

Week One, September *Squirrels & Nuts, Preparation*

**The following pages should be printed and kept in your 3-ring binder along with The Daily Guide for easy reference each week.

Supplies Needed for Week One

Cooking List:

(this does not include supplies for recipes in our seasonal childcare menus – see our online store for purchasing details)

Different types of nuts: pecans, walnuts, peanuts, acorns, chestnuts,
almonds, etc

Nuts to make Nut Butter (any kind you like)

Cookie Sheet

Vegetable Oil

Nuts for Nut Games

Crafting List:

Cardboard/Cardstock

Hole Punch

Large Ziplock Bags

Yarn/String

Watercolor Paper

Red Watercolor Paint

Corkboard, Painting Board or Canvas to place under your paper

Paintbrushes

Water

Paper

Yellow Crayons

Baskets

Pan or Bowl

**Squirrel/Rabbit Puppets or Brown and Light Colored Sock, Nuts for Story
Props

Week One - Additional Book Recommendations

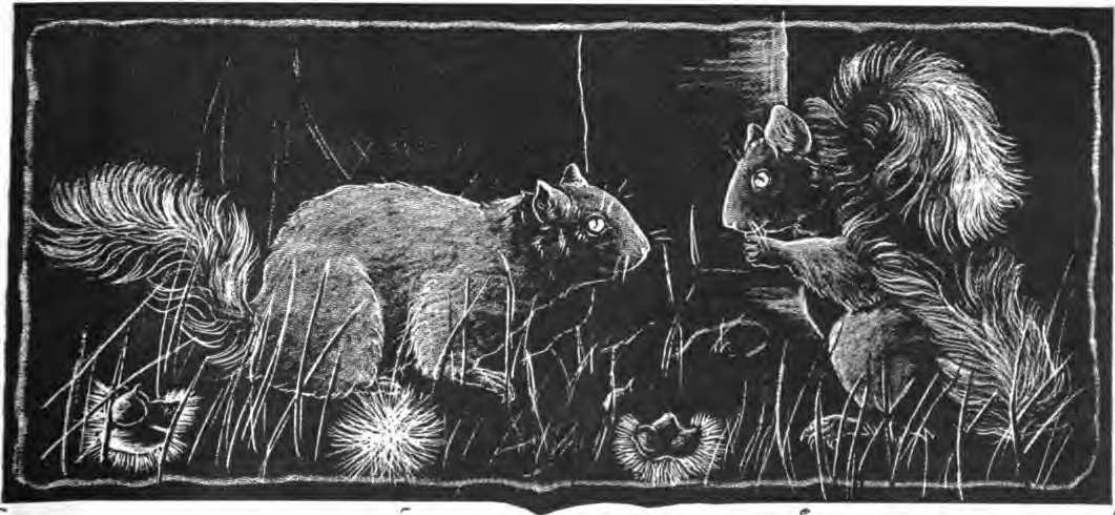
** Visit your local library the weekend before to check out books based on your theme for the week. Older children can help you look up the books by author and title. When setting up your play space for the week ahead, mindfully display these books in baskets for the children to enjoy.

Nuts to You! ~ Lois Ehlert

Berries, Nuts and Seeds ~ Diane Burns
Rabbits, Squirrels and Chipmunks ~ Mel Boring
The Legend of the Kukui Nut ~ Brandon Henderson
Nuts ~ Paul Gerritsen
The Busy Little Squirrel ~ Nancy Tafuri
The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin ~ Beatrix Potter
When Squirrels Try ~ Lisa Galjanic
Squirrel and the Moon ~ Eleonore Schmidt
Squirrels ~ Brian Wildsmith
I Am a Little Squirrel ~ Amrei Fechner
Animals in the Fall ~ Gail Saunders-Smith

Week One - Blackboard Drawing

Drawing Ideas for This Week: Acorns, Squirrels, Rabbit, Oak Tree



Take time to make a simple blackboard drawing that relates to your story or verses for the week. This can be done on Sunday evenings or anytime the weekend before. Buy a small but sturdy blackboard and invest in a good set of colored chalk. Keep the drawing simple and colorful, using the sides of the chalk to make the color look smooth. Cover your drawing with a silk and unveil it for the children during circle time. This will become a much loved tradition in your program and the children will be so excited to see the drawing each week when they arrive.

Week One – Teacher’s Classroom Work

Nature Notebooks

Supplies Needed:
Cardboard/Cardstock
Hole Punch
Large Ziplock Bags
Yarn/String

This week spend time making nature notebooks for the children in your program. These books will be used to hold small leaves and other items found outside during your walks. The children will also journal, sketch and write in these throughout the year.

These can be created many different ways. In our program, we used cardboard for the front and back cover, cardstock and large ziplock bags after every piece of cardstock to hold small items. A hole punch and yarn can be used to attach the pages together. Allow small children to help with simple tasks such as putting the yarn through the hole or holding the paper as you work. Later in the month we will assign each child a symbol that you can add to the cover of their notebook.

Week One - Verses & Songs

The following songs and verses should be shared during circle time each day this week after you open your circle.

Little Squirrel Fingerplay

**as with all fingerplays – try to familiarize yourself with the motions before sharing with the children*

Little squirrel, living there In a hollow tree,

Finger motion: Curve the fingers of the left hand. Let the thumb touch the tip of the middle finger for form a circle. Close the fingers of the right hand and extend the thumb. From below place the thumb of the right hand in the circle formed by the left, showing the inner side of the thumb)

**I've a pretty cage for you
Come and live with me.**

Finger motion: Hold hands in a vertical position facing each other. Hollow the palm. Curve and spread the fingers. Let the tips of the fingers and thumb of the left hand touch the tips of the fingers and thumb of the right.

**You may turn the little wheel,
That will be great fun!
Slowly round, or very fast,
If you faster run.**

Finger motion: Hold the first fingers parallel to each other with the inner side next to the body. Rotate slowly and then very fast.

**Little squirrel, I will bring
In my basket here**

Finger motion: Hold the palms of the hands upward. Interlace the fingers. Let the tips of the thumbs meet above the center to form a handle.

**Every day a feast of nuts!
Come then, squirrel dear.**

Finger motion: Form circles with both hands. The tips of the first and second fingers should touch the tip of the thumb.

**But the little squirrel said,
From his hollow tree,
"Oh! No, no! I'd rather far
Live here and be free."**

Finger motion: Curve the fingers of the left hand. Let the thumb touch the tip of the middle finger for form a circle. Close the fingers of the right hand and extend the thumb. From below place the thumb of the right hand in the circle formed by the left, showing the inner side of the thumb)

So my cage is empty yet

Finger motion: Hold hands in a vertical position facing each other. Hollow the palm. Curve and spread the fingers. Let the tips of the fingers and thumb of the left hand touch the tips of the fingers and thumb of the right.

And the wheel is still

Finger motion: Hold the first fingers parallel to each other with the inner side next to the body.

**But my little basket here
Oft with nuts I fill.**

Finger motion: Hold the palms of the hands upward. Interlace the fingers. Let the tips of the thumbs meet above the center to form a handle.

**If you like, I'll crack the nuts,
Some for you and me,**

Finger motion: Make a fist with each hand. Place the left fist on lap and hold still for a stone. Use right fist for a hammer. Make motion of cracking nuts.

**For the squirrel has enough
In his hollow tree.**

Finger motion: Curve the fingers of the left hand. Let the thumb touch the tip of the middle finger for form a circle. Close the fingers of the right hand and extend the thumb. From below place the thumb of the right hand in the circle formed by the left, showing the inner side of the thumb)

Week One – Story for Older Children

This story is a sweet tale of family and preparation. Discussing the warmth of 'home' during the first week of school is a wonderful way to put children's minds at ease as they settle into a new routine and/or environment. This is also a time of preparation. Teachers are preparing their classrooms, families are preparing for winter and The Squirrel Family in our story prepared for the cold months ahead of them by storing plenty of nuts in their big oak tree home. The story can be enhanced by using simple puppets or a brown sock for Father Squirrel on one hand and a light colored sock on the other for Jack Rabbit. You may also like to keep a few nuts nearby to give the story life.

JACK RABBIT'S VISIT

~Maby Dendy

In a hole in a big oak tree Father Squirrel had made his home. He was such a pretty fellow, with his bright eyes and his long, bushy tail. He was very

careful about little things and always saved up a store of nuts for the winter. He brought up his family in the same way. Mother Squirrel and three little squirrels lived with him, and they were all of them just as careful and saving as could be. There was never so much as an acorn wasted in Father Squirrel's house, and one of the very first things he and Mother Squirrel taught their children was to lay up a store of food so that they would have plenty to eat in the winter. They were nice little things, these children; they had big eyes and big tails. They played in the trees, and on the ground, too, and they had no end of fun.

On this cold autumn day about which I am telling you, Father Squirrel and Mother Squirrel and the three little ones were all at home eating nuts in the old oak tree. All at once there came a tiny tap on the bark of the tree, outside the door. It was a very weak little tap, so low that Mother Squirrel was not sure that anyone had knocked. She listened and soon she heard another tap — this time a little louder. Father Squirrel heard the knock, too, so he went to the door to see who was outside. He could hardly believe his eyes when he saw Jack Rabbit standing there! He had never seen a rabbit in a tree before in all his life. “Hello, Jack Rabbit!” said Father Squirrel. “How did you ever climb up this tree?” “I didn't climb up the tree,” answered the rabbit. “This branch I am standing on reaches all the way from the ground to your front door, so I just walked along on it until I came to your house. May I come in?”

“Yes, come in,” said Father Squirrel. Jack Rabbit came hopping into the house. “Sit down,” said Mother Squirrel. So Jack Rabbit sat down upon the floor. Then one of the little squirrels rolled some hickory nuts up to him and said, “Eat some nuts!” “No, thank you, Little Squirrel,” said Jack Rabbit. “I do not like nuts.”

When Jack Rabbit was warmed and rested, Mother Squirrel sent her little ones to bed. Then she and Father Squirrel had a long talk with their visitor. “Rabbit, where do you live?” asked Mother Squirrel. “I live in the ground; I have a warm hole there,” answered Jack Rabbit. “What do you eat?” asked Father Squirrel. Jack Rabbit said, “Oh, I eat leaves. What do you eat, Squirrel?” Father Squirrel said, “We eat nuts and acorns. In the fall we store them away for winter. All of my family helps me. So we have plenty of nuts and acorns for the winter, and enough for a friend, too, if you will just learn to eat them. Will you come to live with us?” “No,” answered Jack Rabbit. “I

cannot live in a tree and I could never learn to eat nuts. I must go, now. Good-bye!” So away went Jack Rabbit to his nice warm hole -in the ground.

Week One – Short Morning Talk for Older Children

**Be sure to check with parents to find out if there are any nut allergies that you have to consider when working with the children. Also be sure to keep the nuts out of the reach of very young children as they can be a choking hazard.

Prop Ideas: Bring in a few different types of nuts for the children to explore – pecans, walnuts, peanuts, acorns, chestnuts, almonds, etc. Allow children to pass them around and notice their differences.

Ask the following questions to inspire free discussion during circle time.

Monday

Do any of you know what types of nuts these are?

How are they the same?

How do they differ?

What types of nuts have you tried?

Explain to the children that today you will be making snack from fresh nuts.

Tuesday

Where do nuts come from?

What do you think the inside of each nut looks like?

Crack the nuts open with a hammer to show the children what the inside looks like.

Wednesday

What types of animals do you think eat nuts?

Squirrels, Bears and Blue Jays eat acorns..

Do you know where squirrels live? (in holes in trees)

During your nature walk today, look for holes in the trees where a squirrel may choose to make its home while you are doing your Tree Bark Rubbings.

Thursday

What does a squirrel’s tail look like? Is it short or long? Is it bushy?

What color squirrels have you seen before?
Have you seen a squirrel near your home? What was he doing?

Look outside today to see how many squirrels you can find with the children.

Friday

Did you know that squirrels collect nuts and save them to eat during the winter?

Where do we keep our food in our home and school?
Squirrels stay warm in their holes – how can we stay warm when its cold outside?

Talk about how we use our closets, refrigerators, freezers and pantry space to store food.

Week One - Daily Activities

Monday

(Baking/Cooking – Purple Day)

Making Nut Butter

Supplies Needed:

Nuts

Cookie Sheet

Vegetable Oil

Almost any nut can be roasted and made into nut butter. Allow the children to help lay the nuts out on a cool cookie sheet. Nuts should be roasted on cookie sheet at 350 degrees for a few minutes on each side. Watch carefully as cooking time varies and nuts should not burn.

After your nuts are roasted, put one cup of nuts to 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a food processor or blender. Blend at medium to high speed, stopping and scraping the sides when necessary, until nut butter reaches the desired consistency. Add more oil if necessary.

Nut butter should be stored in air tight containers in the refrigerator. If oil settles to the top, stir well before using.

Tuesday

(Painting – Red Day)

Watercolor Painting with the Color Red

Supplies Needed:

Watercolor Paper

Red Watercolor Paint

Corkboard, Painting Board or Canvas to place under your paper

Paintbrushes

Water

After your morning circle, set up your workspace to do watercolor painting with the children. Use only the color red and if you have watercolor paper, wet the paper with a damp sponge before beginning. It is wise to place a piece of wood, canvas or a cutting board under each child's paper to keep it from curling and bleeding through. Be sure to set up an area for yourself. Begin painting your own paper while inspiring the children to imitate your actions.

Wednesday

(Coloring – Yellow Day)

Tree Bark Rubbings with the Color Yellow

Supplies Needed:

Paper

Yellow Crayons

Today have children take pieces of paper and yellow crayons (beeswax block crayons work great!) along with them on their nature walk to do **Tree Bark Rubbings**. Share this week's nature walk verse and visit various trees along your way, allowing children to hold their paper onto the tree while rubbing with a crayon. Point out the differences of the bark markings between different trees. For older children, suggest that they identify the name of each tree and mark it on the associated rubbing. These rubbings would be a great addition to your Nature Notebooks that you are making for the children this week.

Thursday
(Crafting/Games – Orange Day)

Nut Games

Supplies Needed:

Various Nuts

Baskets

Pan or Bowl

Nut Toss:

Set out a pan or bowl and give children a small basket of walnuts. Have each child practice tossing the nuts into the container. Adjust the length of the container to challenge older children.

Nut Gathering:

Younger children will enjoy this activity (be sure they do not put nuts into their mouths)....Scatter walnuts around the room and give each child a basket. Have them collect the nuts as they move about the room.

Hide the Nut:

Have all but one child leave the room. The one child left should hide a walnut. When other children return have them search the room for the hidden nut.

Friday
(Modeling/Housework)

Preparing the Classroom and Home

In preparation for the new school year, spend time today organizing and evaluating your food pantry and childcare supplies. Have children help you organize your closet spaces, cabinets and drawers. Make note of the supplies you are running low on and those that you have too much of. Make a list of what you need for the upcoming months. Think about the cold

weather approaching....What steps can you take now to prepare for the months ahead with regard to home supplies and food storage?

Family Chores

Friday is our housework day.



Spend time with the children tidying up the childcare room.

This is also when you should wash your childcare linens and flat surfaces. Have children gather up all cloth napkins, towels, tablecloths, pillowcases, sheets and other items to put into a laundry basket. Show them how to put the clothes into the washer.

As your laundry is washing, gather up all dishes and small toys that can be washed in warm soapy water. Let the children help you wash the items in a bucket or sink with a rag of their own. Playing in the water is FUN! Let them enjoy it. Place the items out to dry and switch your laundry.

While the laundry is drying, have the children help you wash the flat surfaces in your childcare space with a wet cloth and then dry with a dry rag. Take time to also put toys and other items in their places and run the vacuum or sweep the floor.

When your laundry is dry, have the children help you fold all items and put them back where they belong.

Doing these routines each Friday will teach the children how to take pride in caring for their things. Work together and have fun.

Week One - Nature Walk Verse

*The bright-eyed squirrels, furry, fleet,
A-gleaming go with pattering feet.
Brown nuts polished by early frost
On the moss below by the winds are tossed.*

Week One - Caregiver Meditation

This Week's Reflection: Preparation

“If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first hour sharpening the ax.” ~ Abraham Lincoln

Taking the time to evaluate our current situation and to prepare for upcoming events can save us a lot of time and energy. Our lives are so full it is often hard to find the time to think ahead.

This week spend 15 minutes each day in silence focusing on the present moment. Let your mind be at peace with where you are now. When your meditation time is up, take out a pen and paper and make a simple list of areas of your life that would be wise to prepare for in the upcoming year.

Keep this very simple and stay grounded in the present... it is the only moment we ever fully have.