



*AMC Montessori
Spring 2010 Hands-On
Creative Lesson
Planning Newsletter*

The AMC Montessori Newsletter

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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_spring_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.

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North American Montessori Center

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Activity Submitted by Dale Gausman

Introducing a Bird Feeder

This is a group activity to encourage the children to observe wildlife in their natural habitat.

Setting up a bird feeder is a great experience for children to have at school. Prior to introducing a bird feeder to the class the teacher should perhaps incorporate a theme on birds. It would be best to study a bird which is native to your region.

- Go for bird walks with the children and point out the different types of birds. Bring a pair of binoculars for all of the children to use.
- Sit quietly under a tree with your eyes closed listening to the sounds that birds make.
- Bring in books about birds for the children's library, as well as to be used by the teacher during group time.
- Study the parts of a bird, the life cycle of a bird, as well as their habitat.

Children must understand their duty to maintaining the feeding once you begin, as the outdoor members of the community rely on that food source once it is there.

Materials

- Bird feeder (choose a bird feeder that the child can fill easily, perhaps one with a hinged top)
- Bird seed (check with your local wildlife authority to see what mixes are suitable for wild birds in your geographical region)
- Small pail, funnel and scoop
- Child-sized rake

Presentation

- Introduce the bird feeder to the children during group time.
- Explain how the bird feeder works, and allow the children to examine it.

- Invite the children to go outside with you to hang the bird feeder. (You should have chosen a spot prior to this activity, and placed a hook or nail there to hang the bird feeder.)
- Ask some children to carry the pail, scoop, funnel and bird seed.
- Show the children how to fill the bird feeder with bird seed.
- Hang the bird feeder on the hook that you have prepared.
- Explain to the children that they will have to continue making sure that there is bird seed in the feeder for the birds.
- Encourage the children to sit and observe the birds feeding whenever possible.
- The teacher should prepare a “Bird Feeding Schedule” which is kept in the classroom. The children should take turns going to the bird feeder to fill it with bird seed.
- When filling the bird feeder daily, to model respect for the birds, walk slowly and approach quietly. If there are birds at the feeder, wait until they have flown away.

Making Grass-Eggshell People

To practice creativity, motor skills, patience, and caring for another living thing; to provide the right conditions for a plant to grow; to appreciate how plants grow in nature.

Materials

- Tray containing: tacky craft glue; scissors; bowl of potting soil and a small scoop; dish of grass seed; one pipe cleaner per student; black permanent marker; colored permanent markers.
- Container of clean, dry eggshells (half-eggshells).
- Container of extra soil, enough for all students.
- Watering tray (pitcher of water and eyedropper).

Presentation

- A few weeks before this activity, send home with the students a notice requesting washed eggshell halves (not smaller pieces). Locate a container in which the students can place the eggshells they bring from home.
- In advance, prepare the material (tacky craft glue, scissors, and so on) and place it on the tray, then place the tray on a shelf.
- Place the container of eggshells and the container of extra soil on the shelf near the tray. Place the watering tray on its usual shelf in the Practical Life area.

PART 1: GETTING READY

- Announce that students will have an opportunity to make something interesting that has an eggshell half for a head and grass for hair.
- Go to the shelf holding the tray and the container of eggshells, take two eggshells from the container on the shelf and place them on the tray, then bring the tray to the work area.
- Explain the activity: Students will make an “eggshell-grass person.” First, the students will draw a face on an eggshell with felt markers. Then, the students will fill the eggshell with soil and plant grass seeds in the soil. The students will care for the seeds. In time, the seeds will sprout and grow into grass that looks like hair on the grass-eggshell person.

PART 2: MAKING GRASS-EGGSHELL PEOPLE

- Remove the eggshells, scissors, glue, and pipe cleaner from the tray and place them on the work area.
- Pick up the scissors and pipe cleaner, and demonstrate how to cut a piece off the pipe cleaner, about 4 inches (10 cm) long.
- Bend this piece of pipe cleaner into the shape of a circle. Explain that this round piece of pipe cleaner will be the bottom or base for the grass-eggshell person to sit on.
- Follow the previous steps and make a base for the second grass-eggshell person.
- With the tacky craft glue, demonstrate how to glue along the top of one pipe-cleaner base. Take one of the eggshells and place its rounded end onto the glue on the pipe cleaner base. Stand the base holding the eggshell on the table.
- Glue the second pipe cleaner base to the second eggshell as just demonstrated. Remind the students to allow the glue to set undisturbed for a couple of minutes.
- Once the glue is set and the base is securely attached to the eggshells, demonstrate how to draw a face on one of the eggshells with the black permanent marker, then use the colored permanent markers to add color to the face. Draw and color a face on the second eggshell.
- Fill each eggshell with soil from the bowl, using the scoop, until the eggshells are a little over half-full.
- Pick up some grass seeds (tip: use fingertips) and sprinkle the seeds on top of the soil. Sprinkle a small amount of soil on top of the seeds, just enough to cover them, then gently pat the soil covering the seeds.
- Take the permanent marker from the tray and write your initials on the back of the eggshell. Explain that when making their own grass-eggshell people, students will want to write their initials on their eggshells in order to monitor the progress of the seeds.

PART 3: TAKING CARE OF THE GRASS-EGGSHELL PEOPLE

- Bring the watering tray from the shelf to the work area.
- If necessary, demonstrate how to use the eyedropper to collect some water from the pitcher then, water the seeds in the eggshell until the soil is moist. Ask the students to feel the soil, to experience what moist soil feels like.
- Explain that in order to grow, seeds need to receive not only soil and water, but also sunlight. Place the cup in a sunny spot in the classroom, such as a windowsill.
- With the students, discuss that the seeds will need to be watered regularly, but not over-watered, and set up a schedule for watering. Explain that with proper care, the seeds will grow into grass in a couple of weeks, and that this grass will look like hair on the grass-eggshell people.
- Invite the students to each make grass-eggshell people on their own whenever they choose. Remind students to write their initials on the eggshells with the permanent marker.
- Remind the students to clean the work area, to place the appropriate material back on the activity tray and the watering tray, then to return the trays to their proper places on the shelves when finished the activity.
- Also remind students to refill the water pitcher as a courtesy to the next student who needs to water plants.



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Activity Submitted by Rita

My Family Tree

This is an individual activity that requires some assistance from each child's parent(s). The child will need to bring in a picture of each of the following:

Themselves; any siblings; their parents; and two sets of grandparents. If they have great-grandparents, they could also include them.

Material

A large piece of paper.

Pictures of all family members.

Presentation

Ask each child to bring in their family pictures. (it would be best to send a notice home to the parent(s) explaining this project, and details of the pictures they will need.)

Assist the child in drawing a tree.

Encourage the child to color the tree.

Lay out the child's pictures on a desk.

Guide the child in pasting the pictures to complete their Family Tree.

Marble Design Paper

Materials

- § An apron or painter's smock
- § A jug filled with water
- § Three popsicle sticks
- § A pair of tongs
- § An 8.5 x 11-inch sheet of blank, white paper
- § Three small cans of oil-based paint (different colors)
- § A roll of paper towel
- § A shallow, rectangular baking dish
- § A small bottle of turpentine (paint thinner)

Presentation

- § This experiment can be performed to a small group of children, or with the entire class sitting in a circle.
- § Place all the necessary materials on a table.
- § Explain to the children that this experiment will demonstrate how oil floats on water and how we can use that information to make beautiful art. Instruct the children on the safe handling and use of turpentine (paint thinner).
- § Put on the apron or painter's smock to protect your clothes.
- § Remove several sections of paper towel from the roll and lay them out overlapping one another on the table.
- § Place the baking dish in the middle of the paper towel sections laid out on the table.
- § Using the jug of water, fill the baking dish with water. Do not overfill the dish.
- § Choose and open one of the colors of paint and dip one of the popsicle sticks in it.
- § Make a pattern by dripping the paint from the popsicle stick onto the water.
- § Place the popsicle stick on a section of paper towel after you've made your desired pattern.
- § Repeat the same process with the other two colors of paint.

- § Place the white sheet of paper on the top of the paint and water.
- § Remove the paper using the tongs immediately after placing it in the baking dish.
- § Place the newly decorated paper on the laid out paper towel with the wet paint side facing upwards.
- § Allow the paper to dry before handling it.
- § Encourage the children to record their findings and observations.

Findings

- § This beautiful piece of art was created because oil floats on water and does not mix with it.
- § The paint remains on top of the water, enabling us to use it in a unique way to paint.

Note:

- § For easy clean-up, place a few paper towel sections on top of the paint in the baking dish. After soaking up the paint with the paper towel sections, simply pour out the water.

Visit to see the accompanying picture

http://www.amonco.org/marble_design.html

Activity Submitted by Dale Gausman

Making Senate Bean Soup

Making Senate Bean Soup with your children is a wonderful opportunity to cook, and enjoy a meal with them.

Teaching the US History behind Senate Bean Soup enhances the experience and lesson value.

Children could also copy the recipe down, illustrate it and make the soup at home with their parent(s).

The History of Senate Bean Soup

Senate Bean Soup has been a traditional menu item for over 100 years in the United States Senate restaurant. Stories attribute this tradition to various demanding Senators of the early 20th-century. One such story reveals that in 1904, the soup had been omitted from the restaurant menu on one hot, humid day, but was reintroduced after Speaker of the House, Joseph G. Cannon (1836–1926) of Illinois, became more than a little upset after arriving for lunch and learning that he could not order his favorite lunch.

Another suggests that in 1907, Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota, chairman of the Senate Rules Committee introduced a resolution that decreed Senate Bean Soup shall remain on the menu for the duration of the Senate session. Senate Bean soup has appeared on the menu in all eleven Congressional dining rooms every single day since then, regardless of whether it is hot or cold, rain, snow or shine.

Traditionally, Senate Bean Soup is prepared with early American ingredients, including dried white pea beans, onions, and a ham bone. A variation to this recipe includes mashed potatoes, which was said to be the preferred version for Senator Fred Dubois, of Idaho.

To this day, members of Congress routinely recommend this popular daily item as a must try to their first time guests. Try the following recipe and see if you agree!

Senate Bean Soup

2 lbs. dried white pea beans, sorted, rinsed, and drained
4 quarts water
2 (1/4- to 1/2-pound) thick slices of ham or ham bone with meat
2 1/2 tablespoons butter
3 to 4 medium onions, finely chopped
5 stalks celery (including tops), finely chopped
3 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon white pepper
1/3 cup finely chopped fresh parsley leaves

Place beans in a large soup pot, cover with cold water, and let sit overnight. Drain and rinse beans. A quick-soak method: cover dried beans with cold water; bring just to a boil. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 1 to 2 hours. Drain and rinse beans.

In the same soup pot over medium-high heat, bring the 4 quarts of water to a boil. Reduce heat to low; add beans and ham bone or ham. Cover pot and let simmer 1 hour.

In a large frying pan over medium-high heat, melt butter. Add onions, celery, and garlic; sauté until vegetables are soft. Add vegetables and mashed potatoes to the cooked soup and let simmer an additional 1 hour or until beans are thoroughly cooked.

Remove ham bone or ham piece. Cut ham into small pieces, removing bone and fat; return to soup pot. Add salt and white pepper. Serve in soup bowls and garnish with chopped parsley.

Makes 6 servings.

About North American Montessori Teacher Training Center (NAMC)

- Infant/Toddler (birth- 3 years)
- Preschool/Kindergarten (3-6 years)
- Lower Elementary (6-9 years)
- Upper Elementary (9-12 years)

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Activity Submitted by Heidi Spietz

Up, Up and Away - The Art and Fun of Kite Flying

I originally submitted the following article in 2007, but I feel that those reading this issue in late spring may appreciate the information as well.

Each season offers its own unique footprint, and summer is no exception. Spring awakens us to new beginnings with birds busily building their nests. We have the expectation that soon a beautiful flower garden will emerge, as seeds planted in late winter and early spring bud, then bloom, and flood our olfactory senses with a potpourri of delicious aromas.

Then, in mid-June, the air changes. It's a subtle change to be sure, but a definite reminder that the 'dogs days of summer'

<http://www.factmonster.com/spot/dogdays.html> are just around the corner.

On a slightly warm, balmy, beautiful day in Southern California it's difficult to resist the temptation to venture outside and take a break from all of the stress of working, driving and 'just living' in Southern California. Many Southern Californians spend the weekend near or around Seal Beach, California. This town is known for its historic, quaint downtown shopping area that is just a hop, skip, jump or short bike ride away from the beach.

During the summer months, the beach usually provides the 'cool' refuge needed to escape the unbearable heat. At Seal Beach, an eclectic mix of 'locales' with tourists, provides entertainment for those who wish to rest awhile on benches sprinkled along the sidewalks.

If you are ever fortunate enough to visit downtown Seal Beach, be sure to leisurely walk down Main Street and the neighboring boulevards. Spend some

time popping in and out of antique shops and art galleries. Of course, you must stop at one of the inviting eateries and treat yourself to a light meal, smoothie, frozen yogurt or ice cream cone.

Then, take a stroll down to the beach and walk on the pier, where on some beautiful sunny Sunday afternoons, you can see the magnificent backdrop of the sunlight cascading on the sailboats in the foreground. In a matter of seconds, though, your eyes become fixed on the colorful array of beautifully designed kites, each providing its own special 'dance' for viewers to enjoy. The kites seem to beckon you to come and join in the fun. And, of course, you can't resist....

If you are lucky enough to be near the pier the second Sunday of each month, you will likely see a bevy of kite flyers from the The Up, Up & Away Kite Club participating in an informal gathering. However, before attending the club meeting, I decided to spend a beautiful, summery Saturday morning doing some research on kite flying.

I first visited the Up! Up! and Away Kites! Shop conveniently located on Main Street in downtown Seal Beach. Shop representative, Tara Baptist, was scheduled to give demonstrations near the Seal Beach pier, so I was fortunate enough not only to be able to visit the shop but see a demonstration as well.

Tara, who has also experienced the thrill of paragliding and hangliding and is interested in becoming more involved in kitesurfing, quickly provided me with an overview of kites and their many uses. Watching Tara quickly send her kite airborne made me reflect back to when I was a child and experienced the fun of flying kites with family and friends.

People enjoy flying kites because many are easy to fly, pretty to look at and just a fun, enjoyable activity people can do together. Tara pointed out that here in Southern California, Seal Beach and Huntington Beach are perfect kite flying spots because of the wind conditions. Ideally, the wind speed should be around 10 mph.

Do you remember the paper kites that many of us made and used when we were children? Well, advances in science, for the most part, have changed all of that. Today's kites are often made of durable nylon and kevlar materials, although many who are making homemade kites are using other materials as well. Tara informed me that the types of kites purchased are really just a reflection of the needs of the patron. At the Up! Up! and Away Kites Shop, you and your

family will find a wide selection of kites for every flyer level. The names or terminology of the kind of type used is directly correlated to what the kite can actually do. Naturally, the more sophisticated the kite, the more you will pay. Prices, for the most part, can range anywhere from \$20.00 to \$400.00.

After the demonstration, Tara and I walked a short distance back to the Up! Up! and Away Kites Shop where Tara provided me with a tour of the current inventory (easily over 1,000 items), and I was able to learn more about the higher end models as well. Tara steered me to her computer, and used the web browser to bring up Prism Kites <http://www.prismkites.com> website. At the site, readers can learn more about stunt kites, power kites and single line kites. Although the site is primarily for retailers, novices will glean a lot of information as well.

If you are fortunate enough to be in Seal Beach this summer, stop by the Up! Up! and Away Kite Shop located at 1399 1/2 Main Street, Seal Beach, CA 90720 - (562)596-7661 and talk with Tara and the other representatives. Tara's outgoing personality is such a plus, but what you will truly appreciate is her knowledge about the science of kite flying. She will take the time to fully answer your questions so that you can make informed purchasing decisions for you and your family members.

Perhaps you just skimmed this article and have already checked out the recommended kite flying links mentioned a bit later here. Are you still not convinced that kite flying is something you wish to invest your time and money? Maybe you aren't quite ready to get your feet wet, or just want to first vicariously experience the thrill of kite flying by watching others. The key phrase here is *just relax!*

Spend part of your day at a kite club meeting. Some clubs may require you to preregister, or impose some other prerequisite. The Up Up & Away Kite Club does neither. See <http://www.kiteclub.org/index2.htm> You'll be greeted by a group of people who are warm and personable. President Janis Sabic and husband Jay Sabic are very conversational and make every newbie feel very welcome.

Although many of the kite flyers I spoke with mentioned that they always purchase their kites, some are inspired to make their own. Steve Bird, whose beautiful homemade red cody box kite steadily glided through the air during most of our conversation, became interested in kite flying about a year ago. He attended the Seal Beach Annual Kite Festival 2006 and decided that this would be

a hobby worth *doing*.

Steve told me that people interested in making their own kites could easily do so by obtaining free plans via the Internet. Just do a Google search using keyphrase *kite making*. Interestingly enough, many kites are made from ripstop nylon, which, according to Steve, can be found at any fabric store for about \$4.99 to \$6.99 a yard. (You'll need about 1 1/2 yards to make the kite.) Other materials are also easily accessible and affordable. Steve mentioned that nylon cording can be purchased at any hardware store and snap swivels are readily available at fishing supply shops.

Steve suggests that beginners start by using the delta kites. He feels that many beginning kite flyers can become discouraged if they use the diamond kites, as these kites often end up in trees or power lines. The delta model, on the other hand, is shaped so that the beginner can actually enjoy the experience of keeping the kite airborne.

Educate yourself about kites before making any investments. Steve suggests that people use the Internet to find out more about online kite stores plus advises that consumers explore eBay for comparison shopping.

Learning about kites and kite construction can make for some interesting integrated math, sewing, art and climatology lesson plans. Take some time to explore the following sites for more information about this interesting topic. Who knows? This summer may be the perfect time for you and your family to discover a new hobby that you can experience together.

<http://www.kiteclub.org/index2.htm>

Up, Up & Away Kite Club

(Information about The Seal Beach Japan America Kite Festival can be found there as well.)

<http://members.tripod.com/~TKOGunn1/kiteclubs.htm>

Kite Clubs Throughout the World

<http://sewing.about.com/cs/kitemaking/index.htm>

How to Make and Fly Kites

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

Making a Kite

http://www.allsands.com/howto/makeakite_vdg_gn.htm

Kite Making

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

How to Make and Fly Kites

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

Delta Kite Design

<http://www.kiteflyerinfo.com/delta-kite-design.shtml>

The Virtual Kite Zoo: Terminology

<http://www.blueskylark.org/zoo/terminol.html>

Kite Flying Basics

<http://www.coastalkites.com/t-kitebasics.aspx>

Kite Safety

<http://www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/K-12/airplane/kitesafe.html>

Classified Seashell Activity

There is so much to see on Main Street in Seal Beach, CA. Housed just a few doors down from Up, Up and Away Kites! is the California Seashell Company. Here you can purchase an assortment of seashells for your special classified reading activity. The two of you can construct the activity together.

Find out more about classified reading activities by reading **Montessori at Home: A Complete Guide to Teaching Your Preschooler at Home Using the Montessori Method** and **Modern Montessori at Home: A Creative Teaching Guide for Parents of Children Six through Nine Years of Age**.

<http://www.amonco.org/bookstore.html>

If you can't make it out to Southern California this summer, you can still order many products online by visiting the company's website

<http://www.caseashells.com>

For additional FREE seashell classification exercises please visit

<http://www.amonco.org/montessorispring1998.html>

**Read the other parts of this creative hands-on lesson
planning newsletter by visiting
http://www.amonco.org/montessori_spring_handson.html**

End of Part 4

