

## February 2008 Newsletter



### The Month Ahead

*2008 is a Leap Year!!*

*February 1<sup>st</sup> – St. Brigid's Day / Imbolc*

*February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Candlemas / Groundhog Day (U.S.)*

*February 5<sup>th</sup> – Shrove Tuesday*

*February 6<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday – Lent Begins*

*February 7<sup>th</sup> – Chinese New Year – Charles Dicken's Birthday*

*February 12<sup>th</sup> – Abraham Lincoln's Birthday*

*February 14<sup>th</sup> – Valentine's Day*

*February 15<sup>th</sup> – Nirvana Day (Buddhist)*

*February 18<sup>th</sup> – President's Day (U.S.)*

*February 22<sup>nd</sup> – George Washington's Birthday*

*February 27<sup>th</sup> – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Birthday*

*February 29<sup>th</sup> – Leap Year's Day*

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February is a time of Purification and Cleansing. As we awaken from our Winter slumber, we find ourselves driven to cleanse our homes, bodies and souls in preparation for the new life and hope of Spring. Many people use the time of Lent as a cleansing process by fasting or giving up old habits. You may wish to meditate on what needs cleansing in your life at this time.

When we take care of ourselves, we are better able to take care of our children.

In addition to the February guide, I have provided you with some fun verses and activities to do with the children below... Feel free to forward this newsletter on to those who you feel will find it of value.

XOOX  
Eileen

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*Snowdrop Flowers (Galanthus nivalis) are sometimes called 'Candlemas Bells' because they often bloom in early February even while snow is still on the ground.*



*An Old Candlemas Verse:*

This done, each man his candle lights,  
Where chiefest seemeth he,  
Whose taper greatest may be seen;  
And fortunate to be,  
Whose candle burneth clear and bright:  
A wondrous force and might  
Both in these candles lie, which if  
At any time they light,  
They sure believe that neither storm  
Nor tempest cloth abide,  
Nor thunder in the skies be heard,  
Nor any devil's spide,  
Nor fearful sprites that walk by night,  
Nor hurts of frost or hail.

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### **Make a Weather Chart or Weather Wheel with your Children**

This is a wonderful time of year to introduce a Weather Wheel or Weather Chart to your circle time. Children will delight in looking out the window each morning to determine what type of weather is in store for the day. We created our Weather Chart with cardboard, watercolor pencils, moving arrows (by using a brad to attach), colorful circles in the center and a drawing of the Sun, Rain, Snow and Clouds. Get creative and allow your children to participate in the process. We added two arrows for those days that the weather is more than one

thing. We hung our chart with raffia and a stick found on our nature walk that day. It is on the wall where we do our circle time each morning.



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### **The Ant and The Dove**

~Adapted from Aesop's Fables

Once upon a time there was an Ant who wished a drink.

She went down to the brook for some water.

When she went down the bank to drink she reached too far over the water.

She fell in the brook.

The running water carried her down the brook.

A Dove that sat on the bank saw the Ant.

She was sorry for the Ant.



She pulled a leaf from a tree and dropped it in the water.

The Ant crawled up on the leaf and the wind carried it along like a boat.

The wind carried the leaf to the other bank of the stream.

Then the Ant crawled off the leaf and up the bank.

The Ant was very grateful to the Dove.

After a while a hunter with a snare came to the woods.

He laid the snare for the Dove.

He was going to catch her.

The Ant watched the hunter.

When the hunter was about to catch the Dove, the Ant bit his heel.  
This made the hunter jump and the Dove flew away safely.

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### **Leap Day Activity**

#### Stone Skipping with Children

If the weather permits, take your children to a pond, lake or stream today to learn how to skip stones. Find a few flat stones that are under 3" in diameter and not too thick. Hold your stone with your throwing hand. The bottom of the stone should rest on the middle finger which is bent some and the thumb should hold it down on the top. The index finger is curled against the edge of the stone. Skipping stones is done by spinning it like a wheel before letting go. Flick wrists and pointer forward as if to 'spin the wheel' as fast as possible and flick it forward to skip your stone.

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### **Candlemas Oatcakes**

2 cups uncooked, old-fashioned rolled oats (not instant)  
1 1/4 cups buttermilk  
2 1/2 cups sifted bread flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
Vegetable oil spray

A day ahead, combine the oats and buttermilk in a small bowl. Blend thoroughly, cover and refrigerate overnight. The next day, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Remove the oat mixture from the refrigerator. Combine the bread flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Slowly add the oat mixture and stir with a wooden spoon 20 to 30 times, or until you have a smooth dough. Grease a baking sheet with the oil spray. Turn the dough onto the baking sheet, and use your hands to form a round, cake-shaped loaf about 1-inch thick. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut the dough into 4 quarters. Move the quarters apart slightly, but keep them in the

original round shape. Bake until the cakes are light golden brown and firm to the touch, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool slightly on a rack, and serve with butter and jam or preserves. Makes 1 loaf (in quarters).

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**Little Acorn Learning**  
**February 2008 Guide**



FOUR Weeks of Blessings, Verses, Nature Walks, Crafts, Recipes, Children's Meditations, Caregiver Meditations, Outdoor Suggestions, Stories, Fingerplays and More!

Week One, February  
*Candlemas, Cleansing*

Week Two, February  
*Valentine's Day, Spreading Love*

Week Three, February  
*Weather, Kindness*

Week Four, February  
*Squirrels, Skipping*

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