



Preschool Themes Newsletter – July 2017

Hello Everyone,

I hope you all had a good break and welcome back for term 3. Please accept my apologies for the delay in sending out the July newsletter. My laptop was in for repairs and it took way longer than I expected. It's all sorted now so I can get back on track.

Our winter arrived with a polar blast and a huge dumping of snow just in time for the school holidays. With the cold weather there are plenty of opportunities to experience winter in the playground especially in the early mornings. We often have water that has iced over, frost on the grass, and 'smoky' breath! It's a good time to remind the children to take off those extra layers of clothing as the day warm up and often we have to ask children to put shoes and socks on and jackets for outdoor play on the colder days.



I have enjoyed several art activities this past month at school which I have shared with you. Living in New Zealand it's also been the Maori New Year in June which is celebrated with various festivals and customs. The art activities have been around stars to celebrate the Matariki. This explanation explains why we have done star and moon art activities.

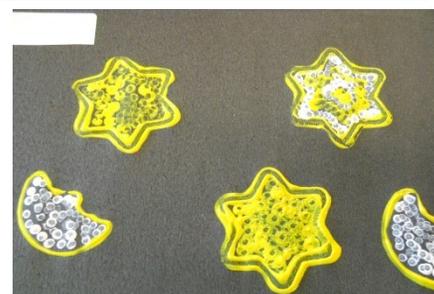
What is Matariki and the Maori New Year?

Matariki is the Māori name for the cluster of stars also known as the Pleiades. It rises in mid-winter and for many Māori, it heralds the start of a new year. Matariki literally means the 'eyes of god' (mata ariki) or 'little eyes' (mata riki).

Creative activities

Printing stars and moons with cookie cutters and painting with ear buds

I did this activity on black paper but it can be done on white paper too but don't use white paint as it will not show up. If you don't have star and moon shaped cookie cutters the paper can be cut into a star or moon shape and painted with earbuds (cotton buds). No earbuds – use the back of a pencil crayon, pencil or finger printing will look effective too. This method can be used with other shapes and themes.



Themes: Night and day, space, sun stars and moon, shapes

You will need:

- Black paper – for the night sky
- Cookie cutters – moons and stars
- Yellow and white paint
- Plastic flat lids or the paint
- Earbuds

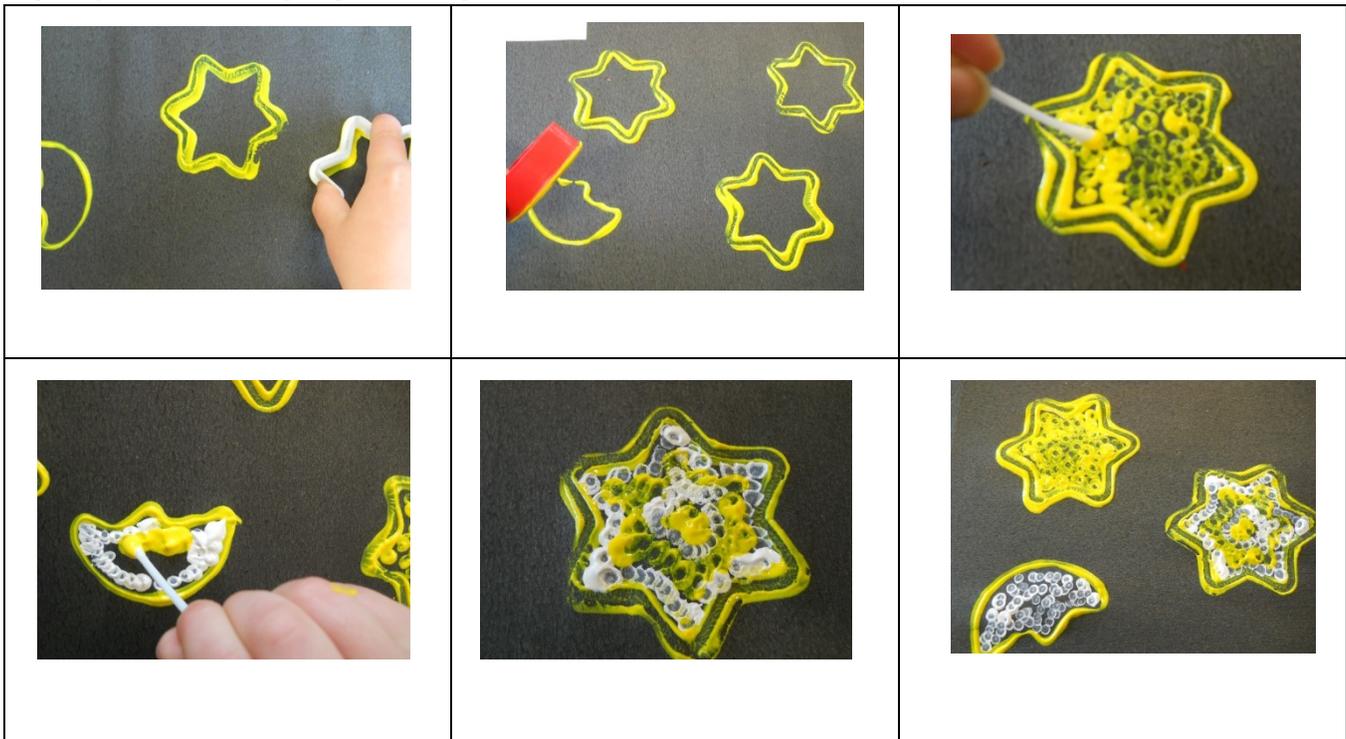


Method:

Use the thick side of the cookie cutter down side in the paint. The children dipped the cookie cutters into the thick paint on the lids and used them to print star and moons on their black paper. The children used the earbuds to paint small blobs or dots of paint to fill in the shapes. The children selected the patterns they wished to create in the shape. This activity could be split over two tables.

Remind the children to make dots with the paint and not to smear the paint (the younger children will smear the paint)

Apologies for the slightly blurred pictures.



Notes:

- This activity was enjoyed by the 4 to 5 year olds. The younger children may not stay in the shape outlines.
- Some children especially the younger children smeared the paint with the cookie cutters instead of printing
- White paint is effective on the black paper
- Use a sticky label to write their names on the black paper or use a white crayon
- The best paint to use is ready mixed. If using powder paint mix it to a thick creamy consistency
- Place the paint in a flat container so the children don't put too much paint on the earbuds
- Remind the children to print by pressing the cookie cutter down firmly on the paper and then lifting the cookie cutter to give a clear print.

Stars – with wool

For this activity I cut out several medium sized stars from cereal boxes. I cut the wool into lengths of about 50 - 70 cm long. It is preferable to cut the stars using pinking shears (zigzag scissors) as the indents it creates on the edge hold the wool securely when winding.

Themes: Night and day, space, sun stars and moon, shapes, wool

You will need:

- Cereal box cardboard stars
- Wool in different colours
- Sticky tape
- Optional: Pinking scissors



Method:

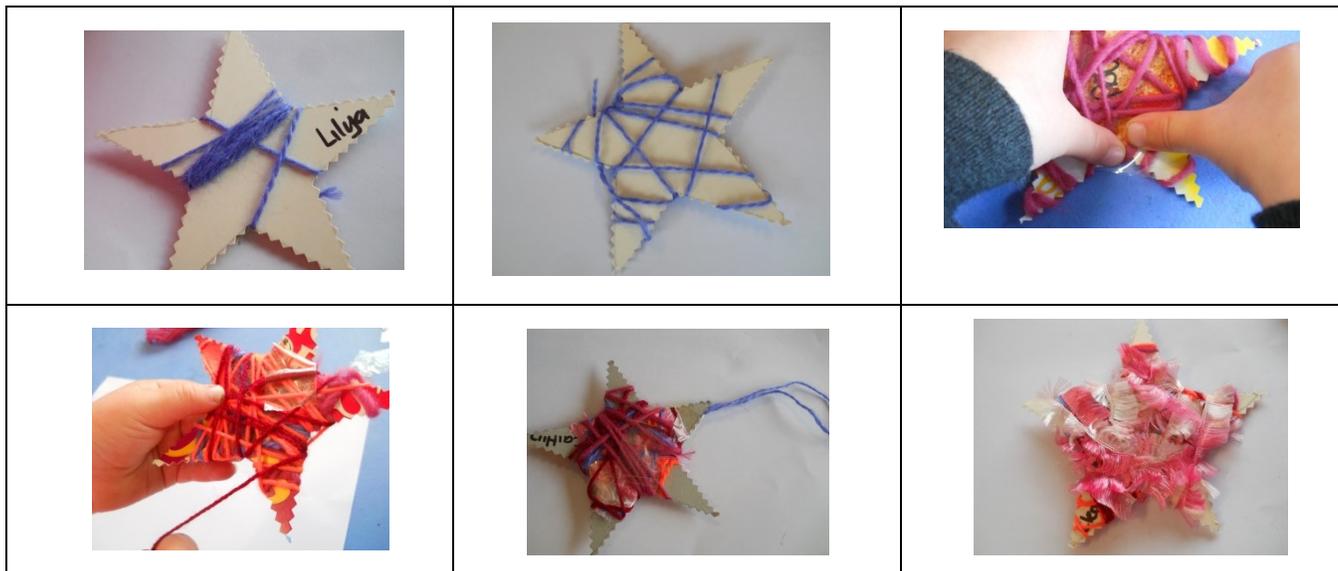
The children taped the first piece of wool to the back of the star. They wound the wool over the star in different directions. When the wool was all used, they selected another pieces and repeated the process until the star is well covered. Display suspended from string.

Notes:

- This activity had varying levels of success. It was a love or hate activity with some children struggling to complete their star while other children made several
- Some children used way too much sticky tape and used the tape on the front and the back of the star



- I gave the children textured wool to use but it was almost better without the texture
- Remind the children to use the clear side of the cardboard as the front of the star
- Encourage the children to wind in several different directions and to continue adding wool until the star is well covered.



Sticky tape (Cellotape) colour wash pictures

Children just love using sticky tape. While it may not be your standard supply for the art area in NZ we have it out every day in the open art area and the children use it freely. Since this may be a bit of a novelty for your children, you may need to supervise closely and perhaps a few rules need to be set out for using the sticky tape. The younger children tend to pull off very long pieces which just end up sticking everywhere and are wasted. If you have limited tape dispensers then I suggest you cut off pieces of sticky tape and attach them along the edge of a container.



Note: My personal experience of sticky tape is that there are cheap and expensive versions. For this activity the cheaper tape is fine. The cheaper tape dispensers don't last very long and the tape splits and doesn't come off the roll in one piece.

In our classroom we have this wonderful tape dispenser. The children wind the knob on the side and it cuts the tape into easy to use pieces.



Themes: Water (water resistant), weather, clothing (water resistant), colours (mixing or just using one colour)

You will need:

- Sticky tape – preferably with a dispenser or two
- Paper
- Food colouring or school dye – diluted (choose colours that blend to make a new colour e.g. Yellow and red, blue and red, blue and yellow)
- Paint brushes or foam in pegs
- Paper to cover the table.



Teacher

If you need to cut the tape for the children, prepare it ahead of time. Place your dye in a safe paint container so it doesn't tip over. **Test the dilution before you give it to the children. It needs to be a good strong colour.**

Method

The children stick the tape to the paper as they please. They colour wash over the paper and tape. The tape resists the food colouring. The colours blend to make new colours. Probably best to have the sticky tape at one table and the colour wash at another.



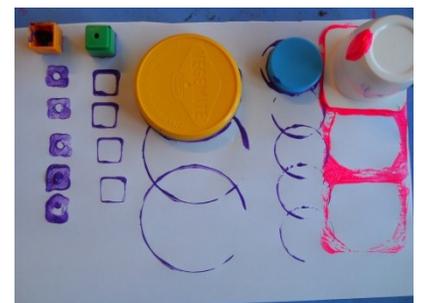
Notes

- Some children used a lot of dye and it was messy when they carried their painting to the drying area. I had some Carlton roll handy to mop off the excess
- It was interesting to note how the children chose different ways to paint over and around the Cellotape.
- I love the end result with the blended colours
- Encourage the children to cover the whole paper with colouring
- You could cut the paper into a different shape to use this activity with another theme E.g. flowers, butterflies, any geometric shape, raincoat shape paper
- If using sponges in pegs to paint with make sure the dye is in a flat container otherwise the sponge picks up too much paint. Paint brushes are definitely a better choice

Printing – with shapes

For this activity we looked I looked around at the waste and resources I had to use to create and print various shapes.

I used the small yogurt cups which have a rim around them which prints as a square, bottle lids, touch and count cubes and milk lids. If you have any other items that would print an interesting shape add it to the activity.



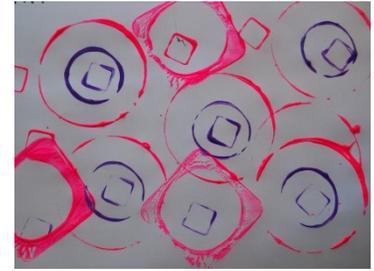
In the photo here I just showed you the shape it prints. If you print with the touch and count cube upside down, it creates an interesting print.

I really encouraged the children to print shapes with in shapes.



You will need:

- Paint – I chose two colours. Ready mixed paint is nice and thick. If you are using powder paint mix it to a thick creamy consistency.
- Printing items – lids, yogurt cups, milk lids, cubes
- Flat plastic lids for the paint - I like to use ice cream container lids
- Paper



Method

I demonstrated the technique of printing and showed the children how you can print a shape within a shape and over a shape. The children selected their own shapes and colours and created their art work. There is no right or wrong with this activity. This is a great activity to develop small and large muscles.



Notes:

- Remind the children to print and not to smear the paint with the printing items as some children tend to do.
- Limit the paint colours to two or three
- Use this activity to print border or frame around another picture.

Stay warm and healthy

Happy teaching

Regards
Karin