

**Planting Seeds Theme Circle Time Ideas**

Circle Time is such a great time for children to learn the social skills of being together as a large group AND to learn more about your theme!

**One Little Daffodil**

In advance, make 5 daffodils from paper, laminate and place velcro or a piece of a dryer sheet on the back so that it sticks on your flannel board.

One little daffodil had nothing to do

Up popped another one and then there were two.

Two little daffodils smiling at a bee

Another popped up and then there were three

Three little daffodils were growing by a door

Up popped another one and then there were four.

Four little daffodils happy to be alive

Up popped another one and then there were five.

Five little daffodils wearing golden crowns

They danced in the breeze wearing green satin gowns!

EXTENSION: Pause before saying each number for the children to have time to count and recall the next number. Ex: then there were.....right! 3!

EXTENSION: Bring actual daffodils to school and place them in your science area. The children can explore them while recalling this poem!

**The Carrot Seed**

Materials: In advance, make flannel pieces to go along with this book. You'll need a little boy, mother, father, brother, a tiny seed, a carrot top, a wheelbarrow a watering can and a huge carrot.

Use these materials while telling the story.

VARIATION: Give each child one flannel piece to add to the board as you read it. You may need to read the story twice this day so that each child has a turn!

**Pears and Blossoms**

Materials Needed: the book From Seed to Pear and a large pear!

Cut the pear down the middle lengthwise and show the children the seeds. Let them feel the seeds and talk about planting them, how long it takes seeds to grow, etc.

Read the story, pointing out that the white flowers turn into little hard pears then ripe juicy ones!

Follow up with the Pear Flower Blossom art activity listed above in the Art Activities section.

### **Once Upon A Time....**

Write a cooperative story. After discussing what seeds need to grow, start a story with them. Tell them they are going to help make up a story about a seed!

Start with "Once upon a time, some preschool children wanted to begin planting seeds. One day, Maria \_\_\_\_\_(fill in the blank from this child). Then, Cheryl thought she should \_\_\_\_\_, etc. If the children seem to get off track, that will happen! However, give reminders as needed such as:

"So, our seed was dug up by the turtle and the bird took the turtle and the seed in the air. What happened next?" Then go on to ask the next child.

These stories are SO much fun to read back to them each day! And to photo copy and send home with them for their families to enjoy!

### **Paint While Planting Seeds!**

Materials Needed: Mix some small seeds (like marigold or other small and thin seeds) into the paint for a different texture!

Seed Mosaic

Materials Needed: Clear contact paper, marker, seeds

Draw flowers on the clear contact. Let the children draw their own flowers!

Remove the backing. Children they use seeds to decorate the flowers.

Extension: Let the children create their own art work by placing the seeds where they want for a very creative design! They can place them on the contact paper or glue them onto paper!

### **Gross Motor Games**

**Seed, Seed, GROW!**

Do your children like the Duck, Duck, Goose game? Replace the words with Seed, Seed, Grow to compliment your theme!

### **The Carrot Seed**

Materials: The book The Carrot Seed by Ruth Kraus.

After reading the book, have the children help act out the story. 4 children will act it out and the rest of the children will be the audience.

Choose 4 children to act it out-one is the little boy, one is the mother, one is the father and one is the big brother.

Explain to the audience that their job is to repeat the line "I'm afraid it won't come up."

Repeat until all the children have had a turn being in this reenactment!

### **Book Suggestions for the Library**

The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss

Dinofours: My Seeds Won't Grow by Steve Metzger

From Seed to Pear by Ali Mitgutsch

From Seed to Plant by Gail Gibbons

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

I Really Wonder What Plant I'm Growing by Lauren Child

Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert

Sunflower House by Even Bunting

The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

### **Seed Sorting**

Materials: several bowls and different packets of seeds.

Let the children combine, sort and separate seeds. This is a great time for them to use their fine motor skills, of course, but also to get to know HOW flowers and plants begin!

### **Weighing and Measuring**

Materials: balance scale; a variety of seeds (such as seed corn, bean seeds, pea seed, sunflowerseeds) in small plastic containers with covers, measuring cups and spoons

Let children explore the seeds. Show them how to use the balance scale (this might be a great circle time activity- use your circle time to introduce this tool).

Ask questions to get them started such as: Are the larger seeds heavier or lighter? How many seeds does it take to make one side of the scale heavier?

### **Package Sorting**

Materials Needed: Save the seed packets that you used for the seed activities in this unit.

Laminate them (be sure to have 2 of each type).

Place them out for the children to match. Use as a memory or concentration type game as well!

### **Planting Bean Seeds**

Materials: ziplock baggies, paper towels, spray water bottle, lima beans, markers.

Children spray their paper towels with water.

They place 3 lima beans in the middle of their paper towel.

Help them to fold the paper towel over the beans.

They place that into a ziplock baggie.

Write their name with marker on the outside of the baggie.

Tape baggies to a sunny window and watch them for a week or two until they sprout!

NOTE: Once you open the baggies, they will smell terrible! Be prepared!

### **Clear Glass Planter**

One year we had a Root-View grower. It had a styrofoam based and clear plexiglass cover. The idea was that the children could see the seeds grow and form roots (especially for carrot seeds!). You can make your own!

Use a small, five gallon glass fish tank (ask parents if they have one to donate, many people do in their basements!).

Fill about 3/4 of the way with potting soil.

Have the children help you to make holes in the soil about half way down (we used a pencil or straw). The key is to push the hole down right against the glass.

Drop seeds in the holes and lightly fill in the holes.

Do this all the way around the tank.

When done, also plant seeds in the middle of the tank, but not as deeply).

Water the soil as needed and the children will, over time, see the process of the seed growing its roots as well as the plants in the middle popping through.

### **How do Roots Work?**

Although this is an experiment that you may be bored with, remember that your children have never seen it before!

Materials: Celery stalks (preferably ones with greens on the tops), two tall, clear glasses of water; food coloring

Place a different color of food coloring in each cup of water.

Place one celery stalk in each cup, with the greens at the top.

Watch and discuss daily.

The children learn how root systems "drink" water from the bottom and bring it to the top.

NOTE: We used blue and red food coloring. The interesting thing was that after a couple of weeks, the blue one still looked blue and ok, but the red one actually began wilting and turning brown...I guess there is something to that whole fear of red dye...it was proven to us with this experiment!

### **Invisible seeds**

Provide the children with a piece of white construction paper and a white crayon. Encourage them to draw different sized seeds and what their seeds will grow.

Have the children paint over their picture with watered down brown tempura paint. It will not stick to their crayon drawings.

VARIATION: Have the children print their name or other letters you may be working on with them. If the white on white is too frustrating for them, provide a color they can see to use on the white paper. It will still amaze the kids that the paint won't stick to their letters!

## Circle Time Activities

### **Parts of a Flower**

Materials Needed: 1 fresh flower, strips of paper and a marker, 4 pieces of construction paper, artificial flowers--dissected (take apart many artificial flowers so that you have enough pieces for each child to have one for the circle activity below).

Show the fresh flower to the children at circle time to introduce your *Growing Flowers* theme.

Pass the flower around for the children to touch and smell and discuss what they notice about the flower.

Ask if they know what a flower needs to grow? (Water, air, soil, sun).

Now, point to each part of the flower and ask if they know what it is called. Let them know the name and then print the name on a label and show it to them. Draw a basic picture of that part on the strip of paper and repeat the name.

Do this for each part of the flower: Flower, leaf, stem, root

Place these labels on different pieces of paper in the middle of circle.

Now pass out pieces of the artificial flowers.

Ask each child to identify which part of a growing flower they have and place it on the proper labeled paper.

EXTENSION: Use these items as a sorting/math activity for your math and manipulatives center (See *Parts of a Flower* math/manipulative activity below).

### **We Are Growing**

As you discuss growing flowers, also discuss that the children are growing!

Bring a growth chart to circle (you can make your own by simply having a long piece of butcher paper and measure off up to 4 to 5 feet with some "inch" increments listed also!

Hang the chart on the wall.

Have each child stand against the chart and place a line and their name where their height is.

EXTENSION: Do this again at the end of the year to chart their growth!

### **Growing Vegetable Soup**

Materials: Vegetables to make vegetable soup with and the story *Growing Vegetable Soup*

After reading the story, have the children identify the vegetables you have brought. Talk about the types of flowers or plants that are seen when they grow (the green on the carrots, etc.).

EXTENSION: If you do this, see the cooking activity idea to go with this book below under *Cooking*.

EXTENSION: In advance, make vegetables and other items from this story to place (or have the children place) onto a flannel board while you read the story.

## Cooking Recipes

### **Cooking Vegetable Soup**

Ingredients and Items needed: The book *Growing Vegetable Soup*; vegetables from the story and a crockpot.

After reading the story, have the children help you to prepare the vegetables and place them in a crockpot with some vegetable broth. Cook on high (out of their way) for several hours!

## Gross Motor Games

### **Hide And Seek**

Materials: Hide several flowers (artificial) in the classroom or playground. Have the children look for a specific flower! Tell them, you'll find many flowers, but right now we are ONLY looking for purple flowers, or red flowers, etc.

### **Bubble Garden**

Materials: See how many bubbles the children can blow in one area to make a bubble garden! Or, place bubble solution in a bin. The children insert a straw and blow to make the bubbles grow in the bin!

NOTE: Whenever I do bubbles and straws, I cut a small notch out of the straw so that if the child "sucks" in, they won't get a mouth full of bubbles. Just be sure you don't place the notch where the children will be placing their hands to hold the straw, thus covering the hole!

## Math And Manipulatives Activities

### **Flower Arranging**

Materials: Clay and artificial flowers.

Let the children work those small muscles by manipulating the clay. Invite them to stick artificial flowers into the clay for a beautiful arrangement!

### **Counting Flowers**

Materials: Plastic vases and artificial flowers.

Program the vases with numbers by taping numbers on the outside. The children place the appropriate number of flowers in the vase.

VARIATION: For a color recognition activity, either provide different color vases or tape a different color on each vase. The children then sort the flowers by color AND count them!

### **Playdough Flowers**

Materials Needed: Spring colored playdough, growing flowers type of playdough cutters (flowers, tools, bees, bunnies, other garden items, etc), plastic playdough cutting tools.

Let the children create their own colorful playdough flower garden while developing their small muscles!

### **Flower Wreaths**

A colleague of mine once had this activity available and the kids loved it.

Place a few large wreaths (purchased at a craft store) and lots of artificial flowers at your manipulatives center. The children will make some beautiful wreaths!

Encourage them to create wreaths with patterns. Encourage counting, sorting, etc.

Display the wreaths, and take apart the next day for more fun!

### **Parts of a Growing Flower**

Materials: artificial flowers with most of them "dissected" into parts: flower, stem, leaf.

4 large pieces of paper with the flower parts written on them (flower, stem, leaf, whole flower). Also, draw a basic picture of each next to the label.

The children sort the pieces onto the correct paper.

After sorting, encourage the children to count how many of each part they have. Which do they have more of? Stems? Leaves?



## Music and Movement

### **Growing Flowers Song** (sung to Frere Jacques)

Flowers are growing, flowers are growing (move hands from your sides to up over your head)

All around! All around! (point around the room)

So many pretty colors! So many pretty colors! (hand over eyes to look)

Fill the ground, fill the ground! (point to floor around the room)

Let's go see them, let's go see them! (hand over eyes to look again)

Growing bright, growing bright!

We'll use our noses to smell them, (bend over and pretend to smell)

and use our eyes to see them, (bend over and pretend to look at a flower)

What a sight, what a sight! (clap hands and display a very happy smile!)

### **Dancing and Growing Flowers**

Materials Needed: Colorful scarves or crepe paper, 2 pieces for each child, to use while dancing or acting out the growth of a flower!

## Library and Literacy

Alison's Zinnia by Anita Lobel

Counting Wildflowers by Bruce McMillan

Everyday Garden by Cynthia Rylant

Flower Garden by Eve Bunting

Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert

Here Are My Hands by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

Jack's Garden by Henry Cole

Paddington's Garden by Michael Bond

The Rose In My Garden by Arnold Lobel

The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

## Science Activities

### **Flower Mixture**

Fill your sensory table with potting soil one day. Give the children different flower seed packets with seeds in them. Let them plant them all! Transfer the soil and seed mix to a large pot for them to water. Once it is warmer outside, transfer your garden to the outdoors!

EXTENSION: Have the children cut out the pictures from the seed packets and glue them onto large craft sticks and place those in the planter to see which flowers they can identify once they start growing!

### **Plants DO Breathe**

Bring in 2 large plants with green leaves and a small jar of vaseline.

On a few leaves, put vaseline on the top (shiny) sides of some of the leaves.

On a different plant, put vaseline on the bottom sides of some of the leaves.

In a few days, the leaves with the vaseline on the top will be unaffected. The leaves with the vaseline on

the bottoms will turn brown and wilt because it can not breath. The veins are covered.

Keep a journal of what happens. Label each plant "TOPS" and "BOTTOMS" to remember which is which!

### **Will It Grow?**

Bring in 2 plants of the same type.

Ask the children if they think the plants will grow if you don't water them?

Label one plant "WATER" Label the other "NO WATER"

Ask the children who thinks the one with water will grow? Write down how many children on that plants label. Do the same with the plant that says NO WATER.

Place the plants on a table and watch what happens over a week by watering one and not the other.

### **Dirt and Water Exploration**

Materials: Small (16 ounce) clear plastic water bottle with the label removed; dirt; water.

Fill bottle 1/4 full of dirt from outside. Fill to about 3/4 full with water. Cover and Seal with a hot glue gun.

When the children shake them, it gets cloudy and when they let it sit, the dirt slowly falls to the bottom. Ask lots of questions about this such as:

What happened when you shook it? Why do you think that happened?

What's happening now? Why do you think the dirt is going to the bottom?

You may want to make many of these for the children to use or:

EXTENSION: Provide enough of these for each child to make one and label it with their name!

### **Sand and Water Table**

#### **Grass Faces**

Materials Needed: styrofoam cups, coffee filters, grass seed, water, eyedroppers, markers and google eyes. In advance use rubber bands to secure coffee filters on the bottoms of the cups.

With the children, invert the cups so the bottoms are on the top and have children draw faces and/or just decorate with markers.

Children place a few drops of water on the coffee filter and then sprinkle grass seed.

It will grow "hair" like a chia pet!

#### **Growing Flowers**

And sand, shovels, buckets, water, silk flowers, small branches from trees, watering cans and water

The children can dig a long trench and plant a beautiful garden. then allow the children to water the plants. Talk about how to care for our gardens, what plants need to survive, etc.

### **Writing Activities**

#### **Growing Flowers Class Book**

Each child chooses the color of construction paper they want and draws their own flower or flower garden. Ask each child to tell you about their page. You write down exactly what they say.

Set the pages up as a classbook reading their stories!