

## Preschool Theme Newsletter – March 2014

Hello Everyone,

I can't believe we are already moving into March – the year seems to be flying by. I hope you all managed to make a little something with the children for Valentine's Day and the parents appreciated your efforts. I know it's not quite Easter yet, but it's worth starting to plan for and think about some creative activities and sensory experiences you can set out for the children. There are some ideas on my blog (see address below) and also in the gallery on the web site. Archived editions of the newsletter on the web site will have some Easter ideas in the Feb, March or April editions depending on where Easter fell that year. And of course my Pinterest boards have plenty of ideas.

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/easter/> for adult and personal ideas

<http://www.pinterest.com/kstedall/easter-school/> You will find some ideas here for other areas of development and not only art. I will be adding some of these ideas in the next newsletter if you cannot access pinterest. Here are a few examples of some of the ideas. The links can be found on the Easter pinterest board.



### Preschool theme blog

I started a blog for preschool themes and decided with pinterest it was not necessary for me to continue blogging, but I have had several requests for me to continue adding new ideas and activities. So I am back blogging and detailing activities to use in your preschools. I hope to add a new activity or idea once a week. The blog can be viewed through the web site under the blog tab or you can go directly to the blog. Here are some of the other links you may find useful if you have not visited them before

Web site: [www.preschoolthemes.co.za](http://www.preschoolthemes.co.za)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes](http://www.facebook.com/preschoolthemes)

Blog: <http://preschoolthemeideas.wordpress.com/>

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/kstedall/>

### Paper plate fish

We made sharks and colourful fish using paper plates. You can read more about this activity on the blog.

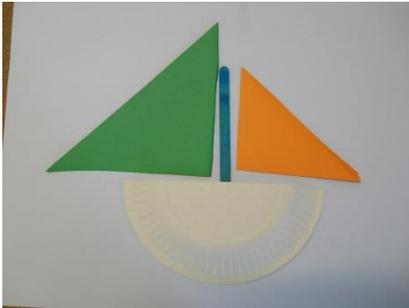


I have mainly been working in the preschool group this year, although next month I am back with the toddlers so you should see some ideas for the younger ones in the next newsletter.

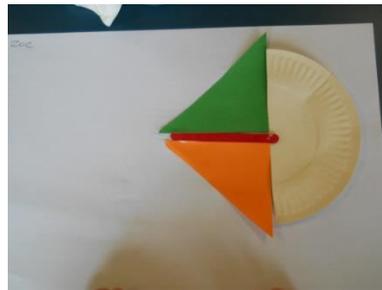
One thing that really frustrates me in NZ is that you can't buy paper plates in the supermarket. They only sell plastic plates. I have eventually sourced a packaging place who sells the plates so I was excited to use them for my beach and sea boat activity in the manual. Paper plates are so versatile and inexpensive.

### Paper plate boats

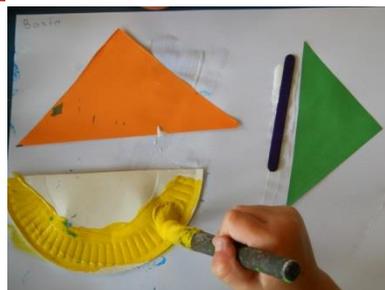
I cut small paper plates in half, cut some triangles of lightweight card in different colours and sizes and placed some wooden sucker sticks for the masts on the table. We also had wax crayons and paint. I showed the children what to do and then left them to create. I suggested we drew ourselves and add the cut out people to the boat. I encouraged the children to draw some fish in the sea and to paint the picture. Here are some end results. This activity was done with the 3 1/2 year olds to 5 year olds. Isla is 5 years old and she assured me she did not know to draw a picture of herself, so I drew a picture of myself to guide her. She then insisted I should be in the boat with her! She drew a lovely picture of herself, cut it out with great care and enjoyed pasting it to her creation.



I was interested to observe a child who is almost 5 create her boat with a sideways orientation. This is an important observation and what we call "a red flag behaviour" which needs to be noted and observe if this happens often. If you observe it more than a few times, she may have a problem.



A few other pictures



This picture was created by a 4 year old. Also an interesting orientation and needs to be noted

**Bubble wrapped sea background with**

### milk lid fish

I covered the wooden play dough rolling pins with bubble wrap. I just used sticky tape. The children painted the bubble wrap with blue, white and light blue paint and rolled the rolling pins over the paper to create a bubble printed background. The children used coloured milk lids to create the body of the fish and cardboard triangles for the tails. I added some pieces of green cellophane for the seaweed. Green crinkle paper would be as effective but we did not have any.

**Note:** I let the children paint the rollers BUT they then ended up painting over the lovely bubble prints as the paint brushes were on the table. Next time I will put the paint into sponge printing pads so there are no paint brushes on the table. This will still not prevent some of the children using the rollers to smear the paint! It's not really a problem other than it spoiled the effect of the rolling.



As usual there are always children who are 'excessive' and keep adding more and more paint until the paper is saturated and basically a mess!! (last photo above) For him it was very much a sensory experience and I am okay with that.

**Younger children:** They will enjoy this activity but leave out creating fish. Use the paper as a background for pasting fish. Alternatively set out large sheets of paper and the younger children roll over the paper to create a group background. The rolled paper can be cut into fish shapes once dry and collaged with coloured triangles and other materials. I will give this a go when I am in the younger group next month and report back.

### Outdoor sea shell and drift wood mobiles

These were made by the teachers to decorate the outdoor area.



### Sand pictures

The children did a free drawing and added coloured sand to complete the picture. Children 'love' using a teachers koki pen such as a thick black pen.



## Open art area – this month's challenge to you

I come from a training and background of slightly more formal creative activities but since working in New Zealand I have come to appreciate the concept of an open art areas. We have an open art area available to the children every day. I have learnt to appreciate this area and I am often surprised at what the children create at this table. It has some limitations in a very mixed age group of children and I do find the children tend to waste art materials but poor supervision is partly to blame for that.

In this area there is a variety of papers and cardboard, collage materials which are changed often or added to, waste materials and boxes, pipe cleaners, glue, paint, cello tape, staplers, glitter, rulers, scissors, pencils, wax crayons and koki pens. Each day the children are free to use these materials as they please.

If you are not comfortable with this idea, then try it once a week without leaving the materials out all week. You will be amazed at what the children create and how much they enjoy the area. It does need close supervision to start with and also some rules. This is in the 3 1/2 year to 5 year age group with a semi open area for the 2-3 year olds.

<http://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2011/07/process-not-product.html>

Do not interfere with the creative process and refrain from suggesting ideas.  
Be available to supply extra materials if asked for.

This article explains the concept really well.

**Here are some creations the children did with no teacher assistance or direction**



Have fun and happy teaching.

Regards Karin