



*AMC Montessori  
Spring 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\\_spring\\_handson.html](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.

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

Celebrate Spring with Some Fun, Educational Nature Activities

Links to Art Extension Exercises Integrating Math, Social Studies and More...

Celebrating the Personal Life of George Washington - Lesson Planning Ideas with Recipes

Celebrate Black History Month

Exploring Eggs - Food Related Activities by Montessorian Kathy O'Reilly

# Nature's Workshop Plus!

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Website: <http://www.workshopplus.com/>

## Celebrate Spring with Some Fun, Educational Nature Activities

Spring! What a wonderful time of the year. The sunshine becomes warmer, dormant grass awakens from its necessary winter nap, trees seem to wake up and wave hello to all who take notice, and life springs from nearly every place we look. We also get to experience the spring rains which boost the season into its new identity. Your students might like to start a nature journal during this season. There is so much to record! Here are a few ideas.

1. Begin by noting the daily weather patterns and discuss how it relates to the greening of the grass. Make a grid in the journal and record the daily temperature, rainfall quantities, amount of sunshine, types of clouds, etc. Reinforce the journal concept with a study of cloud formations.
2. Sketch a tree and the growth of its leaves. Look up the scientific name of the species and record it in the journal along with its common name. Leave space in the journal for revisiting that section during the season and resketch the leaves as they grow. Once the leaf is full grown, leave enough space for a sketch of the colorful Fall leaf. You could even begin a leaf collection of several species beginning with the smallest leaves in the Spring and ending with a colorful Fall collection.
3. Record beautiful poetry about the spring season in your journal. Perhaps adding appropriate Scripture, personal thoughts, and beautiful artwork could complete each entry.
4. Plant seeds and record their growth. Small children love to plant bean seeds. Plant the bean seeds in a glass jar so that the growth is visible. They grow quickly,

and the seeds are so large that the shoot, growing up, and the root, growing down, are very easy to see. Draw the growth stages in your journal. Label all parts of the plant. Older students might like to plant flower and vegetable plants. Record the

growth data in your journal using Metric measure. Keeping careful records now allows the children to gain experience in recording data. Once they enter into the upper level sciences, lab reports will be required.

5. Have an insect section in the journal. It wouldn't be Spring and Summer without our little "friends". Again, look up and record their scientific and common names, draw the species, label its parts, record where the insect lives, and what it eats. Study the metamorphosis of the insect. Does this species experience complete or incomplete metamorphosis? Draw its life cycle. Start an ant farm and observe the diligent activity of the ant. Observe in nature or via video a butterfly leaving its chrysalis. The video "City of the Bees" examines the life of the honey bee. This video shows the inside of the hive, how the bees gather nectar, how the bees communicate, and more. It is fascinating to watch. Don't forget to serve toast and honey! Using colorful photographs as your guide, sketch the bees and their hive into the journal. Label as mentioned before.

6. Begin a rock collection. Draw what you see. Hand magnifiers or stereo microscopes allow for more detailed viewing. I haven't met a child yet who didn't have a touch of "rock hound" him or her! This activity just about requires a field guide for proper identification. A beginner guide works better for children than an overwhelming larger volume which might be harder to use.

7. Go on a nature hike and record what you do and see. Take a pair of binoculars for bird watching. Make sure to begin a bird section in your journal. They are so beautiful. Set up a bird feeding area in your yard and keep a field guide handy for quick identification. Learn the common birds of your area.

These are just a few ideas for you nature journal. Allow your imagination to help you plan. Your children might enjoy this activity better if they can decide which area in their journal to develop first. Always include art and poetry in the journal. Supply your students with a set of colored pencils, drawing pencils and a good eraser. One thing we have found is that children don't want to "mess-up" a page in their journal, so we recommend that each page be completed in a loose

leaf format then placed in a binder when the child is satisfied with the page. If you use a binder with a clear plastic cover, the students can decorate a page and insert it into the cover for a custom look! For upper elementary and middle school students, look up the taxonomy of the species being studied and note it in the journal. The more you do toward preparation for high school biology the better.

Nature journaling will also require nature studying. The "Handbook of Nature Study", by Anna Botsford Comstock, <http://www.workshopplus.com> is an excellent resource for a teacher or parent who needs to know more about topics in nature. The book was originally published in 1911 and contains 887 pages. It is divided into 4 major sections: The Teaching of Nature Study, Animals, Plants, and Earth and Sky. It is a store house of information to help you teach you children/students about nature. Please see <http://www.workshopplus.com> for information about both this book.

With so much to see and do this Spring, don't forget to take time for simple, peaceful, observation. Children need quiet time in their lives to reflect, think and form opinions about life. They can learn from observing nature, listening to nature, studying nature, drawing nature, planting, being outside, getting dirty, splashing in a creek, and chasing butterflies! If we can teach them to enjoy these lovely God-given gifts, we are giving them an enormous gift that no mass media gimmick can ever match.

Blessings to you,

Diana Ruark

Nature's Workshop Plus!

For free catalog or more information:

(888) 393-5663

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

All resources mentioned in the article are available through Nature's Workshop, Plus.



## *About Nature's Workshop Plus!*

Nature's Workshop Plus, Inc. is a small family-run business specializing in supplies for science and nature studies for children of all ages.

We carry nature study books, science project books, hands-on activities, art projects, wood projects, binoculars, microscopes, telescopes, field guides, coloring books, piano music, rhythm instruments, scripture prints, lab equipment, Nature Friend Magazine, and much more!

We distribute free catalogs to groups and individuals upon request. Visit

<http://www.workshopplus.com> today!



## *Sara L. Ambarian*

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**Website:** <http://www.condortales.com/bridestouch.html>

**CELEBRATING THE PERSONAL LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON**  
by Sara L. Ambarian

This time of year, we honor the memory of our first President, George Washington. Washington was a heroic Revolutionary War general and the only unanimously-elected President in American history. The public and professional life of the “Father of Our Country” provides us many interesting historical facts and is intertwined with many important national events. Modern historians have said that some of the stories once told about George Washington (like the cherry tree story) were probably actually myths, but there are plenty of well-documented stories about this prominent American to merit our interest and regard. Perhaps you didn't know, however, that he had a very interesting personal life as well.

## **Youthful Aspirations--**

As a teenager, he was heavily influenced by the French traditions of manners and graciousness, and he even wrote down many of those lessons in a book he called, "Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour In Company and Conversation: A Book of Etiquette" (available in entirety here:

<http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/manners/rules2.cfm>

This lengthy list of rules tells us a lot about the young man Washington was-- and the man he hoped to become. Some of the rules, like "4th, In the Presence of Others Sing not to yourself with a humming Noise, nor Drum with your Fingers or Feet" were simple courtesy lessons. Others, like his final admonishment to himself (and one of my personal favorites), "110th, Labour to keep alive in your Breast that Little Spark of Celestial fire Called Conscience", touched on much deeper concepts of integrity and manliness. Throughout his life, people who met Washington commented favorably on his courtesy, deportment and character; so it seems that these early efforts to improve himself served him well.

## **Romance and Marriage--**

On January 6, 1759, after a whirlwind romance, George Washington married the widowed Martha Dandridge Custis. They were both 27 years old. Throughout their marriage, they celebrated the Christmas season with special sentiment and graciousness since it reminded them of the time of their (short) courtship and wedding. Even during the Revolutionary War, they tried to always be together at Christmastime. Martha was known to travel under military escort over the wintery wartime roads to meet then-General Washington wherever he was. By all accounts, George and Martha were quite happily married. After George died, Martha burned all of their private correspondence to one another, in order to preserve their privacy.

## **Famous Hospitality--**

In the late 1700s, unlike today, there were not very many cities or public services for travelers. Common practice directed citizens to offer food and shelter to others they met or who arrived at their homes. Most social gatherings occurred in private homes, as well.

The Washingtons, following both current custom and George's ideals of courtesy and graciousness, were well-known for their hospitality at their home, Mount

Vernon. Many years during the height of his public service, records show that George and Martha had dinner guests from one-third to two-thirds of the days of the year. They also hosted many overnight guests, as well. Both husband and wife were well-known as fabulous hosts. Guests often wrote to others about the warmth of their welcome, the sumptuousness of their meals, and the congeniality of the company.

The only restriction in their hospitality was that George was very particular about mealtimes and bedtime. He was known to advise guests that his cook did not ask about the number of guests who had come, but only if the hour of dinner (3 p.m., in the Washington household) had come. The story sounds a little bit like a colonial version of “be there, or be square”. Bedtimes were strict as well. In one story Martha is said to have abruptly excused herself from after-dinner socializing at 9 p.m., saying, “The General always retires at nine, and I usually precede him”. In those days, the departure of your hostess would have been a very distinct sign that it was time for you to get ready for bed as well.

George Washington also believed in ending every meal with toasts. He did this in a very formal and meticulous fashion, as he seems to have done many things. According to one guest, the President would individually toast each guest, followed by the “seconds” of the other guests, and a clink of glasses and sip of wine. Then his attention moved on to the next guest around the table, and the process would start all over again.

### **Dine Like the Washingtons-**

From historical records and correspondence, we know quite a bit about day-to-day life at Mount Vernon. George Washington was always truly a hands-on landowner, and he kept meticulous notes. We also know something about the influences on Martha's housekeeping and hospitality habits. Guests have left anecdotal references to dishes and meals they were served at Mount Vernon, and copies of the few cookbooks available at that time give us additional information about what was probably served.

“The American Heritage Cookbook and Illustrated History of American Eating and Drinking” includes a representative Mount Vernon Christmas Dinner menu, cobbled together from various sources. Most of us now would consider it a feast. They theorize there would have been a soup, three types of fish/seafood, five meat dishes, turkey, three vegetable dishes, three pickles/relishes, four pies/tarts, seven miscellaneous desserts, and an assortment of fruits and nuts to snack on with a

couple of beverage options. A large percentage of the food served was actually grown on the estate.

One of the miscellaneous dessert recipes listed in this theoretical Christmas menu is a baked apple dish called Snowballs. This traditional colonial recipe is easy to prepare, but it provides a lovely presentation and is a very tasty and cozy dessert. It is also definitely hands-on kid-friendly for even fairly young children, since there are no eggs or other ingredients that can't be safely licked from the fingers. So, perhaps in honor of George Washington's birthday, you and your family might try this recipe to bring you back in time and imagine what dessert at Mount Vernon might have been like.

### **Snowballs**

From “The American Heritage Cookbook and Illustrated History of American Eating and Drinking”, American Heritage Publishing, Inc., 1964.

Pastry for 2-crust pie (either home-made or frozen would be fine)

6 baking apples (Granny Smiths are good)

orange marmalade

1/4 cup soft butter

1/2 cup brown sugar

4 teaspoons cinnamon

1 teaspoon allspice

1 teaspoon nutmeg

Hard Sauce (recipe below) or ice cream or whipped cream

Prepare (or thaw) pastry and roll out thin on a floured board. Cut into 6 squares large enough to cover the apples.

Pare and core apples, but leave them whole. Set each apple on a piece of pastry and fill the core hole with marmalade. Make a smooth paste out of the butter, brown sugar and spices, and spread this paste over the top of each apple. Wrap apples in pastry squares (using ice water to help seal, if necessary), and prick the surface here and there with a fork.

Bake in a preheated oven at 425 degrees for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 and bake 40-45 minutes more. (Lower the temperature even more if your snowballs brown too fast during the first 15 minutes.) Serve warm, drizzled with Hard Sauce (below) or topped with ice cream or whipped cream. Serves 6.

Note: For an even faster, easier dessert, or for gluten-free households, omit the pastry and just tie the apples with the marmalade and spice mixture in a large square of parchment. Bake for one hour at 350 degrees. Open carefully and serve in a bowl, rather than a plate, to save the delicious juices.

## **HARD SAUCE**

The hard sauce recipe below is a very traditional dessert topping in colonial cooking, probably due at least partly to its easily obtainable and storable ingredients. This recipe goes a long way, so any individual serving doesn't actually contain a lot of rum. It could be considered an "adult" topping, however, so feel free to use an alternate icing recipe of your choice, ice cream or whipped cream.

You can also make a tasty "half-hard" sauce using 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1 tablespoon rum; or you could eliminate the actual rum completely and get a comparable flavor with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract and 1 teaspoon rum (or brandy) flavored extract. Vanilla extract only plus some cinnamon, nutmeg or allspice would also be delicious.

### **Traditional Hard Sauce recipe:**

Cream 1/3 cup of butter until soft and smooth. Add a little at a time, 1 cup of confectioner's sugar and 2 tablespoons of rum, stirring between additions until smooth. Slather over your Snowballs while they're warm for a gooey coating. Enjoy!

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT GEORGE WASHINGTON'S LIFE:**

George and Martha Washington's Mount Vernon farm and estates have been preserved and restored, and they are open to the public. For more information about the Washingtons, the farm and estate, and what life was like there, visit the historical site's official website:

<http://www.mountvernon.org>



# *Creative Process*

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**Website: <http://www.creativeprocess.net>**

February is Black History Month - Commemorate the contributions and events of people of African descent with classroom environments enriched with educational posters celebrating Black History Month. For historical facts and posters, please see

**<http://www.netposterworks.com/history/blhistory/index.html>**

February was chosen as Black History Month by Dr. Carter G. Woodson because Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes and Abraham Lincoln were born in February. Rosa Parks was also born in February (1913), but as of the establishment of Black History Month, her great contribution to Civil Rights was almost 30 years in the future.



## *About Creative Process*

**The company's posters, notecards and biographical bookmarks all make unique, educational gifts.** What child wouldn't want many of these beautifully designed, informative bookmarks as a gift! **Visit <http://www.creativeprocess.net> today for details!!!**



# *Cooking With Children Can Be Easy*

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## **Celebrate Spring with Some Fun, Educational Nature Activities**

### **EXPLORING EGGS - FOOD RELATED ACTIVITIES**

Liquid to Solid and Solid to Liquid

Heat a griddle to about 325 degrees ^Close adult supervision required

Place 1 Tablespoon of butter or margarine on the griddle

Crack an egg into a bowl -pour onto griddle

Which one changed from a solid to a liquid?

Which one changed from a liquid to a solid?

\*Help the children research the different types of bird nests and why different birds need different types of nests.

\*Let the children gather twigs, straw, feathers, etc. to build nests

\*Wash and dry empty eggshells. Let the children use a mortar and pestle to crush them, then use for fertilizing plants or color the crushed shells by mixing with a little rubbing alcohol and food coloring, then spreading on a paper bag to dry to use for creating mosaics.

\*If you are not fortunate enough to have a hen around, hatch chicken, duck and geese eggs in an incubator ^ be sure you have a good home for them. Make charts of the length of time it takes to incubate each type.

\*Show children how to tell a hard boiled egg from a raw egg. Lay one hardboiled and one raw egg on a tray with 1" sides so they won't roll off. Spin each egg. The one that wobbles is raw (liquid inside is moving). The one that spins easily is hardboiled.

\*Discuss-

What kind of bird lays the eggs we buy in stores (chicken)

The eggs we usually buy in stores are not fertilized, so there are no baby

chicks growing in them.

What kind of bird lays the smallest egg (humming bird)

What kind of bird lays the largest egg (ostrich)

An egg is an ovoid shape. What is the difference between an ovoid and an ellipsoid? (The ovoid is smaller at one end and the ellipsoid is the same size at both ends.

## **Books**

Egg-ventures ^ 1st Science Experiments by Harry Milgrom

Katie's Chickens by Nancy Digman Watson

Chickens Aren't the Only Ones by Ruth Heller

The Woman With the Eggs by Hans Christian Anderson

The Egg Book by Jack Kent

The Cake That Mack Ate by Rose Robart & Maryann Kovalski

Chicken and Egg by Christine Back

Eggbert by Tom Ross & Rex Barron



## *About Cooking With Children Can Be Easy*

The late Kathy O'Reilly's lessons in this newsletter are being featured in this newsletter by her daughter who holds the copyright privileges.

**Read the other parts of this creative hands-on lesson  
planning newsletter by visiting**

**[http://www.amonco.org/montessori\\_spring\\_handson.html](http://www.amonco.org/montessori_spring_handson.html)**

*End of Part 8*

