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A Worms Theme?! How cool and gross and fun! Even those who don't like them will learn to appreciate them through this theme! This page has activities for each Interest Learning Center. You'll see the words "critters", "crawlers" and "wigglers" used often!

Art Activities

Themed Art

Kling-Art

Materials Needed: White glue, food coloring, clear report covers or wax paper
Make different colors of glue in the glue bottles (you can use paint instead of food coloring). The children squeeze the glue onto the plastic or wax paper in long squiggly shapes (not too long though!). Let them dry (about 24 hours). Peel and stick to windows or on the refrigerator at home.

This is a great muscle development activity for the children!

VARIATION: Let the children also make a sun, grass, etc. for a kling-on scene!

EXTENSION: Draw shapes onto the plastic or wax paper for children to squeeze the glue onto!

Wiggly Collages

In advance, cook spaghetti and drain. Mix together red, blue and yellow food coloring (to make brown) and add to the spaghetti. Mix!

Give each child a paper plate for them to arrange their wigglers on. The starch on the spaghetti should act as glue.

VARIATION: Have the children brush a very thin layer of watered down glue on the paper plates to be sure the spaghetti sticks.

Sock Puppets

Give each child (or have parents donate) a sock. Using craft glue, add googly eyes, buttons or other feathers (I'd suggest re-gluing with a hot glue gun).

VARIATION: Have the children stuff the sock with polyfill and then hot glue eyes and hot glue the sock closed. Use these in the library or dramatic play area.

Walk the Wiggler!

Materials: paper towel tubes, yarn, paint, googly eyes, markers, misc. arts/crafts supplies, glue

The children paint and decorate as needed. Tell them it will be cut and will wiggle when it's dried.

When dried, help the children cut the tube into 5 or 6 sections.

Tie yarn around the back section. Thread through the middles of the other sections toward the front.

Glue eyes on front section. Take them for a walk!

Wiggle Art

Materials Needed: shoelaces (or string--something thicker than yarn), paper, paint in shallow trays

The children dip the laces in paint and then drag the paint around the paper!

SUGGESTION: Use pinch clothespins for the children to hold the laces. Also, it is difficult to get the paint on the string so I recommend watering down the paint.

Block Area

Themed Block Center Ideas

Just add crawling critters!

Okay, not actual ones, but be creative! Add small stuffed animal snakes; add colorful pipe cleaners or pieces of yarn; have the children cut their own wigglers out of construction paper and add them to the block area. The dramatic play will take hold in your block area!

Circle Time Activities

Themed 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!

Real Worms

To introduce this theme, bring some night crawlers from a bait store or find some in your yard!

Place them in a clear, small container. Pick one up for the children to see.

Discuss living creatures and the need to be gentle, careful, etc.

Talk about what worms eat (all kinds of vegetables, fruit, etc.).

Place some "food" in the bin. The children can watch them as you read a story about them. Let the and let the children pass the bin around to look.

Walter the Waltzing Worm

This is a music and movement activity but GREAT for circle time as well!

It is from a CD by Hap Palmer. It is great and this particular song works on spatial direction with the children (~~up, down~~) as well as body part identification.

IT'S THE WIGGLE WORM!

One teacher had a cloth bag she made with a drawing of a worm on the front.

Inside the bag, she had numbers (1-20) written on index cards as well as a few index cards with a wiggling night crawler picture.

One at a time, at circle time, a child would pull out a card. They would name the number. If they didn't know it, they could ask a friend for help.

If the child pulled out the card with the critter, the child (and the teacher!) would yell "IT'S THE WIGGLE WORM!" and all the kids would drop the floor and wiggle like these wiggly critters until the teacher "called her children back to circle"!

They LOVED this! I suppose you could use other concepts depending on what you are working on like shapes, letters, or just pictures that go with your theme. It would also be a great "transition" activity for those times you need a quick activity in between activities!

Cooking Recipes

Snack Recipe Ideas to Cook Up for Your Theme!

Cooking with children helps develop their math skills and helps them to learn how to follow directions. It also allows for some great conversation! Ask many questions while cooking with

your children to encourage conversation! Be sure to ask specific themed questions while making these fun snacks!

Pretzels

Ingredients: 1 pkg yeast dissolved in 1 1/2 cups warm water; 1/2 teaspoon sugar; 4 1/2 cups flour; vegetable oil; dish towel; large bowl; 1 egg yolk, coarse salt, brush

Add sugar to dissolved yeast and mix.

Add flour. Knead for 5 or 6 minutes.

Place in oiled/greased bowl and cover with towel. Let it double.

Divide dough into 12 pieces.

Let children roll into long snakes.

Mix 1 egg yolk and 2 tablespoons water. Let children brush their pretzels, sprinkle with coarse salt.

Bake on a cookie sheet at 450 degrees for about 10-12 minutes.

Ewww..What's in the Apple

Cut apples in half (across the middle). Place one or two gummy critters in the middle!

[Return to Top](#)

Dramatic Play Ideas

Themed Ideas to Transform Your Dramatic Play Area

Gardening Center

Provide items to have a gardening center! Use real dirt--I know, I know--it IS messy--provide child sized brooms and dustpans (and a dustbuster type vacuum!) to help teach the children to clean up after themselves!

Place gardening tools such as watering cans, spray bottles, seeds, plastic spades, etc. soil, pretend plastic night crawlers into a large bin or a wading pool.

Place a tarp under it for easier clean up.

Provide aprons and a place to rinse hands (perhaps a small bin with warm, soapy water and towels).

[Return to Top](#)

Easel Ideas

Themed Ideas for your Easel--

More Than Just Painting (Although that is always THE favorite in our classroom!)

Wiggle Painting

Use plastic wigglers (can find these in a bait/fishing shop) to paint with.

Musical Wiggle Painting

Play music and have the children use fingerpaint at the easel--their fingers are the crawlers and they "wiggle" them to the beat as they paint!

[Return to Top](#)

Gross Motor Games

Themed Large Group Games

that help build their muscles while they have fun together

Obstacle Course

Set up an obstacle course that your children need to wiggle through! Go under a chair, around a bucket, through a tunnel (or a table with a blanket over it that looks like a tunnel!), etc. Have fun!

Find the Wiggly Critters!

If you don't have real wiggly critters this time of year outside to dig for, try hiding pieces of yarn in your play area. Have the children find them and put them in a bucket or bin. Count the wigglers and hide them again!

Those Crawlers are FLYING!

Items needed: Parachute, jump-ropes (or, I'd recommend ropes without the plastic ends that jump-ropes have on them --they could hurt!-- clothesline rope would work well!)

Place the ropes in the center of the parachute.

As you are showing the children how to gently move the parachute up and down, tell a story about worms...make one up based on what you've you've been learning this week such as: Two little night crawlers were wiggling around in the garden (gently move chute up and down).

It started to rain (move chute faster)

The crawlers went underground to hide (move chute to the ground very slowly then back up slowly then down slowly)

There was so much rain, their tunnel were flooded and they had to GET OUT! (shake chute up and down quickly to get the crawlers out of the tunnels (off the parachute!).

SUGGESTION: Decide BEFORE doing this WHO will get the ropes once they are off the parachute. I assign one child each time---they enjoy having "their turn" to retrieve the ropes as much as they enjoy the game. If we don't designate who will get them, they will ALL go after the rope and then you may be passing out ice packs for bumped heads!

[Return to Top](#)

Library and Literacy

Themed Ideas for Your Library and Literacy Activities for your Preschool Classroom

Book Suggestions for the Library

[Diary of a Worm](#) by Doreen Cronin

[Inch By Inch](#) by Leo Lionni

[Wiggle and Waggle](#) by Caroline Arnold and Mary Peterson

[Wormology](#) by Michael Elsohn Ross

Math And Manipulatives Activities

Themed Activities to help your Preschoolers develop those small muscles in their hands!

In The Garden

Provide green and brown pipe cleaners and clear cups with dirt.

The children bend and shape the pipe cleaners into the wiggly shapes they want.

Provide scissors for them to try cutting them.

They can stick and place their crawlers in the dirt!

VARIATION: Instead of dirt, provide brown playdough for them to stick the pipe cleaners into in the cups.

Puzzles!

Make worm shaped puzzles by cutting a large curvy worm shape from different colors of construction paper.

Draw a face on one end.

Cut puzzle into 4 or 5 pieces. The children put back together.

Print a letter or shape on the cut edges where the puzzle should be matched up so that the children can self correct while doing the puzzle.

Patterns

Provide colored pipe cleaners and bowls of pony beads (with larger holes so they fit on the pipe cleaners).

The children place one bead on one end, fold the pipe cleaner over the bead so that it does not fall off.

They continue adding beads for a colorful wiggler!

Encourage them to create patterns (AB-red,blue,red,blue or ABB-red, blue, blue, etc.) or to copy a patterned one you've already made!

Playdough of course!

What else do children like to do with playdough? Make snakes--big and small! No additional items necessary!

EXTENSION: To challenge those hand muscles, provide modeling clay instead of playdough!

Music and Movement

Themed Music and Movement Activities

and Ideas to get your Preschoolers Movin' and Groovin'!

Little Wiggle Worm *sung to Itsy, Bitsy Spider*

The little wiggle worm (wiggle a stuffed animal worm or playdough worm or pipe cleaner worm)

Went crawling underground. (wiggle worm under hand)

Down Came the rain (wiggle fingers downward)

And then mud was all around. (open arms wide)
The rain filled their tunnels (open hand; move fingers together)
And pushed out the little worm. (push worm through other hand)
And soon the puddles on the ground (make an O shape for a puddle with your hand)
Were the only place to squirm. (wiggle worm into the puddle)

The Magic Worm

Does anyone remember the song, The Magic Ball? Use a stuffed worm or snake instead. I've adjusted the words for preschool.

You pass the worm from person to person as you sing, once you stop singing, the child holding it freezes until you begin singing it again.

The magic worm, goes round and round.

Pass it quickly don't throw it around.

If you're the one, to hold it last-please

When the music stops, hold on to it and you must FREEZE!

VARIATIONS: Use the Pass the Beanbag song from the Beanbag CD or any music you have.

When you stop the music, the children freeze and stop passing the worm.

Nobody Likes Me

I remember this as a camp song...pretty gross song, so here is a preschool version!

Nobody likes me. Everybody hates me.

I guess I'll just eat some worms!

Long, thin, and slimy ones.

Short, fat, and juicy ones.

Itsy, bitsy, gooey worms.

Down goes the first one.

Down goes the second one.

Oh how they wiggle and squirm.

Up comes the first one.

Up comes the second one.

Oh how they wiggle and squirm.

Sand and Water Table

Themed Activities for the Senses!

Dirt Dough!

Materials Needed: 1/4 cup instant coffee; 3/4 cup warm water; 2 cups flour; 1/2 cup salt
Have the children help you measure 3/4 cup of the water and the coffee into a bowl. Take turns mixing until coffee is dissolved.

In a separate bowl combine flour and salt and stir.

Add the water/coffee mixture and stir until dough is formed.

The children use the dough to make what they want.

Bake at 300 degrees for 30 to 45 minutes.

Frozen Crawlers!

In advance, use ice cube trays to make ice cubes but add plastic worms to the trays. It is

GREAT if the critters are sticking out of the compartments a little bit! Freeze.
Add the ice cubes and some non-frozen plastic critters to your Sand and Water table along with cups, spoons, tongs, etc.

Science Activities

Check Them Out!

Night crawlers (found at a bait store), shallow tray, bin with soil
Let the children check out these cool crawlers. When done, place them in a bin with soil!
Discuss the importance of being careful as the night crawlers are living creatures.

Earthworm Farm!

Use a wooden framed boxes (somewhat shallow) for your farm. In addition, you will need: earthworm bedding material (make your own with potting soil and sphagnum moss and a little bit of cornmeal); worms and extra cornmeal.

Add the bedding to the wooden box. Add the critters.

Provide journals or paper and crayons for the children to draw their observations each day.

Dust the box with cornmeal to feed their crawlers now and again.

Another Farm!

Make a mini farm! Cut the top off a 2 liter plastic soda bottle (tape the edge for safety)

Place in about 2 inches gravel (small rocks or stones would work also)--this is for drainage

Add about 2 inches of sand and then 2 inches of soil. Spray the soil to moisten.

Continue alternating sand and soil.

When you get halfway up the bottle, place a few pieces (cut small) of banana peel for food.

Continue alternating sand and soil (moistening soil with a mist of water)

Place the crawlers on the top layer.

Cover bottle with clear plastic wrap and securely tape to the sides. Carefully poke airholes in the plastic wrap.

Tape black construction paper around bottle, and leave for a day or 2.

When you take the paper off, you will see all the cool paths and tunnels they have made!

The layers will have shifted, too, from all their movement!

Be sure to keep this moist and add more banana to the top as needed.

Take ~~LOTS~~ of pictures throughout this observational week!

Layers! ?

OK, this one is a stretch! Add add conversations about what happens to the dirt in the ground when it rains. The water forces the underground crawlers to come to the top.

Needed: Tall, clear plastic cup; 7-up soda; blueberry syrup; heavy cream

Pour the liquids in the jar:

2 inches of 7-Up

1/2 inch of blueberry syrup

1 inch of cream

The layers remain separated because of their density.

EXTENSION: Follow up the same or next day with the following experiment:

Soak Up

Materials: 2 clear, plastic cups; dry soil, gravel, water and a spoon

Fill one cup half full with soil and the other half full with gravel.

Ask them to predict what will happen when they add water (soil will drink water, rocks will float, etc...accept all answers!)

Pour one spoonful of water into one cup. Discuss.

Pour one spoonful of water into the other cup. Discuss.

Continue adding and discussing what happens.

Writing Activities

Writing Activity Ideas for Your Theme!

Class Book

Encourage your children to print letters they know and turn them into worms by adding faces. Encourage them to tell stories about their creations and make the pages from all the children into a class book.

[Return to Top](#)

Miscellaneous Ideas

Miscellaneous Activities for Your Theme!

Your Own Creepy Crawly Squirmy Manipulatives!

Your students could help you to add the ingredients for this! They will enjoy using them!

Materials needed: candy molds in the shapes of different creepy, crawly bugs, night crawlers, etc. or bug shaped cookie cutters; 1 envelope of unflavored gelatin; 1 tablespoons hot water, 2 tablespoons of white glue; 1/2 tablespoon tempera paint

Mix paint and glue together.

In a different bowl, mix gelatin and hot water until the gelatin is completely dissolved.

Add the two mixtures together.

Stir until it starts to thicken (takes 5 or more minutes! Be patient!)

Quickly pour into candy molds or cookie cutters.

Place molds in freezer for about 5 minutes (until firm)

Remove from molds or cookie cutters. Dry for about an hour per side.

Enjoy! Store in airtight plastic baggie.

Science - Worm Habitat/Compost
Use large jar or empty tank
with dirt & real worms. Have
children tend to it by feeding
it with things that go in a compost
ex. banana peels; orange peels etc

Put worms in dirt either in water
table or on trays have children
observe how they move, feel & look

Art - Wiggle worm art with yarn
& paint.

Math - Measure worms & compare
sizes & weigh worms with
scale.

Sand table. put fake worms & grass
in table have children hunt for
worms using tongues (fine motor)