



*AMC Montessori Fall 2011  
Hands-On Creative Lesson  
Planning Newsletter*

## *The AMC Montessori Newsletter*

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*Heidi Anne Spietz, Editor*

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*<http://www.amonco.org>*

The AMC resource participants have generously shared hands-on activities that you will want to use in coming months. You'll be impressed with the ingenuity and creativity expressed in the recipes and crafts they have chosen to share with you. Use their ideas to foster interest in science, social studies, art, mathematics, and other academic hands-on learning activities. Integrate the recipes and crafts into your multicultural lesson planning as well.

Hopefully, you will let the participants know how much you have enjoyed their recipe(s) and craft(s). Visit the websites listed throughout the newsletter. You'll find additional helpful lesson information at these sites.

American Montessori Consulting is not responsible for any of the crafts or recipes posted here. All of the crafts and recipes are copyrighted and are the property of the participating AMC resource organizations listed in this newsletter. For questions concerning their individual copyrighted material, you need to visit the website listed in association with the craft(s) and recipe(s) that interest you and obtain the telephone number and/or e-mail address of the contact person(s).

If you would like friends on special listservs to know of this newsletter, please

request that they download the newsletter directly from

[http://www.amonco.org/montessori\\_fall\\_handson.html](http://www.amonco.org/montessori_fall_handson.html)

Use special precautions when involving children in any craft or recipe where there is a potential for harm. Some children have special food allergies and/or other medical conditions like diabetes. Small children need supervision. Scissors, hot glue, hot stoves and ovens, and other elements in making some of these recipes and crafts need to be considered. Please consider carefully the age and maturity level of the child before allowing him or her to participate.

Be sure to visit each resource participant's site to see the marvelous selection of educational offerings you can use in your school and home classrooms. You'll also find creative, unique educational gift items that are sure to be enjoyed by the special young people in your life.

The following creative ideas are from the AMC Montessori Resource Center <http://www.amonco.org/directory.html> participants. Visit their websites for additional innovative ways to reach your students throughout the school year.



## **Contents of Part IX of the AMC Montessori Fall 2011 Hands-On Creative Lesson Planning Newsletter**

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What to do with all those Tomatoes?

Homemade Fresh Tomato Ketchup

Pumpkins, Pumpkins, Pumpkins

# Birdcage Press

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**Website:** <http://www.birdcagepress.com>

## **Combine Learning and Fun at Art Museums**

by Wenda Brewster O'Reilly, Ph.D.

Are you looking for ways to make your next art museum visit fun and educational? Here are games you and your children can play. Each game gives kids a purpose for looking more closely at paintings and sculptures. The games can be adapted for family or school visits to art museums.

### **Treasure Hunt**

Before your visit, collect pictures of art in the museum's collection. Most museum websites have images of their collection you can print, or you can visit the museum gift shop and buy postcards before your visit. Have each child select a few pictures then start the treasure hunt. If the museum is a big one, you'll need to select works of art in a particular section or plan your route to fit what each child is hunting for. Once you are in the right set of rooms, start the hunt. Children get excited when they find "their" painting or sculpture.

Once they've found their treasure. Ask them if the picture is a good representation of the work of art. Are the colors the same as in the painting? Does the picture show the whole work of art or just a detail? What do they like best about the work of art?

### **Art Collector**

In this game, everyone picks a favorite painting in each room they visit. Then they select their top ten to include in a collection of their favorites. Each child can make their own list or kids can buddy up and two children can decide on a list together.

If you are taking a younger child to the museum, you can be your child's secretary, writing down the ones they pick as their favorites. You can also ask them why they like each one and write down their answers. The game – and museum visit – is over when each child has collected a certain number of favorites.

At the end of your visit, you can go to the gift shop to find postcards of any favorites to take home as a keepsake.

### **I Spy an Eye**

Nothing is as fascinating as eyes. They can say so many different things. Even very young children are captivated by a person's eyes. Make a game of finding the paintings with the best eyes and hunt for as many different kinds of eyes as you can find.

When children select a painting, ask them what the eyes tell them about the person. Or notice how many brush strokes it took to paint the eye.

Children will have fun scanning the art in a room to find the one with eyes that intrigue them. Answering questions about what the eyes say creates a reason to stop and look more deeply at the painting.

### **Scavenger Hunt**

Give each child a list of things to find in paintings then choose a museum room, or set of rooms, in which to play the game. The child who finds the most things on the list wins. Another winner is the one who finds the most things in a single painting. If you are playing the game with several children, make a rule that no one leaves a given room until everyone is ready to move on.

Here is list of things they might look for:

baby  
basket  
bird  
boat  
bowl of fruit  
bug  
child

claws  
earrings  
fancy headdress  
fire  
flowers in a vase  
furry animal  
glasses  
horse  
house  
jug  
lion  
man's hat  
monster  
moon  
musical instrument  
mustache  
pictures within a picture  
rope  
sea  
skull  
snake  
something bright red  
something gold  
stripes  
sun  
sword  
wings  
woman's hat

You can vary the list to fit the museum you are visiting. To get ideas, see a sample of the museum's collection on their website. This will also give you a better idea of what you want to see. Perhaps your children would like to help make up the list before their visit.

A few more tips....

1. Plan a short visit.

Set a time limit and let children know what it is...or break the visit up into manageable time chunks: "We'll visit the museum for half an hour then have a picnic lunch in the courtyard."

2. Don't look at every painting.

You and your children will be exhausted within half an hour if you try to look at every painting in a room. Instead, pick a few favorites and look at them more closely. Playing a museum game helps you to hunt for your favorites and then spend time with them. The games work for adults as well as children!

3. Play art games at home.

Play art games at home or in school before visiting an art museum. This will help children associate art and museums with having fun, and they will become better observers of art.

Look for a game that involves memory and observation, but which is not just a disguised test. Kids hate games where the person who knows the most always wins. They love games in which they can beat adults or older children by using their great memories and some luck.

For example, play “**Go Fish**” for art or play “**Concentration**” with three art games from Birdcage Books. Each game has won a Parents' Choice Gold Medal:

**The Renaissance Art Game**

**The Impressionist Art Game**

**Van Gogh & Friends Art Game**

Or spot the difference between real art and forgeries with Art Fraud Detective, by Anna Nilsen.

4. Above all, have fun.

Art museums can open up worlds of interest in different cultures, the way people lived in past eras, and different ideas of beauty. The best way to ensure that your children will continue to visit museums as they grow into adults is to make their early visits fun.

## **BIO**

Wenda Brewster O'Reilly and her school-age children designed The Renaissance Art Game, The Impressionist Art Game and Van Gogh & Friends Art Game. They began designing art games to make their own museum visits more fun. Each game comes with an art book filled with fun and fascinating facts about the artists.

Wenda O'Reilly wrote the books and her children and two friends edited them. The young editors made sure every paragraph was interesting for children. Dr. O'Reilly holds a masters degree in education from Harvard University and a doctorate Stanford University School of Education. See these pages:



## *About Birdcage Press*

For biographies about famous artists click the links below:

Each game, offered by Birdcage Press, includes museum-quality playing cards and a companion art book. Children play "Go Fish," to collect all the works of art by each artist. As they play, they learn to recognize different styles of art. The 80-page, full color art book presents fascinating facts about each artist and painting in the game. It also teaches history through the lives of the artists. Fun and educational for all ages.

### **Go Fish for Ancient Egypt**

Give me your pharaoh! Play Go Fish and discover Ancient Egypt. Have fun learning about gods, goddesses and symbols. Dramatic images and facts on every playing card. 36 cards and a beautiful companion book. Age 6+

Visit us at <http://www.birdcagepress.com>



# Lab Essentials

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## Ever Been On a Microscope Safari?

There are very few hobbies where your initial start-up costs are nearly your only costs. But with your purchase of a microscope, some slides and reasonably priced accessories, you are ready to begin your adventure. Too many, though, after viewing a few prepared slides and common specimens around the house, allow the novelty to wear off and push their microscope aside for other interests. If only they knew what awaited them with just a little bit of imagination. Let's take a look at going hunting for "small" game.

Look to the water's edge of any pond. There you will find a tangled mat of hair-like green filaments. Your first thoughts: slime-repulsive-yucky. Perhaps, but what you see is really a beautiful and most clean plant. Take a wide-mouthed bottle, and, after loosening a small piece, float the mass along with some pond water into your bottle. Do not lift the mass from the water, for you will lose a good portion of your specimens-- they will simply slip back into the water. Now, using a dropper, place a drop or two onto a well slide. A well slide has an indentation in the middle for specimens such as this. It allows you to see the specimen and to view it in its natural setting. A standard slide would allow the water to run off, and if you place a cover slip over it, you could damage the delicate specimens.

Here's the fun part! Starting at lower magnification, you will be amazed at the variety of different creatures you will see. You may find large numbers of the same kind of specimens or hardly any two alike. Our suggestion is to visit your local library and check out a good book on plant and animal life. Not only will this identify your specimens, but you will also learn the scientific name for each. Many do not have common names, only their scientific names, and each species has been carefully named. Isn't it best to learn the correct name? Using the scientific name is a mark of efficiency and an orderly mind. Make and keep a log of your discoveries for future reference.

Literally hours can be spent studying the life that teems in pond water. But don't stop there. Sample water from other locations: a stream or lake, the ocean, wherever you find natural bodies of water. Pond life may provide the most abundant life forms, but other locations will offer you diverse specimens to locate and identify.

Don't limit yourself to just the study of water borne specimens. Take the time to study various insects. You will be amazed by the delicate parts of an insect's wing or leg. An everyday leaf, pine stem or seed pod offers marvelous opportunities. Nature has provided you an endless supply of possibilities.



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# *Garden Artisans*

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Website: <http://www.gardenartisans.us>

## *Articles and Lesson Plans Contributed by Catherine of Garden Artisans*

### **NECTAR RECIPE FOR HUMMINGBIRDS**

Hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and insects. To make your own nectar, the correct solution that resembles plant nectar should be:

- 1 part sugar
- 4 parts water

Boil the water first, and then add the sugar. The boiling water will ensure the nectar stays fresh longer and retards fermentations. Add the sugar to the water after it has boiled. Don't boil the sugar and water together. Doing so will cause some of the water to evaporate and will create nectar that is too concentrated. If the nectar is too sweet it can damage a bird's liver.

### **DO NOT USE:**

1. Red food coloring or dye
2. Artificial sweeteners which have no nutritional value
3. Honey which ferments quickly and causes a deadly fungus

Place your feeder in the shade and keep out of direct sun and wind. Be sure to clean your feeder regularly and replace the solution every week. Clean your feeder with hot water or a 10% bleach solution. Rinse thoroughly and allow to dry completely before refilling. Change your solution ever two to three days when the weather is hot or consistently over 60 degrees.

## **FAMILY FUN WHILE CAMPING**

It's fall and your mind turns to camping. Cooler days, crisp evenings, campfires and, of course, S'mores! Camping is a wonderful activity for the entire family and with a little planning you can ensure a great time will be had by all!

Before you get too far into your adventure it is important to review a few simple campfire safety guidelines that will keep everyone safe.

- \* Use caution around a campfire. Keep hands and feet away from fire.
- \*To prevent falling into the fire, don't play or run around a campfire.
- \*When cooking on a campfire use long potholders, long picnic sticks and always have an adult supervise the kids while they cook.
- \*When you are done with your campfire cooking, make sure the fire is totally out. Sprinkle water on the fire and stir the ashes around with a stick.

## **BUT WE'RE BORED ...**

While camping the adults often feel the work keeps them occupied. Kids, on the other hand, may require some organized activities to keep them entertained. Be ready to meet those needs by having a few ideas in your back pocket. With just a little bit of planning and a few everyday supplies, you can have a ready answer when your young campers complain of boredom.

A magnifying glass and a book can provide lots of entertainment even for the youngest explorers. Provide your child (or children) with a small plastic magnifying glass a book and note pad then send them off to check out the details around the campsite, like different types of soil, the structure of plants, small insects, rocks, sticks, or other natural treasures.

Remember making leaf rubbings when you were a kid? Still guaranteed fun and they make nice souvenirs of your trip. All you need is some paper, pencils and crayons – you could even use cooled charcoal from last night's campfire! Let the children explore an area where they are still visible to you. They can make rubbings from leafs (vein side up under the paper), tree bark or even stones. Teach the kids some of the skills your learned when you where a kid. With proper supervision, see if they can start a fire by rubbing two sticks together, try making a broom from a large stick and dried grass tied with twine.

## **RAINY DAY BLUES**

So, it's raining and you don't know what to do in your confined space or while you are at home. Visit our website for fun and easy projects parents and children can do together: weave your own basket, build a birdhouse, paint your own apron or create your own puppets!

## **COME VISIT US ON THE WEB**

<http://www..gardenartisans.us>

## **WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THESE TOMATOES**

Your plants have exploded and you don't know what to do with your bounty. Instead of buying a bottle of ketchup, try this easy recipe. It's delicious, cost effective and a fun project to do with the kids.

### **Homemade Fresh Tomato Ketchup**

#### Step 1

3 lbs. Ripe Tomatoes, *chopped*  
1 med Onion, *diced*  
2 Garlic Cloves, *crushed*  
2 t Black Peppercorns  
2 t Mustard Seeds  
2 Allspice Berries  
2 whole Cloves  
2 t Celery Seeds  
1/2 Cinnamon stick  
1 t Paprika  
Pinch Cayenne Pepper  
1 fresh Bay Leaf

#### Step 2

1/3 c Golden Brown Sugar  
1/3 c Apple Cider Vinegar  
Juice 1/2 of a Lemon  
1 t Sea Salt

1. Place all of Step 1 ingredients into a large stockpot (at least 3.5 qt size). Bring to a simmer and slowly cook for approx. 30-45 min., or until about 1/3 of tomato juices have evaporated. Stir regularly while cooking.

2. Allow cool, adding tomato mixture to blender and carefully blending at highest speed for about 1 min. (*careful: hot liquids will jump when first blending. Carefully pulse to start and cover with a towel.*)

3. Strain through a cheese cloth back into a saucepan. Bring back to a simmer. Add Step 2 ingredients, adjust each to your preferred taste and simmer for about another 5 minutes, or until sugar is dissolved. Continue to thicken further to your preferred thickness.

4. Store in a closed jar in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

## **PUMPKINS, PUMPKINS, PUMPKINS**

Kids (okay, adults too!) love to grow pumpkins. Watching their Halloween jack-o-lantern emerge from a seed is nothing sort of magical! Make a trip to your local nursery and pick the seeds and you are ready to plant. Below are a few tips to ensure your seeds having a good chance of growing into beautiful pumpkins.

\* If possible, soak your seeds overnight before planting. A softened outer shell makes the seed sprout more quickly.

\* If you live in a colder climate, start your pumpkins indoors. The day time temperature for outdoor growth should reach 70 degrees or more regularly.

\* Pumpkin seeds should be planted in a nutrient rich soil (use some of your compost!).

\* To maximum growth, pumpkins need at least six hours of direct sunlight each day.

\* Make mounds of dirt about 10 feet or so apart from each other. Make a moat around the mound to keep the water near the roots of your plant.

\* Place around five seeds in a circle on the top of each mound (6 to 8 inches apart). Cover the seeds with an inch of soil to keep the birds from getting to

them.

- \* Water gently and try not to disturb the covering soil.
- \* When you have real live actual pumpkins, place a plant saucer or cocoa liner underneath the pumpkin to keep the bugs away!
- \* Remember to turn your pumpkin so it doesn't grow lopsided!

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## *End of Part 9*

