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## Preschool Themes Newsletter – March 2021

Hello Everyone,

Once again, this year is flying by and here we are heading towards Easter next month. I love doing Easter art activities with the children so I will be posting the activities we do over March on the preschool themes Facebook page for you to enjoy. I have also included some ideas from my Easter school Pinterest boards for some inspiration. These are not my activities so please visit the links for instructions on how to do them.

I hope you have a wonderful March and that life is beginning to get back to some sense of normality for you all.

<https://www.pinterest.nz/kstedall/easter-school/>

<https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes>



### Extending your art activities

There is no question about the value of doing art or creative activities with preschool children and it should be offered daily to the children in some form even if its free drawing or painting. So many perceptual skills are developed through art opportunities and as its through play it is the best way for young children to learn.

I love creating art works with the children that have several layers to the end artwork. This creates an opportunity to practice and develop more skills, adds depth to the picture and offers opportunities to use a variety of techniques which often on their own would be a quick activity without much engagement e.g., fork printing. Because there are various steps and processes and often an important order to follow to complete the activity, it encourages the children to listen, follow instructions and remember the sequence which are all particularly important skills that are needed for formal learning. But most importantly it is being done in a safe and fun way through art. You will notice this layering in many of my art activities in the newsletters and on the preschool themes Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes>

The giraffe and lion and the space activities in this newsletter are great examples of this layering. At times it may be more practical to do some parts of the activity the day before, but do not make the mistake of taking a complex activity and breaking it down into each of its components and doing one small part per day over the whole week. Its important that its mostly done on the same day to allow for the skills listed above to happen. Since I only go in for the morning to do art with the children once a week at school (as I retired!) I am not able to do any of the activities over two days or two weeks so I have managed to work around this limitation. But it can add some frustration to the activity e.g the space rocket and moon lesson in this newsletter. With a wet black background, we had a lot of black paint where we would have preferred not to have, as our fingers ended up getting messy. I did provide Carlton roll for them to wipe their hands so we did end up getting a nice picture after all.



There is a lot of debate on how structured an art activity should be in preschool and many believe you should only be doing free art and process art and limiting or not offering any structure or pre-cut components to an activity. I have worked in both settings and I feel quite strongly about having opportunity to do both as I believe they achieve different objectives. I do quite strongly disagree with an when there is too much structure and teacher input in an activity so that the child does very little and they all look identical. The younger the children the more opportunity they need to enjoy the materials in a freeway and so process art is more the focus in this age group e.g. not necessarily creating a 'picture' but rather it is about the materials and what they do with them.

So if you are wondering if your activities are in this category then ask yourself how much of the activity did you do and how much variation is there in the end products. Balance is always the key word here. At the end of the day its all about having fun, being creative and enjoying a variety of mediums and textures

### Creative activities

This was a very successful activity that the children really enjoyed doing. It is a bit teacher intensive initially to get all the children's arms and hands traced but it went quickly and while I was completing this the children cut out their giraffe bodies ready to complete the activity. The body of the giraffe was cork printed but if you don't have any corks, finger printing is effective too. This activity is more suited to the older children who have reasonable cutting skills but many did not cut the fingers out along the lines. For the younger children the teacher will need to cut out the traced hands ahead of time.

#### Theme: Wild animals

#### Giraffe using hand tracing, printed patterns and collage trees

**Other themes:** Zoo, Opposites – long neck, Safari

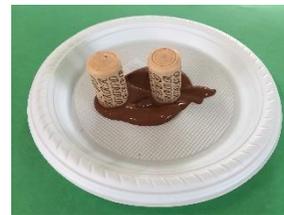
**Ages:** 4 - 5-year-olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination



#### Materials:

- A4 white paper and yellow paper
- Corks and brown paint on flat lids
- Glue and glue brushes
- Scissors
- Brown paper –cut into tree trunks and branches
- Tissues cut into smaller squares or use toilet paper squares
- Green paint
- Googly eyes, black paper for horns and a black marking pen for the face

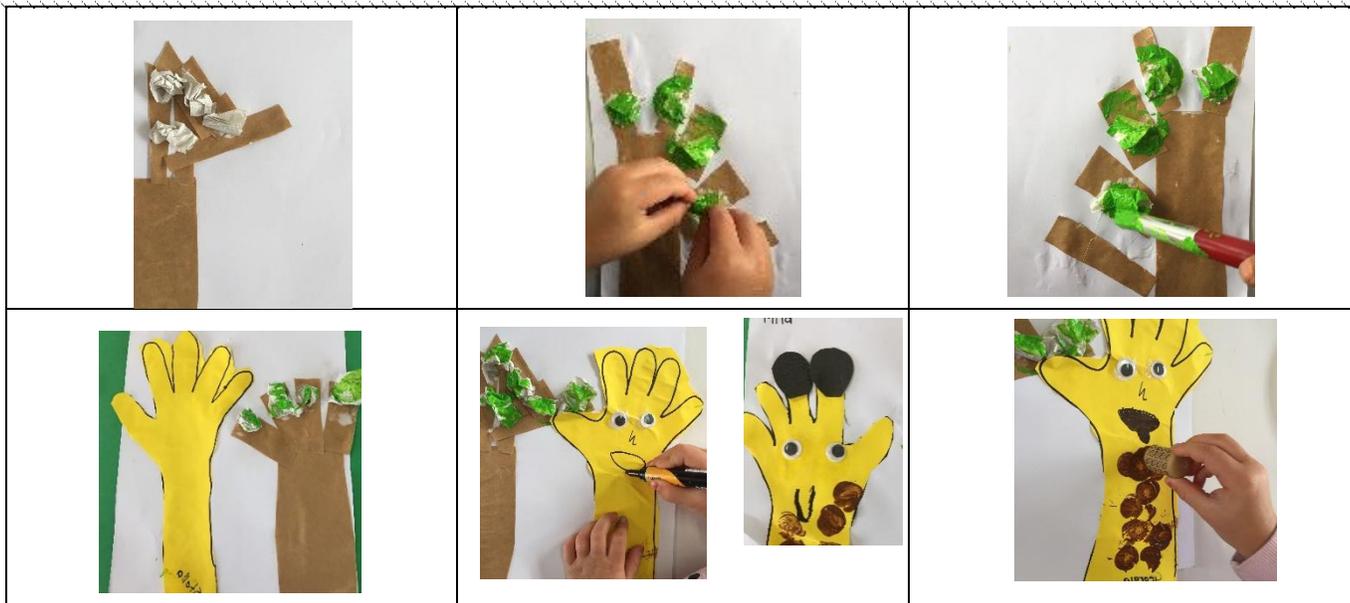


**Teachers note:** Trace around the child's forearm and hand with open fingers using a Koki pen on the yellow paper. Cut the brown paper into tree trunks and thinner pieces for branches. Cut the tissues or toilet paper into pieces. Cut some ovals from black paper for the horns.

#### Method:

The children cut along the traced lines of their arm and spread fingers. Using the brown paper pieces, the children create a tree on the one edge of the paper so there is space for the giraffe. Crumple a few toilet paper squares and paste to the tree branches. Paint the leaves green using a dabbing action. The children paste their cut-out giraffe next to the tree. Using the corks, the children print brown spots on the giraffe. The children paste googly eyes, the horns and draw a face.





**Notes:**

- A few children overprinted the spots. Clear single prints are more effective
- Make sure the tree branches don't encroach into the space where the giraffe needs to be pasted
- The younger children struggled with the concept of making a tree



**Theme: Wild animals**

**Lions made with paper plate heads, fork printing for the mane and painting for the body**

**Other themes:** Zoo, Safari, Cats, Carnivores

**Ages:** 3 ½ - 5-year-olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

**Materials:**

- A3 paper
- Small paper plate
- Forks and orange paint in a flat container
- Face features – black circles, googly eye, triangles for noses
- Paint – yellow and light brown optional green
- Paint brushes
- Glue and glue brushes



**Teachers note:** To obtain a lion brown colour paint you may have to use yellow paint and add a bit of brown paint. This activity needs a large piece of paper.

**Method:**

The children paste a small paper plate to one side of the A4 paper. The children do fork prints around the edge of the paper plate using the orange paint. The children paint the face with yellow paint and add a face. Using the light brown paint, the children paint the body, legs and tail of the lion. Optional: add grass with the green paint.



**Notes:**

- Some children got frustrated with the fork printing and chose to paint the mane
- Some children tried to print from the inside of the plate instead of the edge
- It works best to first paste the lion head to the paper before printing it
- A mouth would have looked better!



**Theme: Space**

**Space scene – a night sky, moon and rocket**

I got some of the inspiration for this activity from Pinterest at this link but added some of my own ideas to create a layered activity. <https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/241927811222367503/>

Because I had to do this activity in one morning as I only go into school for the morning I had to work out a sequence that would work. So the children to pasted the moon to the background first and then printed it so we would not have to try and paste a wet moon. This worked really well. I used a centre of a large paper plate as the cardboard is good for carrying the weight of the paint but you can use a cut out circle from a cereal box too. It really is best to paint the background the day before but sometimes doing this takes it out of context and the children don't link the two together. We managed fine to do them on the same day just working carefully. The children loved having a person in the rocket and this added a drawing aspect to the activity.

So we ended up doing printing, painting, collage, construction and drawing in one activity.



**Other themes:** Day and Night, Air travel, Planets, Shapes, The moon, Night skies

**Ages:** 3 ½ y - 5-year-olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

**Materials:**

- A4 paper
- Inner circle of a large paper plate
- Rockets – cardboard rectangle 10 x10 cm folded in half, triangle for the top and smaller triangles for the sides. Squares and circle windows are optional. Square of tissue paper for the flame.



- Glue and glue brushes
- Tin foil squares 30 x 30 cm - to make printing balls and flat lids for the paint
- Paint – black for the sky (Add some glue) and grey for the moon and paint brushes
- Crayons or Koki pens **Optional:** glitter and stars



**Teachers note:** Prepare the rockets by folding the cardboard in half and flattening the fold. Cut the other shapes required for the rocket. Make the tin foil printing balls by carefully pulling up the four corners to the centre and twisting it to make a small handle and a ball. Do not squash it too much. You want the texture on the base.

**Method:**

The children draw an astronaut or person inside the space rocket. The children paste the moon circle to one side of the paper. The children print the moon using the tin foil printing balls and grey paint using a dabbing action. Using the black paint, the children paint the background paper taking care not to paint the moon. The children sprinkle glitter and/or stars on the black background. The children secure a flame to the underside of the rocket and paste the rocket to the paper adding the triangles on the side and windows to the front of the rocket.





### Notes:

- You may prefer to paint the background the day before and work on a dry background. It is a lot less messy!
- Some children drew a lot of people and animals in the space rocket

## Theme: Space

### Planets and stars on a star printed background

**Other themes:** Day and night, Shapes, Planets

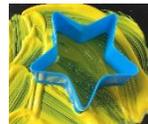
**Ages:** 4 - 5-year-olds

**Skills:** Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination



### Materials:

- Paper – A3 and preferably blue
- Paper plate – large with the centre circle cut out
- Paint – black, yellow and silver or gold and paintbrushes and earbuds
- Glue and glue brushes
- Planets and stars – cut from coloured and white cardboard in a variety of sizes
- Pastels or crayons
- Star shaped cookie cutters and flat lids for the paint



**Teachers note:** Prepare the paper plate circles. Cut out stars and planets in different sizes preferably using cardboard



### Method:

The children select a few planet circles and stars and decorate or colour them in and place them in a container. The children paste the paper plate circle (top side down) to the one side of the A3 paper. The children paint the paper plate black. The children paste the stars and planets around the circle. The children dip the star shaped cookie cutters into paint and make star prints around the planet circle. Optional: add gold or silver dots of paint using earbuds to the prints, planets and stars or the background.





**Notes:**

- Give each child a container or plate to keep their coloured planets and stars safe while they complete the rest of the activity
- Encourage the children to add lots of patterns and colour to the planets and stars
- Pastels add a lovely vibrant colour to the artwork



At the end of an art activity I often leave the left-over materials on the art table for the children to continue to enjoy and to create freely.

**Heart shaped Valentines puppets**

We made these puppets for Valentines day but they could be made with any body shape for a theme on shapes.



**Free painting with shiny collage materials**

The children enjoyed creating these pictures with paint and shiny collage materials. This was a free open activity so no directions or suggestions were offered.



Have a great month  
Regards  
Karin