside of the folder. I laminate them and then cut open the pockets. Every week I provide a sheet with the word wall words that goes in a pocket. The students may put work that is not completed in the other pocket to finish later in the day. I love my ‘offices’, and the kids seem to like the privacy.”

Mary

Shary's Tips

"I have a class with quite a few behaviour challenges and personality conflicts amongst the students, so I try to do activities to build class community. Every Wednesday is designated as Secret Buddy Day. They print their names on a paper, and with their back turned to the rest of the students (so as not to look directly AT the person whose name they have just drawn!), they draw a name. I put my name in the draw too. We brainstormed ideas of things to do, such as picking up things under that person's desk so as to keep our room cleaner, push their chair in if they have forgotten, smile and say hi, excuse me, thank-you or ask them to play, let them go first in line, etc., etc. At home time, we spend a few minutes saying who was our secret buddy and smile at them. It is a huge hit.

To help build class community, we have two parents come in and make Taco Day happen at lunch, once a month. The students go into self-selected pods; each pod is responsible for bringing pre-cooked taco meat mixture, shredded lettuce and chopped tomato, grated cheese, carrot and celery sticks, and cut up fruit for dessert. We rotate pods monthly.

To help the students settle as soon as possible after recess and after lunch, I read from a chapter book. They do NOT want to miss a word.

To build class community, there is a VIP once a week, on a rotating basis. I have an bright matting from a picture, and they bring photos to put inside it, and also 'things' to put in front on it, on the shelf. They give a little talk about themselves via their 'things'. We all learn a lot about each other.

To build class community and for me to get a sense of where each student is on Monday mornings, we sit on the carpet, and go round the circle saying what number from 1-10 we feel inside, and then give one positive and one negative, if any, from our week-end. This is time consuming but it is so valuable! We take about 15 minutes and I will always do it after this. I follow this up once school gets underway, until the end of October (i.e.: so as to hit Parent-Teacher conferences), a 'Touch Base' duotang. Each double page has: page 1 - about 15 feeling faces, labelled and about 5 blank faces; page 2 - divided into quarters, horizontally, with a blank face in each quarter, on the left. First thing in the morning, again after Recess, right after lunch and again just before Home Time, they draw in the face according to how they feel, then write one sentence I feel _____ because _____. It gives a good inside look at how they are all adjusting and leads nicely into friendship skills and also conflict resolution skills.

Reading Buddy time: two buddies cruise about watching how students stay on task, help the little buddies with reading strategies, share their book, etc. These two students pick ONE set of buddies for the Buddy of the Week, at the end of the session. The prize is a 6" strip of border trim, with a ribbon tassel, for each to have as a book mark. They go about with a clip board with the criteria, discussed beforehand, on it. The new names are added to a chart with their names, and is posted in the hallway."

Grade One and Kindergarten children can write this little poem. Talk about the rhyming words on the second and fourth line. The last line will stay the same, so are there any other words that will fit into line two? Bee, flea, tree, key, ski, knee.... Then the students can fill in the other two words with their choices.

I am not a crocodile.
I am not a bee.
I am not a monkey.
I am ME!



Class Management

"In" Days

"I find that limiting the options for the students when in the classroom on in-days helps to keep order. I often have a large jigsaw puzzle on a table, and I bring out the math games. They can play Chutes and Ladders, card games and simple board games. I teach the directions first, so there are no arguments about rules. Then they can read on comfy cushions. I also put out puzzle sheets and I encourage the children to bring an empty scrap book or other book to draw in. For the first few in-days, I either stay in the classroom or pop in frequently to make sure all is going well.

After the bell goes and it is school time again, we have a drink of water and do exercises for a few minutes."

"I have a list on my computer of all my favourite read-alouds. I add to it whenever I find another great book. Each year I bold and underline the entire list, and then put each book into regular print as I read it to my children. This way I am able to look at my list, choose a book that has not been read, and go to the library and grab it quickly. I find that this saves me lots of time of hunting through books to find one that might be suitable."

Silent Reading

Tired of calling reading time SSR (sustained silent reading) or, as my school called it U.S.S.R (even worse - uninterrupted sustained silent reading)? Here are a few more acronyms that are more interesting:

BEAR - Be Excited About Reading

DEAR - Drop Everything and Read

WEB - Wonderfully Exciting Books

OTTER - Our Time To Enjoy Reading

GRAB - Go Read a Book

RABBIT - Read a Book Because it's Terrific

RIOT - Reading is our thing

ZYLAR - Zip Your Lips And Read



And more....

"I keep free standing wind chimes on my desk. They are the signal to stop what you are doing and listen. And the students do stop and listen because of the lovely sound."

"My washroom signal is a W - three fingers up to form that letter. I either nod or hold up my hand, fingers up and palm toward the child, meaning 'wait a minute'. When they do go out, they take the bathroom bear (a small stuffed toy) and put it on their desk. That way I can immediately see who is out, and only one child can go at a time."

"We use hand-sanitizer, but the kind that has a hand lotion base. Some sanitizers will sting if there is an open cut, and the lotion helps to prevent this and the children like it much better. Of course, dirty hands must be washed."

"I made banners each with a polite word or phrase - please, thank you, I'm sorry, you're welcome, and excuse me. I put one banner up each day and each time a classmate hears someone use the word of the day, they get to put a marble in the treat jar. This helps the students to think of the polite words to use."

Make a chart on the wall that shows how you want printed exercises set up.... margin, leaving spaces, headings, etc.

A Penguin Theme

Do a KWL chart. Begin the unit by discussing the student's prior knowledge about penguins. Ask the children what they already know about penguins and list what they say (K – what they know). Ask the children what they want to learn about penguins (W – what they want to know).

Read some factual books about the different species of penguins.

Penguins are sea birds of the Southern Hemisphere. They cannot fly. There are 18 species of penguins, found in South Australia, New Zealand, and off the coasts of Peru, Chile, and South Africa. Some species live as far north as the equatorial Galapagos Islands, but they are primarily cold-weather birds. There are seven species of Antarctic penguins: the Adelie, Gentoo, Macaroni, Chinstrap, Rockhopper, King, and Emperor. The Adelie and the Emperor are the two true Antarctic species.

After you read through the books and have completed the study, as a class fill in facts on the 'Learned' part of the chart.

Activities

- Ask the children to put a pin on the map where they live and then to put a pin on the map where they think penguins live. Talk about the continents and Antarctica.
- How much do the different penguins weigh? Weigh objects until you have a similar weight.
- How tall are the different types of penguins? Make some pictures life-size and label them.
- Describe a penguin and draw it.
- Make a plasticine model of a penguin and make the penguin's habitat.
- What sort of animals are penguins? (mammal, fish, bird etc.) Think of three things all birds have in common.
- Ask the children to waddle, jump, slip, slide and dive like penguins.
- Ask your students to come to school wearing black and white.
- Buy some little plastic penguins and fill a pan with snow and build a penguin habitat. Build nests out of pebbles.
- Create a Venn diagram – how penguins are alike and different from other birds.

Make a penguin book:

Penguins:

Do not fly, they hop, walk, or toboggan

Are expert divers and swimmers

Have thick layer of fat called blubber under skin

Do not build nests.

The female lays egg, males hold egg on the top of their feet, hunches down so skin covers and warms the egg.

Raise their chicks in colonies called rookeries.

There may be thousands of penguins in one rookery.



Penguin Thoughts

Have you ever seen penguins in picture books?
I always smile when I see their looks.
They look like men in their fancy suits,
All black and white from head to boots.
I often wonder when it snows,
Do they freeze their little penguin toes?
Do they shiver and shake in their land of ice?
Sitting on icebergs CAN'T BE NICE!

Penguin Parade

Waddle, waddle, waddle,
From side to side.
Penguins go a-walking,
Slip, slip, slide.
With a funny jump,
The penguins dash
Down to the water,
Splash! Splash! Splash!
Waddle from the water,
With a rock'n roll
Penguins go parading,
On a wintry stroll.

Here's the template for a penguin book.

http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/printables/cat_penguins.shtml

<http://www.geocities.com/teachingwithheart/penguinsunit.html>

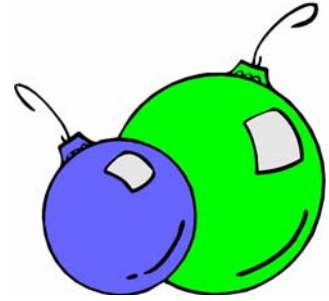
Math Ideas

Three dimensional shapes

“I put a cube, a cone and a sphere into a bag that I call a feely bag. The children reach in the bag and feel one object and describe it to the class and see if they can guess which one it is.”

<http://www.senteacher.org/Enlarge/12/Nets.xhtml>

These are great! Have the students make 3D shapes from these patterns. Enlarge them and show the students how to make the shapes. Talk about the names of the shapes. For each the students had to write the name and the characteristics of the shape.



<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/maths/contents10shape.htm>

This is a good site for ideas to teach 2D and 3D shapes. There are lots of ideas!

Brainstorm where each of the shapes can be found in our surroundings. Collect items that are the shapes.

“I put together a shopping bag of empty food containers ('cube' tissue box, cracker boxes (rectangular prisms), oatmeal boxes, paper towel tubes, Pringles potato chip can with plastic lid (cylinders), plus a few play food items (plastic ice cream cone), plastic oranges, etc. and wood blocks.? The students draw around each shape to make any type of picture they like.”

“We had a 3D shape snack at the end of the unit. We had cheese cubes, grapes, pretzel sticks (the thick ones for cylinders), and Bugles for cones. Let the students see if they can find foods that are in the shapes for the snack.”

Counting game for Kindergarten

“In my kindergarten class, we play ‘Ten to Win’. The children roll one die and take a corresponding number of counters. They have to count how many dots were on the die and then count that many objects and keep counting until they have a total of 10. The first to get ten counters wins.

Then when they do that easily, we will play ‘Zero to Win’, and begin with ten counters, taking away the number rolled on the die until a child has none left. The students who are capable will then need twenty to win.”

My Opinion on the WCP in Math.....

As I was revising the Math Success books, I went carefully through the math curriculum (all the western provinces have the WCP curriculum in math). B.C. is new to this and the prairie provinces have had it for some time. The Grade One program has added addition and subtraction to 18 (which many Grade One kiddies are not ready for, in my opinion) and left out time and money and fractions - and watered down the measurement unit. The Grade Two year only wants place value and numbers to 100 and no multiplication or division theory, and also leaves out many of the interesting extra bits that are fun to teach and fun to learn. The Grade Three year only teaches numbers to 1000 and just the beginning of multiplication and division to 25. In all the years there is a lot of emphasis on patterning - a little of which is good, but I think it is rather overrated in what it teaches the students.

So - IMHO - I think the curriculums are dumbing down the math expectations in Grade Two and Three, and putting too much in Grade One as far as addition and subtraction is concerned. It leaves out the interesting bits in all grades. Because I feel that way, I kept in all the work that I know children are capable of doing and like to do. And the extras are fun to teach, too! We can get as bored as the kiddies.

Teachers are always asking whether the books follow the WCP..... and the answer to that is ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Everything the curriculums ask for is there - and a great deal more.

Jean

More Math

Calendar Math Ideas

1. Practice patterning on the calendar - do simple patterns as the day is put up using colours or different pictures or shapes.
2. Put the days in school on a chart, putting up the day number as it happens. Then put a large card up on the bulletin board with the words... Today is Day _____ with the number large and very important.
3. Do place value with the days in school, bundling straws into tens, or other graphic representation.
4. Do money at the same time (this also helps with place value) by using pennies and dimes to represent the calendar date (Grade One) and the days in school (Grade Two).
5. Talk about today's numbers and whether they are odd or even.
6. Count the days in school in ten frames. Use a sticker or a Bingo dauber to put the dot in the frame, and begin a new one as the old one is filled and put with the other tens.
7. Read the time on a Judy clock and a digital clock and talk about the different times of the day when things will happen.

Make Numerals Correctly!

- 1 A straight line down and 1 is done.
- 2 Around and back on the railroad track, 2,2,2.
- 3 Go around and around a tree. That's the way to write a 3.
- 4 Down and across and down once more. That's way to write 4.
- 5 Down and around, make it fat. Numeral 5 wears a hat.
- 6 Down and around, make a loop. Numeral 6 rolls a hoop.
- 7 Across, slant, then you are done. Writing 7 can be fun.
- 8 Write an S but do not wait. Come back up and write an 8.
- 9 A loop and a line make numeral 9.
- 10 Pull down straight, lift, and then curve down, curve up--that's a 10.

Call Rudolph

Eight little reindeer pulling Santa's sled
One fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
"Can seven little reindeer pull my sled?"
*Count down the same way until
you get to one little reindeer...*
One little reindeer pulling Santa's sled,
He fell down and bumped his head.
The elves called Santa and Santa said,
"Call Rudolph!"

My Colourful Number Book

Illustrated by _____

The children put one sentence to a page.

Look at the black zero.

I can see one big brown dog.

Look at the cat with two orange eyes.

Look at three little gray ducks in the brown puddle.

Can you put four yellow stars in a blue sky?

I can see five pink flowers.

Can you see the little dog with six brown spots?

Seven blue birds look at me.

I see eight little green trees.

I can see nine red berries on the bush.

Ten little purple birds are in the tree

Model Game Playing

Do you have problems when your children play games? Modelling the activity is a huge help. Practice how the dice should be rolled, the game purpose and the rules, how to flip cards over, how to set up and put away the games. Go through each game with you modelling, and then let a couple of children try it in front of the others as you talk about the rules and how things should be done. Talk about quiet voices, the way to win and the way to lose gracefully.

If a child is not behaving suitably, remove him immediately, give him a math worksheet in a quiet place and discuss the correct behaviour when playing games.

Teach your children to play Sudoku. There are puzzles at all levels. Great brain food!

Shapes - K and 1

“We hunted for shapes in the classroom (the clock is a circle). Then each child made their own shape book. Each page said, ‘A _____ is a (shape name).’ The children drew the item and wrote what the item was on a line. Some children copied words next to the item they drew (I have signs all over the classroom - desk, chalkboard, closet, door, sink, etc....) The children really loved doing this activity and many of them were very creative!”



“Cut out assorted shapes in sandpaper, about 10 cm. down to 5 cm. big. The kids place them under large white or manila construction paper and rub with the sides of crayons. By overlapping the sandpaper shapes, and changing crayon colours, the kids can make beautiful shape collages!”

- Find shapes in magazines. Cut and glue to create robots on construction paper.
- Craft stores sell big tubs of foam shapes in different colours. These can be used for sorting and classifying, and can be glued to make pictures.
- Spray a small glob of shaving cream onto each child's work space. Encourage them to draw shapes.
- Make ‘shape’ cookies. Roll out refrigerated sugar cookie dough and then cut with circles, squares, triangles, etc.
- Make shapes with your bodies – circles with fingers, triangles with two hands. Four children can make a square or a circle, three children can make a triangle – in different ways – standing, lying on the floor, etc. let the children be creative!
- Build with shape blocks.
- Put shape blocks in a bag. The child puts his hand in the bag and picks a shape. He attempts to identify the shape without looking at it. Have the child justify the guess before removing the shape from the bag.
- Put shapes in bag. Tell the child to find a _____ without looking. Again have them tell why they think the shape they have is the correct one.
- Give each child a shape – shapes could be attached to the student’s clothing with clothespins or safety pins. Ask the circles to stand up, triangles to hop, rectangles to crawl under the table, etc.
- Hide a shape in your hand and give clues (one at a time) and have the children guess/tell what the shape is/could be.
- Use shapes to make patterns on paper or in pocket charts. Children practice the names of the shapes by reading the pattern (circle, triangle, circle, triangle).
- Put toothpicks on the table and instruct them to make various shapes (ask them to make a circle and see how many actually try!)
- Use a shape as the beginning of a picture: a circle can be turned into a face, a square can be turned into a house, a triangle can be turned into an ice cream cone, a diamond can be turned into a kite, etc.
- Cut out different shapes – circles, triangles, rectangles and squares. Place them on the floor and have the kids ‘cross the river’ or ‘cross the street’ only walking on triangles or squares or another specified shape.
- If you have a garbage can dressed as a ‘Muncher’, it can be called a ‘Shape Muncher’ for this:
Shape Muncher, Shape Muncher, munch, munch, munch..
How about a red circle for your lunch? (blue square, yellow triangle, etc.)
- Eat shapes: pizza, cookies, graham crackers, triangle crackers, slices of radish and cucumber – you can also use cookie cutters to cut bread into shapes.
- Cut a large orange felt tapered triangle for a pizza slice. Have the children add brown circles for pepperoni, black circles for olives, long yellow rectangles for cheese, etc.
- Make shape books, and glue in pictures of that shape from magazines.

A Substitute Binder

We are sometimes absent unexpectedly, and while we should always have planbooks prepared thoroughly and in advance for the week, it is often difficult for a substitute teacher to come into a classroom and take over your students and follow the day as you would do. We want these days to be as valuable as possible and a binder with the following information will help this to happen.

This could be your planbook itself, if you wish, with your daily plans in the second section, or your planbook can be separate.

Part One

1. A 'Welcome' page with your name.
2. A class list, with the students' numbers if you do this.
3. Make name tags - the ones made like a necklace with a name tag and string to go around the neck are easy. Put a class set into the pocket at the front of the binder. Then the sub can call the children by name easily.
4. A seating plan that is up to date. This can be in the binder or on a bulletin board by your desk. Some teachers put the names on sticky notes and this way the names are easy to change and it can be kept up to date.
5. A brief page with the classroom rules and the school rules.
6. Put in a simple outline of your behaviour management philosophy and simple easy techniques that you use that are effective with this class.
7. Put in a school map, with the rooms where the class goes for special lessons marked - the library, the computer lab, gym, etc. Especially in larger cities, you may have subs who have never been in this school before. Label the teachers' lounge!
8. Add a page describing where important things can be found.... extra pencils, art paper, math manipulatives, etc.
9. Give a brief discussion about your special students and the modifications or needs that a substitute should know and health concerns of your students.
10. Talk about your classroom routines - what the students do when they come in, how they line up, your bathroom rules, using the class library, pencil sharpening, attendance, etc.
11. Have a page for emergency procedures (fire, earthquake, etc.) This should also be posted by the classroom door. Also let the substitute know who to contact in case of classroom emergencies



Part Two

1. A timetable for your week.
2. An outline of typical days through the week.
3. Alternative lesson plans in different subjects from reading lessons to gym lessons - in case you do not have enough left for the sub - in emergencies.
4. Classroom games the students know how to play with instructions and rules.
5. Put a book for read-alouds in the back of the binder pocket - a book that the students have not heard, and a list of other possible choices and where they could be found.

Part Three

1. A 'feedback' sheet for the sub to fill out telling what she did through the day, if there were any problems or concerns, etc. Put headings of what you would like to know.
2. Have a 'comments' section at the bottom of the page.

Part Four

1. Extra sheets in all subjects - math drill sheets, reading and phonics sheets, puzzle pages - follow the dots, word search, colouring pages, etc.

Behaviour Management

Give the tools to problem solve

“We talk about problems being little, middle-sized or big. Little problems can be solved by the child: my pencil broke, I finished my book, someone bumped into me accidentally. Middle-sized problems are ones where minor hurt is involved, either hurt feelings or minor scrapes, arguments, etc. Large problems are bullying, serious injury, blood, sickness, a stranger on the playground, fire, etc. Brainstorm problems and write them on a chart in the right column after discussion.

Little problems should be able to be solved by the person. With middle-sized problems, the person should try first to solve it by speaking to the other person involved, but if it doesn't get settled the teacher can be told. Big problems must be told to an adult immediately.

Every day do 'what if' questions and ask the children what they should do. If problems arise in the classroom or playground with the students, talk about the solutions. Ask what they did about the problem and how it could have been solved in other ways.”

I feel sunny!

“I have a chart with pockets and the students names on these. Inside the pockets are cards.....sunny, cloudy, rainy, stormy - with the pictures. The students start the day being sunny, and the weather deteriorates if the behaviour does. If a child ends on stormy for the day, we go to the phone in the classroom and the child phones the parent to tell them about it. The children do not want to have to do this! They also have a chance to improve the weather, if the behaviour noticeably improves through the day.”

Tattling

“I have my students 'talk it out'. When the kids come in with problems, I have them go out into the hall and take turns telling each other their side of the story. They must be quiet while the other person is talking. This usually solves the problem.”

“I have Grade Twos and Threes. I tell them that if they come to tell me something, it must begin with the word 'I'.”

“We ask these main questions:

1. Are they trying to hurt me?
2. Could someone get hurt by their actions?
3. Are they in danger by doing what they are doing?

We discuss hurt feelings, and I always do the 'wrinkled heart' to show how hurtful things stay with us.” (If anyone doesn't know about the wrinkled heart, drop an e-mail to me.... Jean)

We Have Rules

We have rules. We have rules.
Rules to keep us safe at school.
We use inside voices and walking feet,
(point to mouth, then to feet).
We don't touch or bother the friends we meet.
(Hug self and shake head)
And when we're eating we stay in our seats,
(sit and pretend to eat)
'Cause we have rules
At our school.



Poems for November and December

No green grass
No blue sky
No bare feet going by
No birds
No bees
No leaves on trees
November

No shade, no shine,
No butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers,
No leaves, no birds,
November.

In November
Dark comes soon.
We turn on the lights
In the afternoon.

Now the autumn days are gone
Frost is sparkling on the lawn,
Windows winking cheerful lights
Warm the cold November nights.

No sunshine, lots of rain,
No warm days, snow again!
No bugs or bees
No leaves on trees.
You must remember
This is NOVember!

November Chant

No - vem - b-e-r X, (*X is a clap*)
No - vem - b-e-r X
Weather's cooler, days are short.
Stay inside and build a fort.
We remember soldiers brave.
Wreaths are placed beside a grave.
No - vem - b-e-r X,
No - vem - b-e-r X
November is cool!

November

November is cold
And rainy (*snowy*) and gray.
Many days in November
I stay in to play.

December

Trimming trees in stocking feet
Eating all we want to eat.
Giving presents to our friends
This is how the whole year ends.

December

In December we're happy
Whatever the weather
For Christmas helps people
Be happy together.

December

It's hard to think of anything
But Christmas in December.
There's so much to look forward to
And so much to remember.

December

December brings us Christmas
With secrets big and small.
And sharing joys with others;
Oh, December's best of all!



Santa Claus is big and fat
He wears black boots
And a bright red hat.
His nose is red
Just like a rose
And he 'ho ho ho's'
From his head to his toes.



When Santa Claus Comes

A good time is coming
I wish it were here,
The very best time
In the whole of the year;

I'm counting each day
On my fingers and thumbs -
The weeks that must pass
Before Santa Claus comes.

Then when the first snowflakes
Begin to come down,
And the wind whistles sharp
And the branches are brown,

I'll not mind the cold,
Though my fingers it numbs,
For it brings the time nearer
When Santa Claus comes.

Santa's Reindeer

A B C D E F G
Santa's reindeer laughed at me.
H I J K L M N
Santa's reindeer laughed again.
O P Q R S T U
Haven't they something else to do?
V W X and Y and Z
Santa's reindeer should be
home in bed!

Health

'Health' is a broad topic - so broad that this unit could last through the school year.... but here is an outline of a health unit.

1. What is 'health'? What does it mean to be healthy? Why is it good to be healthy? What things might we do to make our bodies healthier? Brainstorm things we can do to make us healthy.

2. What causes us to be sick? Germs can make us sick..... What are germs? Can you see them? Why not? Are all germs 'bad'? Germs are in the air and on the surfaces of things around us. How do germs get into the air? (When we sneeze and cough....) What can we do to prevent germs getting into the air?

How do germs get on the surface of things? Have a student put glitter paint or glitter glue on his/her hand. Then he could shake hands with another child or touch the desk top or a pencil. What happens? Then another child might touch these surfaces and the germs spread all about.

3. How can you prevent germs getting on your hands? You can't! Germs on your hands don't hurt you, but if they get into your mouth they could make you sick, and germs on your hands spread them everywhere. How can you clean your hands of germs? Washing the hands is the best way to prevent the bad germs from making you sick. When should you wash your hands? We should wash often, and especially after the bathroom, before touching food and after touching animals.

A quick wash does not get rid of all the germs. You could have the children wash as long as they sing a song to themselves - sing 'Happy Birthday to You' and don't stop washing until the song is done. Or:

To **Row, Row, Row Your Boat**.

Scrub, scrub, scrub your hands
Put the soap between
Wash the germs right down the drain
Make them nice and clean!

And another:

Wash, wash, wash your hands,
Chase those germs away,
Rub, scrub, rub, and scrub
No more germs today!



If they sing this three times they will be at the sink long enough to clean well.

Children should be taught how to wash..... the water temperature, the amount of soap, the scrubbing of the entire hand, rinsing and drying properly.

4. Eating the correct foods help us to be healthy. What foods are good for you and what foods are not? Brainstorm two lists. Do your students really understand what foods are healthy?

5. There are 4 different food groups that we should eat every day. Vegetables and fruit; meat, fish and eggs; grains - bread, pasta, etc.; dairy products - milk, cheese, yogurt, etc. Some foods do not fit in any of these - the fats and sweets. We could call this last category 'Other foods'. Think of foods that fit into each of the 5 groups. Children's growing bodies should have lots of the first 4 groups and very little of the last.

6. Have the health lesson just before lunch time. Talk about the students' lunches. Lay the foods out on the desks and talk about which groups the foods fit. Do any students have all of the 4 good groups in the lunch? A meat sandwich, carrot sticks and milk to drink would cover all 4. Who has the healthiest lunch? What vegetables and fruit are in the lunches? Go through the lists and make a chart of all the good things. Now eat!

7. Ask the students to talk to the parents about the lunches. Can you improve the lunch for the next day? Repeat the lesson the next day and see if there is more healthy variety.

8. Exercise is important for healthy bodies. Do your students get enough exercise? Children now get less exercise than children in past eras. Discuss this with your students and why this is so. Talk about the play you did when you were young. In years past, there was no TV, no video games and children had freedom to be outdoors without supervision to visit their friends on the street and play games.

What do we consider exercise? Playing soccer, running, skipping, climbing are all good exercise. Talk about what your students like to do. Good exercise lasts for at least 10 minutes and makes your heart beat faster and your breath come quicker.

Do some exercises in your classroom on days when you don't have PE. Run on the spot, do jumping jacks, put on jazzy music and do 'fitness to music', following your lead in aerobics. This is good for you, too! This makes a good break in a long quiet work period.

9. It is important to keep our teeth clean. When should we brush our teeth? We should brush after meals and before bedtime. Why is that an important time to brush? Have small mirrors and let the students have a good look at their teeth. Do you see any white material on the teeth? This is called plaque, and when we brush we should try to brush away all of the plaque, because it will damage the teeth if left there. Discuss how we should brush,

Hold the brush with the bristles pointing toward the teeth.

Move the brush so it cleans from the gums to the teeth edges.

Brush the upper teeth downward, the lower teeth upward.

Use a scrubbing motion to clean the chewing surfaces on the molars.

Brush the inner surfaces as well as the outer.

Brush each area at least 10 times.



10. Drinking water is important for health. Our bodies are more than half water, but we are always losing water so it must be replenished. We need water to live. The cells in our bodies need water to be healthy. How much water do the children drink each day? Some people say that students learn more effectively when they drink water throughout the day - replenishing the brain cells! You could try it for a week - let each student have a bottle of water on the desktop, refilling it when it is empty with tap-water. At the end of a week, ask the students if they noticed any difference in their work..... An experiment!

11. Safety is part of a health unit. Teach safety on the street and the rules of riding bicycles. Go over safety at school and at home.

12. You can teach the different body systems - respiratory, circulatory, skeletal, digestive, etc.

13. Teach the heart, and how we can keep the heart healthy.

14. The five senses unit is usually in the science program, but can also be taught in an over-all health program.



Teaching lessons about healthy living and then going on to the next topic will not change any behaviour. 'Health' is not a topic to be studied and then left behind. Good will only occur if habits are changed, and that takes effort. The concepts should be mentioned every day. Talk about the school lunches and what the children eat for breakfast - talk about it almost every day. Praise children who are munching on carrot sticks or an apple at recess. Exercise every day until it becomes part of the students' day. Make hand washing a part of the daily routines. Let the children drink water whenever they want.

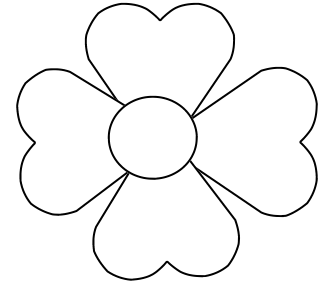
Remembrance Day

“I have my kids colour 2-3 poppies each which they cut out and we make into a wreath to lay at our Remembrance Day ceremony.

“I have them copy a short poem onto a patterned sheet (wreath with poppies) that we put up on our wall.”

“Try cutting a large green pepper in half and taking out the seeds and the cut edge of the halves make a great stamp for a poppy design.”

“I make poppies by cutting 4 same-sized hearts from red paper and gluing them with the points together in the middle.”



Remembrance Day

We wear a poppy
On Remembrance Day,
And at eleven
We stand and pray.
Wreaths are put
Upon a grave.
As we remember
Our soldiers brave.

Little poppy
Given to me,
Help me keep Canada
Safe and free.

On Remembrance Day
Our flags will wave,
To honor those
Who were so brave.



Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Day
We wear our poppies
(children point to their poppy)

On Remembrance Day
We see the old soldiers
proudly marching in the parade
(veterans march or stand and salute)

On Remembrance Day
We see people laying wreaths at the cenotaph
(child places wreath at podium)

On Remembrance Day
We think of the soldiers who died
(heads down)

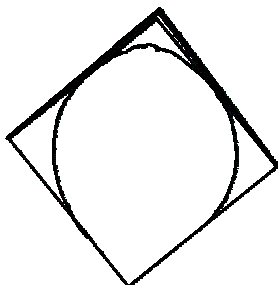
On Remembrance Day
We think of the mothers who cried
(girls weep)

On Remembrance Day
We think of the people who were fighting to
make the world a better place to live
(globe and dove)

On Remembrance Day
We stand in silence *(heads down)*

On Remembrance Day
We remember.

Teresa Williams



Fold red paper twice. Put it on the table as shown – four points upwards. Draw the petal shape and cut it out. This may take some practice on scrap paper first.

Add yellow and black spots in the centre of the poppy.

Glue the poppies onto a wreath.

It's Christmas!

We've Been Waiting

(Tune: I've Been Working On the Railroad)

We've been waiting for December,
And it's finally here.
We've been waiting for December,
Santa's getting near.
Can't you hear the sleigh bells ringing?
Reindeer up so high.
Can't you hear the children singing
As they watch the sky ?
Hurry up Santa!
Hurry up Santa!
Santa, please come to-da-a-ay!
Hurry up Santa!
Hurry up Santa!
Santa, please come to-da-a-ay!
Toys in the sleigh with Santa
Toys in the sleigh I know.
Toys in the sleigh with Santa
Time's going oh, so slow!

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/deer.html>



Here are good ideas for a Polar Express theme....

<http://teachingheart.net/polar.html>

<http://www.cape.k12.mo.us:80/blanchard/hicks/Reading%20Pages/Polar%20Express.htm>

Lots of great links, including a good Kindergarten one for the Polar Express.

Do you remember the Monster in a Jar activity that was a Halloween activity shown in the 2007 magazine? That was great! Now do Santa in a Snow Globe. Draw Santa doing some Santa-ish activity in the globe (a globe pattern is at the end of the magazine) and colour it well, filling the whole globe with colour. Print the child's name on the globe base. Then the students write a paragraph about the picture. Cut out the globes, and put them up on a bulletin board with edited or typed stories.

The globes could be used for other art activities, too!

Spray paint old CDs - or leave them silver on one side. Take a digital picture of each student and print them out in a circle shape so they will fit in the centre of the CDs. Cover each photo with clear contact plastic. Make another paper circle for the other side of the CD, too - and have the children print the grade and the year and decorate it with colour. Glue the picture on one side of the CD and the paper circle on the other.

Take a drill and make a small hole at the top. Put a loop of thread or a hanger in the hole.

Now get the children to 'paint' glue carefully around the outside 1/2 inch at the edge of the CD. Drop glitter on the glue, or confetti or macaroni or other decoration. When this is dry, do the same on the other side.

Make snowmen out of tube socks! Pour graduated amounts of rice into the socks. First pour in 1 1/2 cups of rice and then tie that section off with white string or yarn. Then do the same with 3/4 cup of rice, tie it, and 1/2 cup and tie it again. Fold the top of the sock over to make it look like a hat and put a pom pom on it. Use smaller pom-pom for the nose and buttons. Buy googly eyes at a craft store and let the kids use markers to make dots for the mouth. Use a strip of felt to make the scarf.

Christmas Ideas

My absolutely favourite Christmas art project is Torn Paper Santas. They look so individual and very charming and the parents always want them to decorate for their Santa's Breakfast.

Our Santa's are about 3 to 4 feet tall and are created using the coloured paper on the large rolls, except for the head which is made from pink construction paper. The kids are afraid to tear the paper at first but if they don't rush it won't be a problem.

We begin with the head and then tear out coloured eyes with black centres, a jolly red nose, a white beard and place a little red mouth on top of that. This is probably enough for the first day. Everyone now puts the bits and pieces into the blue recycling box.

On Day Two we tear out a red suit, black boots and mitts and trim with white fur and a black belt topped with a gold buckle.

I love them and put them on the window and along the wall outside of the classroom.

Santa, Santa Books

Make little student books with the following text:

Santa, Santa, what do you see? I see the lights on my Christmas Tree!

(Add foil stars or glitter to a picture of a Christmas Tree)

Santa, Santa, what do you hear? I hear the bells on my reindeer!

(Glue tiny bells to a picture of a reindeer.)

Santa, Santa, what do you feel? I feel my beard, so soft and real!

(Glue cotton to a picture of Santa)

Santa, Santa, what do you eat? I eat a candy cane, so nice and sweet!

(Tape a real candy cane to this page.)

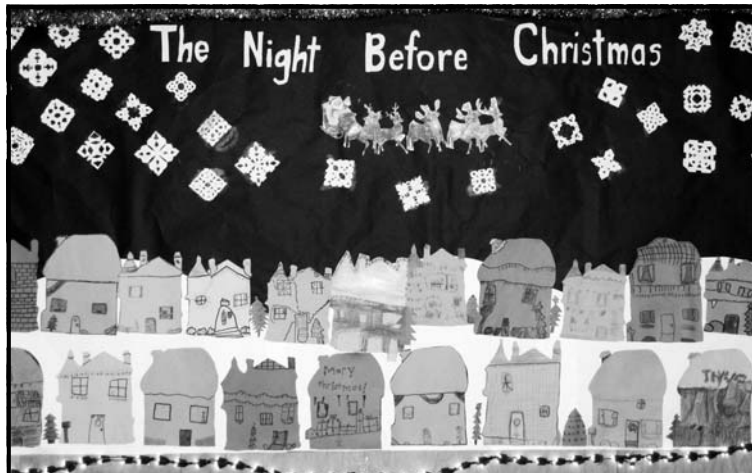
Santa, Santa, what do you smell? Something's in the oven, but I won't tell!

(Add cinnamon to a picture of a gingerbread man.)

The best gifts for parents have a picture or handprint or something personal of the child. If that can be in a tree ornament, that makes it a real keepsake.

"I just did a bulletin board for school. I covered 8 inch squares of poster board with gift wrap of various types. Then I added a Christmas bow and in the middle placed a picture of the child. In each of the four corners we placed an ornament cut from the Ellison machine with a talent that each child has - example - 'I can read really well' or 'I can draw really great rockets' written on each one. In the middle of the board, I attached an empty wrapped box to make it have a 3D component - Caption - 'We All Have Wonderful Gifts To Share'"

Hilda



Christmas Fun

“My class has 10 boys and 10 girls and the boys are bringing 10 gifts, one for each boy, and the girls are bringing 10 girls’ gifts, all the same. On party day we take turns passing our gifts out....great fun to all be the same and not worry about comparison.”

Try these other gift exchange ideas:

-Have each child bring a wrapped book for the classroom! Each child can open one. Then everyone can enjoy 20 gifts instead of one, and your classroom library benefits. Have each child write their name and the date on a special label and glue in the book they bring.



“Here is a door decoration or hall bulletin board. The title says: ‘The Angels in Room ___ wish you a Merry Christmas!’ You can put music notes in glitter above the angels.

Trace each child's foot with shoes off so the toes make the bumps on the bottom. The heel becomes the head of the angel. Then have the students trace the two hands with the fingers together – these will become the wings of the angel. Glue the hands behind the body of the angel. Use a gold pipe cleaner halo. The children then put glue on the ‘skirt’ and wings and put on glitter. They really turn out lovely!”

“Make a ‘Froot Loops’ tree. Fold a standard size piece of green construction paper in half lengthways, draw a triangle with base (1/2 of a Xmas tree) then cut out with zigzag edged scissors (pinking shears). Cut a star shape from the yellow construction paper. This is to put on the top of the tree. Have the children put the names on the back before adding the cereal. Give each child a puddle of glue on a separate paper. They gently dip each Froot Loop bit into the glue and place it on the tree. Glue the star on the top of the tree. Lay flat to dry.”

“My class made calendars as gifts for the parents. You need some computer knowledge for this (not much): I took a couple of pictures each of the kids with the school's digital camera. I then made a page for each of them in MSWord, with their pictures, the year and ‘My Calendar’ on it and printed it in colour. I left a white border around the edge which they each decorated with pictures, glitter glue, etc. - all the fun stuff. I printed off a set of calendars for each of them with some school dates, etc. The children can put the dates in themselves, or you can print the completed calendar. I cut red tag about 10" x 20", and glued the picture page at the top and stapled the calendar pages at the bottom.”

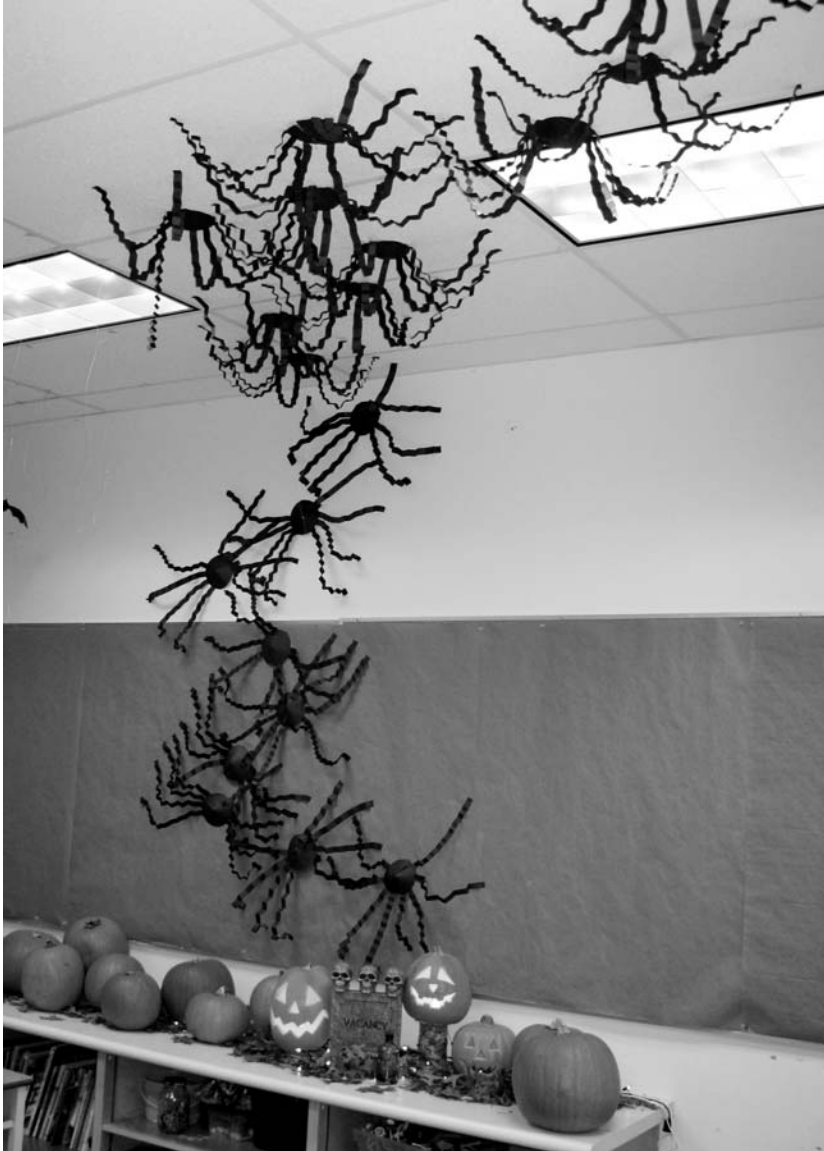
If you want to make your own calendars - MSPublisher and Office have calendars that you can use, and the program puts all the dates in if you just give the beginning and end dates. Then you can cut and past photos or computer graphics.

“On black construction paper the students wrote ‘Merry Christmas 2008’ with white pencil crayon. I took a digital picture of each child and printed them. They glued the picture and a tiny holly leaf on the black paper and laminated it. We then painted popsicle sticks green or red and made a frame out of the sticks and I hot-glued them onto the laminated paper. They looked like little school chalk boards with a Christmas Message. You can attach a hook on the back to be hung on the wall, or a longer string so they are ornaments. The parents loved the gifts. We sponge painted white butcher paper for wrapping paper.”

“An upside-down flowerpot is shaped like a bell! Buy the smallest clay flowerpots you can find. Fold 1/4 inch red satin ribbon in half and push through hole at bottom of flowerpot and tie a small bell on the ribbon for the clapper. On the front of the pot hot glue some holly and berries, cut out pictures from old Christmas cards and glue on, or attach the student's picture. On back of the pot the children write their names and the year. On the rim of pot write ‘Happy Holidays’, or “Merry Christmas’. You could also try the tiny green plastic plant pots to make similar ornaments.”

Some Pics

Who knows - I may not do the magazine next year - and I took some pictures at the local school and the Grade Two classroom of Mrs. Carruthers - a favourite teacher who loves art projects and decorating for the seasons. So these are a couple of her Halloween ideas!



These large spiders climb up the wall and across the ceiling!

The bodies are a simple circle, slit to the centre and then overlapped a bit to make a slight cone shape. The legs are just accordion pleated construction paper.

Little lights go around every bulletin board and on bare tree branches in the corner.



Websites

<http://organizedchristmas.com/printable/child-journal-jar>

Writing prompts for Grade two and three that you can print out and put in a jar - they pull one and answer the question.

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/>

Great reindeer ideas: some really cute reindeer heads you can make.

<http://kinderkorner.com/reindeer.html>

<http://www.reacheverychild.com/feature/ESL.html>

Here is a collection of ESL links.

Math worksheets for telling time:

<http://www.dositey.com/math/time.htm>

<http://www.mathslice.com/>

A great math site - make worksheets and games.

<http://www.boardman.k12.oh.us/bdms/golubic/dolch.htm>

Lots of links to activities for the Dolch words.

<http://www.bookitprogram.com:80/teachers/reproducibles.asp>

This is great! There are all sorts of home reading logs to print - seasonal and holidays.

<http://www.mrsjonesroom.com/songs/alphlist.html#spell>

Songs to learn to spell.... fun!

Great printables for Christmas work and play:

<http://www.carlscorner.us.com/Holidays.htm>

<http://www.carlscorner.us.com/>

This is one of the best sites for primary information. Spend a while and see how much there is!

This is a cute story, with story pieces to help the story be acted out:

http://www.susanmdailey.com/santa_clothes.htm

Go on a 'Christmas Around the World' trip! Here is a great website with everything you will need, from tickets to traditions:

<http://www.mrsnelsonclass.com/teacherresources/thematicunits/worldholidays.aspx>

These are great sites for Christmas music....

Christmas songs – Midi files

<http://www.santaland.com/songs.html>

<http://youthonline.ca/christmas/carols/>

<http://www.eslkidstuff.com:80/ChristmasGames.htm>



Odds and Ends

Classroom Games

7-Up: An old favourite! Pick 7 children to come to the front of the room. All remaining children put their heads down with one thumb up. The 7 children walk about the room and select one child each by pushing his/her thumb down gently. (If they complain that someone is peeking, tell them they are not to choose anyone who looks as if he/she is peeking.)

After all have selected, then the leader says "Heads Up, 7 Up!" Those 7 who were chosen stand by their seats. One by one they guess who chose him/her. Decrease the number of guesses if only a couple of people are left at the front. If the guess is correct, the child at the front sits down and the other goes to the side of the classroom to be part of the next game.

4-Corners: One child is chosen to be It. She/he puts her/his head down and begins to slowly count to 20. The rest of the class is to move quietly to a corner of the room. (Before beginning the game, determine what each corner is called. I use North, South, East and West. As soon as the child says, '20', remind the students that they must stay in their chosen corner or they will be 'out'. The person who is It announces a corner. Students who are in that corner must sit down. It counts again and the students move again. Play continues until only one child remains.

Here Comes the Judge: One child is It. That child sits at the front of the room with his/her eyes closed and facing away from the class. I select a child by pointing to come to the front of the room. That child comes to stand behind the person who is It and says, "Here comes the Judge" in a disguised voice. If he is correct, he stays, if not the players trade places and play continues. This game came, of course, from the old 'Laugh-In' show - which you may or may not remember, and it can be updated with the child saying something else! Make it seasonal by having the child say "Ho, ho, ho", pretending to be Santa.

Musical Numbers: Place cards with the numbers 2-12 on them around the room on the floor. You will likely need two or more sets. Have as many cards as there are children (or more). Music is played. Children walk around the room and must stand on the nearest number when the music stops. The two dice are rolled and the number that is rolled determines which children sit down. Play continues until one player remains.

Promise

Each day I'll do my best,
And I won't do any less.
My work will always please me,
and I won't accept a mess.

I'll color very carefully
My writing will be neat.
I simply won't be happy,
'Till my papers are complete.

I'll always do my homework,
I'll try on the test.
And I won't forget my promise,
To do my very best!



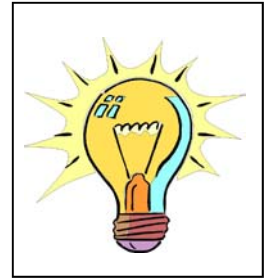
November

Do you know November's here,
November's here, November's here?
Do you know November's here?
A great time of the year!

Leaves are turning red and brown,
Many leaves are falling down.
Leaves have blown all over town.
A great time of the year!

Do you know November's here,
November's here, November's here?
Do you know November's here?
A great time of the year!

More Odds and Ends



Gifts for volunteers, others....

Give your staff friends a root beer, wrapped and ribboned on the last day - the tag reading 'Merry Christmas and a Happy Root Beer'.....

Use this with a package of purchased cocoa mix or make up your own dry mix. Tie the saying to a candy cane with colourful ribbon and tape to the pack of cocoa.

A little cup of cocoa, As you sip this cocoa,
I'm sending your way, It's heat will warm your heart.
For you to sip and enjoy, Just like our friendship warmed mine,
On some cold lonely day. Right from the very start.



Give a cookie cutter with this cute poem.

I made a plate of cookies, I went into a panic,
And ate just one or two. And ordered on the phone
But I started feeling guilty This brand new cookie cutter
Because they were for you. So you can make your very own!

Use one of the poems below with a whisk.

Whether stirring up cakes, cookies, soups or soufflés,
You'll find this whisk useful in so many ways.
But whenever it's use, whatever you do,
It says "Merry Christmas from me to you".

"Whisking" you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Give a package of muffin mix with this sentiment....

You're getting muffin for Christmas.....

"We made Christmas cards for our parents. The children made the front by tracing holly leaves and then gluing them onto a green or red card with red holly berries. On the inside I had them write or copy a cute little poem. I have this one I would like to share."

The Nicest Gift

The present you give another
Need not be a costly thing
If you have tucked some love inside
Before you tie the string



Gifts

What shall we give the children?
Christmas is almost here -
Toys and games and playthings
As we do each and every year?

Yes, for the magic of toy land
Is part of the Yuletide lore
To gladden the hearts of childhood
But I shall give something more.

I shall give them more patience
And a more sympathetic ear,
A little more time for laughter
Or tenderly dry a tear.

I shall take time to teach them
The joy of doing some task.
I'll try to find time to answer
More of the questions they ask,

Time to read books together
And take long walks in the sun
Time for a bedtime story
After the day is done.

I shall give these things to my children
Weaving a closer tie,
Knitting our lives together
With gifts that money can't buy.

How can you tell if you are a real primary teacher?

1. In public, you feel the urge to snap your fingers at random children to correct their behaviour.
2. You correct adults who say, "Me and my children...".
3. You mark everything you read - newspapers, letters, and the Primary Success magazine.
4. You can tell if it's a full moon without ever looking outside.
5. You can read upside down and have eyes in the back of your head.
6. You think caffeine should be available in intravenous form.
7. It occurs to you that marking all A's on report cards would make your life SO much simpler.
8. Your personal life comes to a screeching halt at report card time.
9. You can "hold it" for seven hours!
10. You would like the people in the mall to all walk in line.
11. You give 'The Look' to people who are not doing as they should.
12. You say 'sh!' in meetings and movie theatres.
13. 'Getting your exercise' means running off papers and having recess duty.
14. 'Criss cross applesauce is not a new variety of food or the name of a rap group.



People can be divided into two classes:
those who go ahead and do something,
and those who sit still and inquire,
'Why wasn't it done the other way?'
---Oliver Wendell Holmes

Dear Colleagues,
Have a great holiday and a rest
after the hectic month of December!
You deserve a holiday so have a good
one..... Pamper yourself!

Jean



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Nanaimo, B.C., V9V 1J1

E-mail:

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Website: <http://www.primarysuccess.ca>

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Bringing Exclusion to a Conclusion

A new presentation is changing the face of bullying in every school where it is presented.

This is a message with a difference. Madeleine Sleightholm (Slate), 21, an outstanding young musician, and her mom, Joanne Sleightholm, an award winning teacher/consultant with the Toronto District School Board (Prime Minister's Award of Merit for Teaching Excellence and a TV Ontario Award for Teaching Excellence) are bringing exclusion to a conclusion.

The presentation features both Joanne and Madeleine, who is actually the headliner of this duo. Madeleine was severely bullied in Elementary and Middle School and beyond and brings a clear picture to the audience of just what that felt like. Madeleine is now a professional singer/songwriter turning the heads of major industry folk in Nashville Tennessee with her outstanding lyrics and exceptional vocals.

Beyond her beautiful, captivating singing voice, Madeleine is the voice for every young person who has ever been excluded. Her real life personal stories of watching kids run away from her, students dropping her gym shorts in the toilet, or the sad tale of how the cyber-bullying was invisible to her teachers and administrators, will be made more powerful when the audience listens to her singing.

Fortunately for Madeleine, songwriting was the vehicle that transported her away from the devastating effects that exclusion often causes in young people. The audience is delighted with the songs that Madeleine sings during the presentation and every listener is touched by the purity and eloquence of the lyrics. She not only gives hope to the students who are being left out, but she raises awareness of the importance of inclusivity in our lives. The effects are powerful, positive and immediate. Administrators have reported that the students talk for weeks after this memorable presentation.

Joanne points out clearly that exclusion is the precursor to bullying and bullying is the precursor to violence. They know that this is the best way to turn this behaviour around.

Joanne and Madeleine have been invited to present to directors, superintendents and principals. Their message touches the hearts and minds of every listener. Always bring a box of tissue into the auditorium when you are going to watch this presentation.

Their "***Bringing Exclusion to a Conclusion***" phone line is buzzing with new opportunities to spread this valuable message.

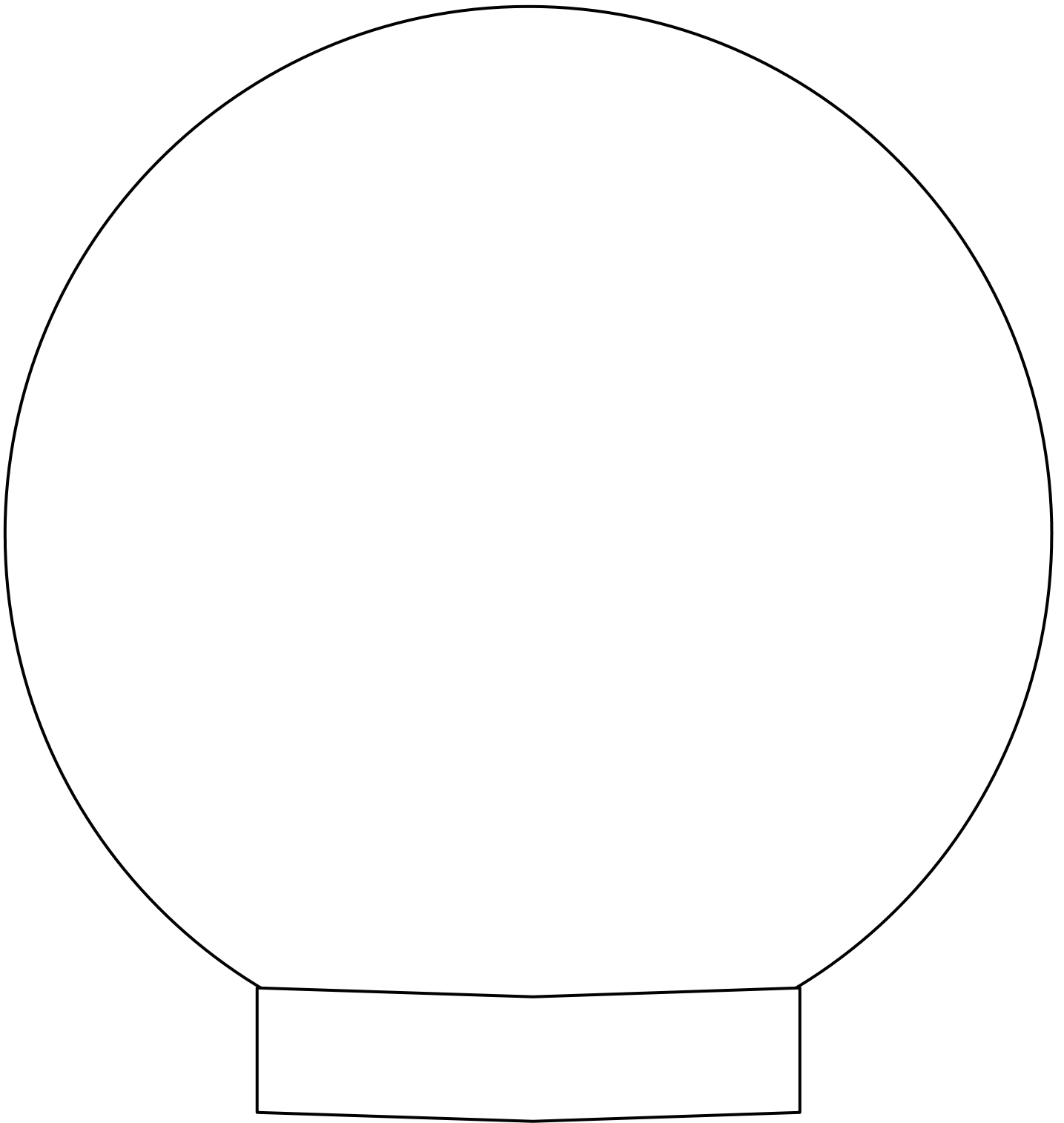
It is their hope to bring about the biggest difference in the way "others treat others".

"Bringing Exclusion to a Conclusion" would love to come to your school district and you would love to see the difference that they can make. Your school will never be the same...just better!!!

They can be reached at josleigh@yahoo.com or 416 481 4590 (Toronto, Ontario)

You can hear Madeleine sing at <http://www.myspace.com/madeleineslate>

Note: I like to hear about the interesting things that other Canadian teachers are doing. Joanne contacted me about her presentation - and it sounds interesting. - so I am passing it on to you! Jean



Santa in a Snow Globe

Christmas Alphabet

The following can be done with each child (or pair of children) taking a verse.

It's that special time of year again
When everyone's filled with cheer,
We're so excited we can hardly wait
For the Holidays are almost here.

This is our holiday alphabet
It's made for you to enjoy
We hope that you will listen to
The poem of each girl and boy.

A is for Australia, where Santa Claus
Comes jingling all the way,
Pulled by six white kangaroos
On a scorching summer day.

B is for bells in every size and shape
How we love to hear their sound
They are on packages and in windows
They are all around.

C is for bright candy canes
Which we hang on the tree
There are always plenty of them
For all my friends and me.

D is for a dreidel
Watch it as it spins
Around and around it goes
I wonder who wins.

E is for everyone at Christmas
Who joins in the cheer
Of giving to each other
At the best time of the year.

F is for Frosty
A fairy tale they say
But the children know how
He came to life one day.

G is for games and goodies
Wonders of every kind
As you open each gift,
Look at the treasures you'll find.

H is for Hanukkah,
The candles we'll light
We'll play with a dreidel
On each Hanukkah night.
I is for icicles
Which we hang on the tree

And I is for icicles
Outside, you see.

J is for jumping
Jumping with joy!
When the holidays come
For each girl and boy.

K is for the kitchen
And each Dad and Mom
Is cooking up treats
For the holiday fun!

L is for Las Posadas
And the children of Mexico
They wish you Feliz Navidad
As down the streets they go.

M is for the music
We love each holiday song
Listen to us sing each one
And then please sing along!

N is for the New Year
Won't we have fun!
What year will it be?
Two thousand and one!

O is for "oh!"
That is what I will say
When I open my gifts
On this holiday.

P is for presents. What do you see?
That present's for you, and this is for me.
Don't rattle, don't shake, don't peek
inside
You mustn't know what this present
will be.

Q is for the quiet snow
Falling in the night.
When we wake up on Christmas Day
Everything is white!

R is for Reindeer Rudolph
With his nose all aglow
He shows Santa and his team
Which is the way to go.

S is for jolly fat Santa
Filling stockings in a red suit,
And St. Nicholas from Holland
Filling shoes with candy and fruit.

T is for the Christmas tree
Covered with bright lights
Decorated with ornaments
It shines through the nights.

U is for us
Very good will we be!
We will be very patient
Just you wait and see!

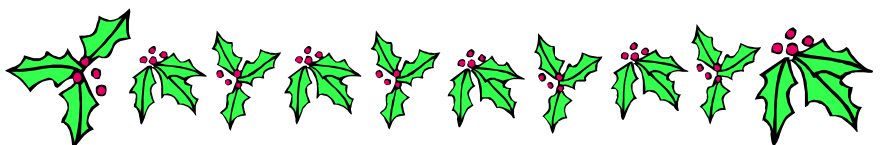
V is for visiting
Friends old and new
May your vacation be happy
and lots of fun, too.

W is for wreath
That we put on our door,
To wish all our friends
Merry Christmas and more!

X is for kisses
I put on each card
I also put 'O's
To hug very hard.

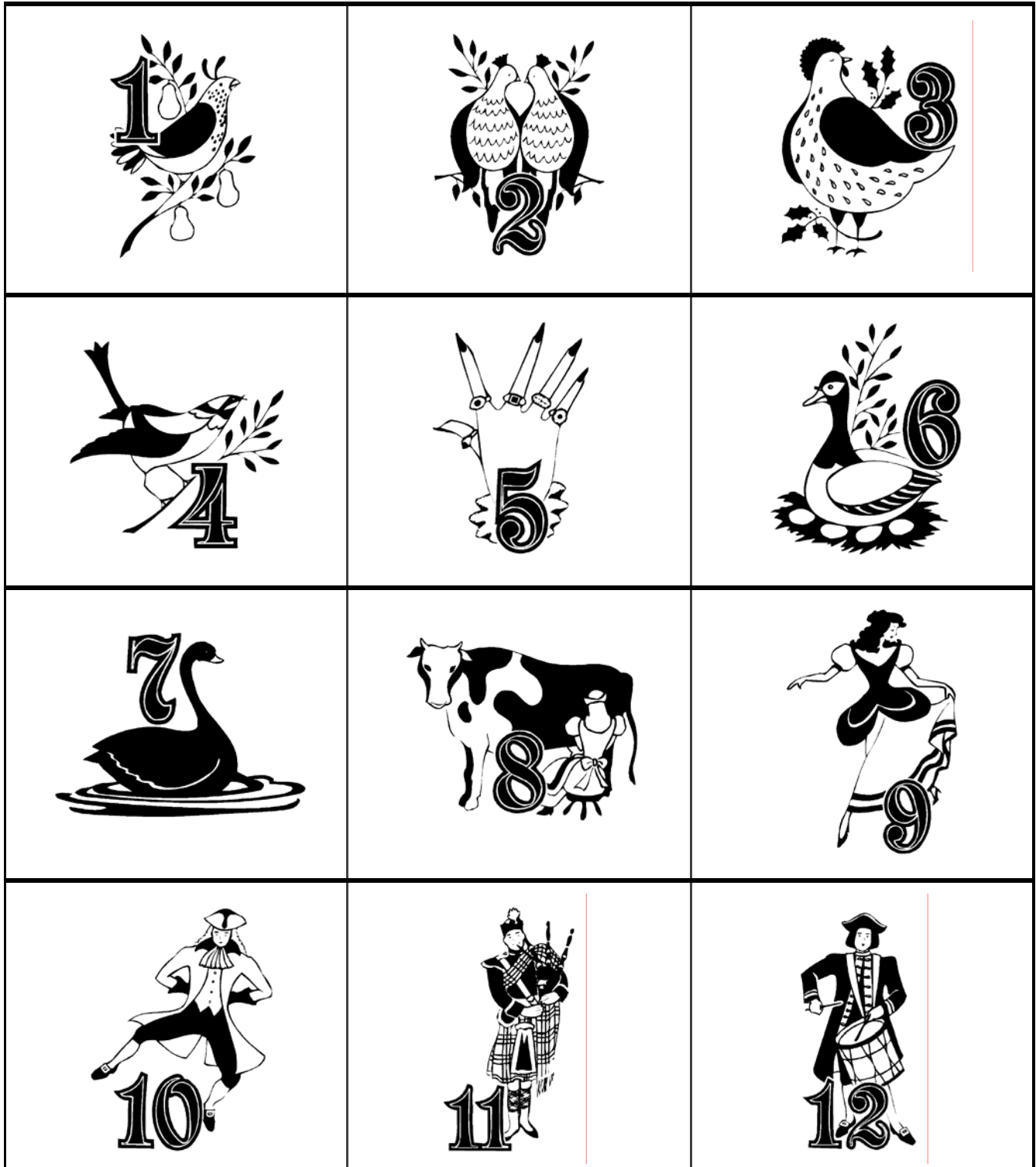
Y is for the yule log
That's burned in an English home
To remind you of Yuletide
pleasures
No matter where you roam.

Z is for a zillion wishes
A million zillion wishes for you!
Thanks for coming –
Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah
And Happy New Year too!



The 12 Days of Christmas

Use these pictures to make individual books or a bulletin board display (enlarge them on the photocopier). You could enlarge the pictures and photocopy them on tag – have the students colour them and then tape them to the ends of rulers. Act out the song!



The School Daze Before Christmas

'Twas the days before Christmas,
And all through the school,
The teachers were trying
To keep their cool.

The hallways were hung
With Christmas art
(Some made in November
to get a head start!)

The children were bouncing
Off ceilings and walls,
And seemed to forget
How to walk in the halls.

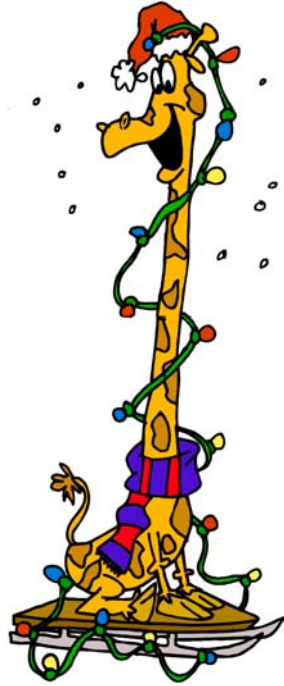
With 'holiday shirts'
And 'jingle bell jewels',
The teachers looked festive
Enforcing the rules.

When out of the teacher's lounge
There came such a chatter,
The principal went in
To see what was the matter.

The teachers were hiding
And trying to refuel,
On coffee and cookies
And treats from the Yule.

When what to their wondering
Ears do they hear,
But the ringing of school bells
- It's the children they fear!

More rapid than reindeer
The little ones came,
And the teachers all shouted
And called them by name;



Walk, Vincent! Walk, Tanner!
Walk, Tyler and Sammy!
Sit, Jamie! Sit, Laura!
Sit, Tara and Tammy!

To your desks in the room!
To your spots in the line!
Now walk to them! Walk to them!
No running this time!

So straight to their places
The children all went.
With fear of detention
Where they could be sent.

With manuals of lessons
Cradled in arms,
The teachers began
To use all their charms.

But the lessons presented
All fell on deaf ears.
The children were thinking
Of Santa's reindeer!

With a toss of their hands
They put manuals aside,
Went straight to the cupboards
Where videos hide.

And laying their finger
On the TV remote
They sat back to write
Their last Christmas note.

But you could hear them exclaim
At the end of the day -
Have a wonderful, happy and
LO -O-O-O-O-NG HOLIDAY!!!