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— School Library Journal, February 2011

Incorporate creative, educational, and fun fingerplays into your storytime with this time-saving, uniquely extensive one-stop resource. Organized by theme from “apples” to “zoo,” experienced children’s librarian Barbara A. Scott’s 1,000 ready-to-go fingerplays and action rhymes provide busy librarians and teachers with the up-to-date, cost-effective material needed to improve storytime without the extra planning time.

Scott explains numerous developmental benefits that children gain from fingerplays and offers helpful guidance for selecting appropriate material and organizing and marketing storytimes. The book’s 1,000 fingerplays are grouped into over 40 categories and span a wide range of themes, including different types of animals, foods, activities, games, colors, shapes, and more. Much more than just another storytime book, Scott brings her decades of successful experience to your screen through an accompanying DVD. Watch her perform all types of fingerplays and action rhymes so you can choose different styles to implement or adapt in your own storytime.

Learn to lead 1,000 fingerplays with confidence while your young listeners absorb listening and memorization skills, motor coordination, and a love of storytime fun.


The Holiday Handbook
700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur... from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan

Barbara A. Scott
www.alastore.ala.org
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Storytimes or storyhours are an integral part of the job of a children’s librarian. Early childhood educators, day care providers, and teachers of elementary grades also often present stories with activities as part of their jobs. These professionals (and sometimes paraprofessionals) are the intended audience for *The Holiday Handbook: 700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur…from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan*.

**Holidays and Storytimes**

Holidays are usually times of general busyness in the midst of celebration, and libraries, day care centers, and schools are no exception. Just as families hold holiday celebrations in their homes, your library or school may find holidays to be a time for special programming in addition to any regular storytimes that you hold. Depending on the area of the country (or world) in which you live, some holiday celebrations may provide a learning opportunity for everyone involved.

I designed *The Holiday Handbook: 700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur…from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan* to be a one-stop source for everything the busy librarian, early childhood educator, or day care worker would need to conduct a holiday storytime or special programming centering around a holiday. I hope this book will give the busy librarian or educator more time to concentrate on presenting the program instead of looking in multiple sources for activities.

I know from experience how nice it was when, while attending workshops as part of my job, presenters would share complete units for storytimes, holiday or not. Thus, over the several years that I became a presenter myself at state summer program workshops, I crafted my presentations as complete storytime units for whatever the theme happened to be that year. I always provided a detailed handout for suggested storytimes (usually six to seven different themes), complete with everything needed, even patterns for crafts! My audience was always very appreciative, and many attendees told me that they looked forward to these handouts year after year.

Many books focus on the major holidays, but *The Holiday Handbook: 700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur…from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan* is different in that I have attempted to give even the lesser-known holidays the same treatment as the well-known ones.

**Organization of the Book**

*The Holiday Handbook: 700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur…from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan* covers 34 different holiday storytimes. Each chapter focuses on a specific holiday or similar holidays and is organized in the same manner:

- **History (introductory material):** Each chapter has a short history of the holiday. You may wish to share this with your participants, or it can simply be for your own benefit. I readily admit that before I did research on any of the chapters concerning Jewish holidays, I had little, if any, idea about what the holidays represented or how they were tied to the Jewish faith. My research entailed searching online, diving into books that were recommended from online sites, and combing through titles that I had available to me both through my library and through interlibrary loan. There is an old adage that says that you are never too old to learn, and how true that is!
Poetry: Following the history of the holiday is a listing of poems that you may use to introduce your storytime. I had the distinct pleasure of hearing Dr. Caroline Feller Bauer speak many years ago when her book *The Poetry Break: An Annotated Anthology with Ideas for Introducing Children to Poetry* came out. It offers many creative ways of introducing poetry to children, and this was one idea that I took and ran with! Rare is the storytime that I do not open with a poem related to whatever the theme may be. As I suggested in my first book, *1,000 Fingerplays and Action Rhymes*, if you can type out and simply illustrate the poem for the benefit of your participants, so much the better. Another alternative that works just as well is to use realia that helps you “tell” the poem (e.g., see the programming idea for “My Mother’s Chocolate Valentine” by Jack Prelutsky in the “Valentine’s Day” chapter). Remember that poetry is rhythm and rhyme, which are a part of phonological awareness, an integral component of early literacy and prereading skills. Phonological awareness also involves recognizing the sounds of letters and words and the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. And if anything plays with words, it’s poetry! Anywhere from 1 to 24 poems are referenced, depending on the holiday.

Books: What would a storytime be without stories? From the newest copyrights to older titles (dubbed “Older Gems, or Titles Too Good to Pass Up”), each chapter boasts an extensive list of books, including both fiction and nonfiction titles, that will provide simple introductions to the holidays or great stories to share. For the newer titles, depending on the popularity of the holiday, anywhere from 5 to 39 books are listed; for the “Older Gems,” anywhere from 1 to 10 titles are listed.

Activities: Activities that engage participants are a staple of storytimes or special programming: coloring pages, cut-and-tell stories, draw-and-tell stories, flannel- or Velcro-board stories, games (matching and otherwise), and so on. Each chapter offers a variety of such activities that could be found for the different holidays. I like to include all of the types listed previously within the parameters of my storytime sessions, with the exception of the coloring pages, an activity I usually reserve for concluding my storytime sessions. Depending on the holiday, chapters may include as few as 5 or 6 activities or as many as 30.

Fingerplays: Each chapter includes fingerplays and action rhymes (rhymes that use the whole body) to use with participants. There may be as few as 1 or 2 fingerplays for some of the lesser-known holidays, but the more common holidays will have 20 or more fingerplays from which to choose.

Musical Selections: Each chapter lists a number of songs that can be used as an additional activity with your participants. Dancing and playing instruments are great large- and small-motor activities for children, and singing also reinforces the same rhythm and rhyme concepts that poetry does, all leading back to those very important literacy and prereading skills. Do you own rhythm band instruments? Bean bags? Scarves? Parachutes? Or do you just want to dance? Young participants are likely to enjoy any of these ways of expressing themselves as well as singing along to the music. The musical selections are listed by the song title, the performer, and the CD on which the song appears. Some songs are available only as downloads and this information is included as well.

Crafts: Participants love to cut and glue and create, and parents love those handmade items that can be hung on the refrigerator at home or used year after year as a special reminder. Each chapter provides descriptions of numerous holiday-related crafts, and pictures are provided for 1 or 2 of the crafts featured. Crafts may number as few as 3 or as many as 10, depending on the chapter.

Patterns: Each chapter includes 1 or 2 (in most cases, 2) pieces of original artwork by artist Earl Musick. This artwork can be used as you see fit: name tag patterns, patterns for flannel/Velcro-board presentations, or matching games.

Included at the end of the book are 2 appendixes: (A) contact information for companies that offer items to enhance your storytimes, from puppets to realia, from crayons to craft kits, and (B) a craft photo gallery.
It is always fun to learn about different cultures, and what a great way to expose participants in your programming to the customs of people from around the world! We may not be able to travel to those countries we talk about, but we can bring a little bit of them to our corner of the world.

As of this writing, I’ve been doing storytimes and programming for 26 years, and the excitement of seeing little ones react to the books read or the activities done has never grown old. I hope that *The Holiday Handbook: 700+ Storytime Activities from Arbor Day to Yom Kippur… from Diwali to Kwanzaa to Ramadan* inspires you, re-energizes you, and makes your busy work life a little simpler!
April Fools’ Day

Celebrated on April 1st of each year, this day gives us all an excuse to play jokes and be silly! Enlarge your theme to include all things silly!

History

April Fools’ Day is sometimes known as All Fools’ Day. The history behind the day, however, is uncertain.

One account says that ancient cultures, including the Romans and the Hindus, celebrated New Year’s Day on or around April 1st. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII instituted the adoption of a new calendar, the Gregorian Calendar, which stated that New Year’s Day would be celebrated on January 1st. According to lore, many people either refused to accept this new date or did not learn about it right away, and they continued to celebrate New Year’s Day on April 1st. Others made fun of these people, sending them on “fools’ errands” or tricking them into believing something that wasn’t true. (See Jerry Wilson’s “April Fool’s Day” at http://www.wilstar.com/holidays/aprilfool.htm.)

Many cultures, however, celebrate days similar to April Fools’ Day around the start of the month of April. The Romans had a festival called Hilaria that they celebrated on March 25th. The Hindu calendar has Holi, and the Jewish calendar has Purim. Perhaps it is the time of year, with the season turning from winter to spring that just brings out the silliness in everyone! (See David Johnson and Shmuel Ross’s “April Fools’ Day: Origin and History” at http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aprilfools1.html.)

Poetry


“Curious Questions,” from page 52 of Poems Just for Us! 50 Read-Aloud Poems with Cross-Curricular Activities for Young Children by Bobbi Katz (Scholastic Professional Books, 1996).


“Mr. Backward,” from page 71 of Bing Bang Boing by Douglas Florian (Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1994).


“Silly Supper Farm,” from page 114 in A Poem for Every Day! An Anthology of 180 Poems with Activities to Enhance Your Teaching by Susan Moger (Teaching Resources, 2006).

Books

Family pranks highlight the gentle, teasing relationships in this amusing tale. Grandpa thinks he’s wise to his grandchildren’s April Fools’ Day tricks and ignores their warnings of animals run amok.

On April Fools’ Day, Gilbert is unhappy that everyone is tricking him and he is unable to get them back. Then he thinks of a great way to fool his best friend!

Young ones will love counting backward as they watch eight monkeys disappear one by one with each turn of the page in this delightful tale.

It might be April Fools’ Day, but Punxsutawney Phyllis knows that winter isn’t over yet. Her infallible instincts tell her a blizzard is brewing, but no one will believe her.

Timmy Bear asks his mother to play a game with him at bedtime in which they remember everything he did during the day, but in reverse order. While not an April Fools’ Day book, a neat idea!

The hapless mother in this bouncy rhyming tale just can’t keep track of her silly baby: he gets switched with the chimpanzee at the zoo, with the dancing bear at the circus, with a lazy sow at the farm, and with a buffalo at the Wild West show.

Friends Wagner and Pearl star in three episodes taking place on April Fools’ Day.

It’s April Fools’ Day, the perfect day for playing tricks. Little Bear wants to have some fun with his friends, but if he’s not careful, they might just play a trick on him first!

Older Gems, or Titles Too Good to Pass Up

Arthur worries about remembering his magic tricks for the April Fools’ Day assembly and Binky’s threats to pulverize him.

The combination of food and farce makes for an affectionate rhyming picture book about a family of picky eaters who drive their mother frantic.

Animals and campers join together in the woods one evening and shake their sillies, clap their crazies, and yawn their sleepies out.

Every year on April Fools’ Day, Winnie the Pooh and his friends are victims of silly pranks and tricks, and they know who’s to blame—the April Fool, of course! But this year they’re determined to beat the Fool at his own game.

Come along and join Silly Sally and her outrageous friends as they parade into town in a most unusual way!

Mrs. Heath is horrified when she sees the changes the students have made while she is on maternity leave and wonders if her wonderful library will ever be the same.


Harry loves April Fools’ Day. Last year he pulled tricks on his parents with spiders and whoopee cushions. His little sister Emily thinks they should just use those tricks again, but Harry informs her that only new tricks are allowed.


Part of the Rookie Read-About Holidays series, this is a great introduction to the holiday.


Tilly, a goose, bathes in apple juice, wears a pancake as a hat, and likes to tickle frogs. But her ways raise the ire of the other farm animals, who demand that she cease all silliness.


A very silly boy takes you on very silly adventure where you meet very silly characters who run in silly circles, fly in silly skies, and walk in the silliest parade ever!


Three dust bunnies, Ed, Ned, and Ted, rhyme all the time. They say that *far*, *jar*, and *tar* rhyme with *car*, but a fourth dust bunny, Bob, just does not seem to get it; he says, “Look!”


In the small town of Bakonneggs, France, the grumpy mayor, a pig named Melon de Plume, and a happy red rooster, Michael Le Souffle, battle wits until they learn to enjoy April Fools’ Day together.


On the way to school one morning, Will regales his friends with a tall tale about an adventurous, acrobatic elephant he once saw along the same route.

### Activities

#### Coloring Pages

Consult your favorite pattern books or holiday coloring books for pages to use as coloring sheets. Be sure to search online as well. There’s lots of great stuff out there!

#### Cut-and-Tell

“Four” This story about four sillies is found, complete with text and cutting patterns and instructions, on pages 52–54 of *Storytelling with Shapes and Numbers* by Valerie Marsh (Alleyside Press, 1999). Once you are done with the cutting, it will reveal the number 4!

#### Flannel/Velcro Board

**What’s Missing?** The instructions and the patterns for this flannel/Velcro-board activity can be found on pages 175–177 of *Felt Board Fun* by Liz and Dick Wilmes (Building Blocks Publications, 1984). Each picture has a part (depicted with dotted lines) that can be cut away. I take these, color them, cut out the dotted line areas, add Velcro to both, and laminate for durability. I first place the incomplete picture on the board and ask participants what is missing. When they identify what is missing, I then add those parts to the picture.
What's Wrong? Patterns for this flannel/Velcro-board activity appear on pages 178–179 of *Felt Board Fun* by Liz and Dick Wilmes (Building Blocks Publications, 1984). These pictures show things that have something wrong with them, such as a truck with square tires or a whale carrying an umbrella. Color these patterns, cut them out, and laminate for durability. Place the patterns on your board and ask participants to tell you what is wrong with them. Then, of course, talk about what would make the pictures right.

“What Did You Put in Your Pocket?” This rhyme by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers, pages 24–29 in *Juba This and Juba That: Story Hour Stretches for Large or Small Groups* by Virginia A. Tashjian (Little, Brown, and Company, 1969), could easily be adapted into a flannel/Velcro-board presentation. It could even be done with realia (box of pudding, plastic water glass, plastic ice cream cone with scoop, a potato, small bottle of molasses, your fingers, and a handkerchief).

“The Whale and the Elephant” The text for this silly story can be found on pages 61–62 of *Festivals Together: A Guide to Multicultural Celebration* by Sue Fitzjohn et al. (Hawthorn Press, 1993). This is a great story to tell using flannel/Velcro-board figures or by dividing your participants up into two groups (one group is the whale, the other the elephant) and having a long rope that they can pull on in opposite directions when prompted.

Silly Sally Flannelboard Audrey Wood’s book *Silly Sally* is one of the “Older Gems” books for this chapter. *Storytime Magic: 400 Fingerplays, Flannelboards, and Other Activities* by Kathy MacMillan and Christine Kirker (American Library Association, 2009) provides flannel board figure patterns to turn this book into a flannel/Velcro-board presentation. Larger versions of the patterns are available online from the American Library Association at http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/publishing/editions/webextras/macmillan09775/macmillan09775.cfm. Click on the number 340 link.

Games

Joker Matching Game Use the image search on Google to find a suitable “court jester” piece of clip art to copy twice and reproduce on different colors of paper. You might also wish to use the elf/jester Ellison die. Give each participant one of the copies and keep one for yourself, placing it in either an apron pocket or a container. Begin the matching game by placing one of your jokers on the flannel/Velcro board and invite the participant who has the match to bring it up. Continue until all colors have been matched.

Miscellaneous

Silly Hat Parade/Backwards Day The week before your April Fools’ Day celebration, ask participants to bring something from home that could be worn as a hat, and you can also invite them to wear their clothes backwards for the day. Play some music and parade around your area or library. When you parade through the library, walk backwards. Remind your participants to go slowly while doing this—falls can happen easily—and to stay aware of those walking around them.

Look Closer! Use the image search on Google to find close-up pictures of everyday things, such as shoelaces, yarn, a towel, and so forth. Simply type in “close-up picture of . . . ” into the search bar. Print out these close-up pictures and laminate them for durability. Show participants pictures and have them guess what they think might be. You might want to have a smaller picture on the back of the large picture that shows the item at actual size.

“Oh Me, Oh My” This participatory chant can be found on pages 11–13 of *Crazy Gibberish and Other Story Hour Stretches* by Naomi Baltuck (Linnet Books, 1993). This silly chant has simple motions that you can teach your participants and is perfect for an April Fools’ Day theme!
“The Snooks Family”  This story can be found on pages 47–50 of *Juba This and Juba That: Story Hour Stretches for Large or Small Groups* by Virginia A. Tashjian (Little, Brown, and Company, 1969). I remember hearing Caroline Feller Bauer tell this wonderfully silly story at a workshop. Use a real candle, if you dare. I have a plastic candle that came with a play set my daughter had when she was young. It has a small lever on the side that, when pushed, makes the flame “drop” to go out.

**April Fools’ Day Songs**

- “All Around the Town,” a piggyback song (new song, sung to a familiar tune), can be found on page 31 of *Holiday Piggyback Songs* compiled by Jean Warren (Warren Publishing House, 1988).
- “The Silly Song” and “Silly Song II” can be found on pages 83–84 of *More Piggyback Songs* compiled by the Totline Newsletter Staff (Warren Publishing House, 1984).
- In addition, the song “Backwards” can be found on page 122 of *The Best of Totline Newsletter* compiled by Jean Warren (Warren Publishing House, 1995).

**Fingerplays**

**April Trickery**

The big round sun
In an April sky
Winked at a cloud
That was passing by.
The gray cloud laughed
As it scattered rain.
Then out came the big,
Round sun again.

*Form a circle with fingers of both hands.*
*Raise arms to form circle over head.*
*Wink.*
*Pretend to scatter rain with fingers.*
*Form circle with fingers of both hands.*

—Author unknown

**April First**

Little bears have three feet.
Little bears have four.
Little cows have two feet.
And girls and boys have more.
Do you believe my story?
I’ll tell it only once a year.
When April comes along.
APRIL FOOL!

*Hold up three fingers.*
*Use four fingers in same way.*
*Use two fingers in the same way.*
*Use five fingers in same way.*
*Point to “you”; point to own self.*
*Hold up index finger for “one.”*
*Clap hands to express pleasure.*

—Author unknown

**Wind Tricks**

The wind is full of tricks today.
He blew my daddy’s hat away.
He chased our paper down the street.
He almost blew us off our feet.
He makes the trees and bushes dance.
Just listen to him howl and prance.

*Make sweeping motion with one hand for wind.*
*Pretend to sweep hat off head.*
*One hand chases the other around.*
*Pretend to almost fall.*
*With raised arms, make dancing motions.*
*Cup hand to ear.*

—Author unknown
Silly Sally
Silly Sally tried to get dressed.
Silly Sally had a mess.
Silly Sally put her shirt on her toes.
Silly Sally put her socks on her nose.
Silly Sally put her pants on her head.
Silly Sally, just go back to bed!
(Pretend to pull on clothes.)
(Point to toes.)
(Point to nose.)
(Point to head.)
(Rest head on hands; snore.)
—Susan M. Dailey
A Storytime Year (Neal-Schuman, 2001, p. 70)

What Fun!
What fun! Let’s make a silly face.
What fun! Let’s make a silly pose.
What fun! Let’s make a silly sound.
Silly is so fun to be!
(Pause and let kids make faces.)
(Pause and let kids get in silly positions.)
(Pause and let kids make noises.)
—Susan M. Dailey
A Storytime Year (Neal-Schuman, 2001, p. 70)

Make a Face
Make a face, touch your toes,
Now you’re being silly!
Wiggle your fingers, hold your nose.
Now you’re being silly!
Flap your arms, turn around.
Now you’re being silly!
Pat your stomach, touch the ground.
Now you’re being silly—
Just like me!
(Match actions to words.)
(Wiggle index finger, playfully scolding, each time this is repeated.)
(Point to self.)
—Author unknown

More Great Fingerplays
“I Saw a Sight Today,” “Surprise! It’s April Fool’s!,” “Happy April Fool’s,” and “What April Fools’ is For,” from page 275 of 1001 Rhymes and Fingerplays for Working with Young Children, compiled by the Totline Staff (Warren Publishing House, 1994).

Musical Selections
“April Fool” from Touched by a Song by Miss Jackie Silberg. Miss Jackie Music. ASIN: B002K74FCK.
“Backwards Day” and “Crazy Shoes Theme” from Jim Gill Sings Moving Rhymes for Modern Times. Jim Gill Music. ASIN: B000FKOZRO.
“Big Fun” and “Silly Willies” from Greg and Steve: Big Fun. Youngheart. ASIN: B00000AG60.
“Boom, Boom Ain’t It Great to Be Crazy” and “Shake My Sillies Out” from Sing Along with Bob #2. Bob’s Kids Music. ASIN: B00000DAO5.
“Laughing in Rhythm” from Jim Gill’s Irrational Anthem and More Salutes to Nonsense. Jim Gill Music. ASIN: B0007CBNCS.
“Silly Dance Contest” from *Jim Gill Sings The Sneezing Song and Other Contagious Tunes*. Jim Gill Music. ASIN: B000FKOZQU.

“Silly Sticks” from *Rhythm Sticks Rock* by Georgiana Stewart. Kimbo. ASIN: B000QUU6GM.

**Crafts**


**Largest Tie Ever!**  This craft can be found on TheBestKidsBooksite.com under their “April Fool’s Day” section. The base of the craft is a very large piece of colored construction paper or a colored heavier-weight paper. You will also need a hole punch, two pipe cleaners per participant, scissors, and markers or crayons. Take scissors and paper and cut out a very large tie shape. You may wish to have these precut for participants. Punch two holes on either side of the very top of the tie. Take each of the pipe cleaners and affix them to either side of the top of the tie. This will allow participants to wear their ties once they are done. Decorate tie shape with crayons or markers.

**Silly Shakers**  This craft also comes from TheBestKidsBooksite.com. Take two paper cups, place dried beans in one, place one on top of the other so that the rims are together, and tape them closed. Make sure they are completely taped so that the beans can’t escape. Decorate and shake!
Arbor Day, Earth Day, and Tu B’Shevat

Use these programs to help participants appreciate our earth and the trees that supply us with so many things!

History

Earth Day is celebrated on April 22nd. It was first celebrated in 1970, and its purpose is to increase awareness of our earth’s endangered resources and how they are used. The day was created by Gaylord Nelson, a former U.S. Senator. Nelson realized that there were very few people who were aware of environmental problems. He had seen them firsthand after witnessing the devastation caused by an oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, in 1969. (See “Earth Day: The History of a Movement” at http://www.earthday.org/earth-day-history-movement.)

Arbor Day is celebrated as a national holiday on the last Friday in April. Julius Sterling Morton started the first Arbor Day in Nebraska on April 10, 1872. He was a settler in the state and was convinced that the planting of trees would help to conserve water and save the prairie topsoil. He convinced the state to set aside a day for tree planting. His effort was very successful, as more than a million trees were planted. As the years passed, the movement grew and many other states adopted Arbor Day as a holiday. People celebrate Arbor Day by planting and caring for trees, and by recognizing the usefulness of the tree in our daily lives. (See Julia Jasmine’s Multicultural Holidays: Share Our Celebrations [Teacher Created Materials, 1994].)

If you wish to celebrate this type of holiday earlier in the year, the Jewish holiday of Tu B’Shevat normally occurs in the months of January or February. Tu B’Shevat is known as the New Year for Trees and is used for calculating the age of trees. The word “Tu” is the number 15 in the Hebrew language, so the day is the fifteenth day of the Jewish month of Shevat.

Several customs relate to the holiday of Tu B’Shevat. These include eating a new fruit on this day, or one of the fruits of the seven species described in the Bible: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. Some people plant trees on this holiday. In some places, money is collected to plant trees in Israel. (See Tracey Rich’s “Tu B’Shevat” at http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday8.htm.)

Poetry

“Arbor Day,” a perfect simple poem to present, from page 133 in Fingerplays and Rhymes: For Always and Sometimes by Terry Lynne Graham (Humanics Ltd. Partners, 1987).


“Celebrate the Earth,” from page 54 of Circle-Time Poetry Around the Year by Jodi Simpson (Scholastic, 2005).


Books

*Part of the Rookie Read-About Holidays series, this book is a simple introduction to Arbor Day.*

*Arthur’s sister D.W. wonders what the Big Green Machine is that Arthur is talking about. And why is he showing up for dinner with green hands?*

*From the Let’s-Read-and-Find-Out Science series, this reillustrated book on the science of trees is well designed for preschool and early-primary-grade children.*

*Join Biscuit as he helps take care of our green world.*

*Gilbert has trouble coming up with ideas. First he couldn’t think of a springtime poem, and now he needs an idea for an Earth Day project!*

*This engaging, eco-friendly picture book opens with a child-friendly invitation to “play a guessing game.” Through a series of short rhyming clues, children will join in as members of a family “unearth” the mysterious round object little by little.*

The lone tree behind Oak Lane School tells the story of the animals who call it home.

*A lift-the-flap story with rhyming text in which a little boy learns seven green ways to travel. Part of the Teenie Greenies series.*

*A lift-the-flap story with rhyming text in which a little boy goes green by building a compost heap. Another title in the Teenie Greenies series.*

*In a cumulative rhyme à la “The House That Jack Built,” a little boy and his grandfather plant a seedling and watch it develop into an apple tree as they grow older, passing on to succeeding generations the tradition of caring for the tree and enjoying its fruit.*

*It’s Earth Day and Mr. Heron is giving away free trees. Franklin can hardly wait to plant a big climbing tree in his backyard.*

*Oscar the Grouch shows his Sesame Street friends how to reduce, reuse, and recycle.*

*Little Critter is on a mission! After watching at school a film about climate changes, Little Critter decides to do his part to slow down global warming.*

*In two different parts of the world, two families plant a tree. As the trees grow, cleaning the air, enriching the soil, and providing fruit and shade, the families flourish as well.*
Older Gems, or Titles Too Good to Pass Up


Fleming's handmade paper collages dramatically illustrate a simple story of a forest replaced by houses and the animals that lost their home.


Celebrating water, the sun, and wind, this rhythmic story relates how humans share the planet with animals.


Grover and his friends on Sesame Street show how we can all do little things that will add up to a cleaner planet.


Sammy watches as the seasons pass and trees blossom, bear fruit, and shed their leaves. When Tu B'Shevat arrives, his spinning skills provide a gift for his favorite tree.


This Caldecott classic speaks simply and eloquently of the many pleasures a tree provides.


After learning about being green at school, Nancy decides to teach her family all about respecting the environment.


Dora explores the ways we can all make a difference and help save the planet by doing simple things at home.


Another in the Rookie Read-About Holidays series, this book offers a simple introduction to Earth Day and how it is celebrated.


This board book provides an introduction to the youngest children about the Jewish New Year for trees.

Activities

Coloring Pages

Consult your favorite pattern books for pages to use as coloring sheets. Be sure to search online as well. There’s lots of great stuff out there!

- Visit http://dulemba.com/index_ColoringPages.html for author and illustrator Elizabeth O. Dulemba's great collection of holiday coloring pages. Click on the Earth Day link. While there, sign up for her Coloring Page Tuesdays e-mails.
- Go to http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/earth/mearthposter.htm to find Earth Day pages that can be printed out in black and white.
- Check out http://www.first-school.ws/theme/cp_h_arbor_day.htm for Arbor Day coloring pages.
Cut-and-Tell

“The Tooth-Picking Giants”  This cut-and-tell story with patterns can be found on pages 26–29 of *Paper-Cutting Stories for Holidays and Special Events* by Valerie Marsh (Alleyside Press, 1994). Trees are the result of the paper cutting.

Draw-and-Tell

“Alligator”; “Duck”; “Suzanne, the Pelican”  All three of these conservation stories can be found on pages 45–50 of *Lots More Tell and Draw Stories* by Margaret J. Oldfield (Creative Storytime Press, 1973).

Flannel/Velcro Board


“A Special Tree”  This story, which follows a tree through the different seasons, is found on page 28 of *FlannelGraphs: Flannel Board Fun for Little Ones, Preschool–Grade 3*, by Jean Stangl (Fearon Teacher Aids, 1986). The patterns appear on page 66.

Games

Tree Matching Game  Use an Ellison machine tree die (there are a variety to choose from) to cut out pairs of trees from different colors of construction paper. Laminate shapes for durability and attach Velcro or flannel. To play the matching game, hand out one of the pair of trees/colors to participants, keeping one for yourself and placing them in an apron pocket or container of some sort. Once all pieces are passed out, begin the game by placing on the flannel/Velcro board, one at a time, a tree from your pocket or container. Let participants bring up their matches. Continue until all colors have been matched. You could also do this game with just leaf shapes as well.

Earth Matching Game  Use the Ellison Globe #2 die to cut out pairs of Earth shapes from different colors of construction paper. Laminate shapes for durability and attach Velcro or flannel. Follow the instructions listed for the Tree Matching Game.

Recycle Symbol Matching Game  Ellison offers a die cut of the recycle symbol that you could cut from different colors of construction paper, laminate, and attach Velcro or flannel. Follow the instructions for the Tree Matching Game.

Pin the Leaf on the Tree  The instructions for this game are simple. Have a large tree trunk and green top precut, or you can use just the large trunk. Use one (or more) of the Ellison machine leaf dies and cut your leaf shapes from different-colored paper. Place tape on the backs of the leaves. Blindfold participants and allow them to place their leaves on the tree. There is no wrong place for the leaf to be in this game! Continue as long as there is interest.

The Litterbug Game  The rules for this game, played like “Duck, Duck, Goose,” can be found on page 40 of *The Storytime Sourcebook* by Carolyn N. Cullum (Neal-Schuman, 1990).

Recycled Games  The idea for materials for these games appears on page 39 of *Learning and Caring about Our World: Activities for Helping Young Children Learn and Care about the Environment* by Gayle Bittinger (Warren Publishing House, 1990). It suggests using plastic soft drink bottles and a rubber ball for a bowling game and cutting out the centers of plastic lids to make lids for a ring toss game with plastic soft drink bottles. Have these games set out for your participants to play!
Miscellaneous

Arbor Day/Earth Day Nature Walk   Since these holidays fall in April, weather conditions could be favorable enough for you to take your group outside for a walk. Tell them to use all of their senses! Allow them to take a snack, such as raisins or trail mix! For Arbor Day, observe the different types of trees that make their homes in your area. Talk about the different types of trees and identify them for participants.

How Old Am I?   If possible, obtain a cross-section of a tree, showing the age rings. Explain to participants that each ring represents a year of life or age for the tree. Count the rings together.

What Is Litter?   This activity can be found on page 29 of Learning and Caring about Our World: Activities for Helping Young Children Learn and Care about the Environment by Gayle Bittinger (Warren Publishing House, 1990). Have available items that are obviously litter and other items that are found in nature, such as a pine cone, a leaf, a branch, a rock. Hold up the items and ask participants if the item is litter or not. Have a small garbage can to dispose of the litter as it is identified.

Tu B’Shevat Items   The Craft Shop website (http://www.thecraftshoponline.com/) offers a number of sticker, foam, and paper cut-out items that would work well for presenting the concept of this holiday to young participants. Included are trees, leaves, and fruit. You could use these items to create flannel/Velcro-board presentations.

Guest Speakers   At this time of year, your county’s Soil and Water Conservation District may be giving away free trees. This organization is also a great source for guest speakers for programming!

Fingerplays

Tree
I am a tree, I am big and strong.  
(Put arms up like branches.)
In the spring, I grow leaves.  
(Sway arms and wiggle fingers as new leaves.)
In the winter, they all fall.  
(Make arms fall or fall down on the ground.)
—Kathy Buchsbaum

Plant a Tree
(This action rhyme is sung to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus.”)
Now it’s time to plant a tree, plant a tree,  
(Pretend to plant a tree.)
plant a tree.
Now it’s time to plant a tree, it is Tu B’Shevat  
(Arbor Day/Earth Day).
Now it’s time to water that tree, water that tree,  
(Pretend to water the tree.)
water that tree.
Now it’s time to water that tree, it is Tu B’Shevat  
(Arbor Day/Earth Day).
Now it’s time to watch it grow, watch it grow,  
(Put hands over eyes like goggles.)
watch it grow.
Now it’s time to watch it grow, it is Tu B’Shevat  
(Arbor Day/Earth Day).
Now it’s time to hug our tree, hug our tree,  
(Arms around yourself for a hug.)
hug our tree.
Now it’s time to hug our tree, it is Tu B’Shevat  
(Arbor Day/Earth Day).
—Kathy Buchsbaum
More Great Fingerplays

The fingerplays “The Lonely Tree,” “Trees,” and “Trees in Israel,” perfect for the Tu B’Shevat holiday, can be found on pages 32-34 in Clap and Count! Action Rhymes for the Jewish Year by Jacqueline Jules (Kar-Ben Copies, 2001).

The book Learning and Caring about Our World: Activities for Helping Young Children Learn and Care about the Environment by Gayle Bittinger (Warren Publishing House, 1990) has the following fingerplays and songs:

- “The Trees Are Growing” (fingerplay, page 19)
- “Litter Is Garbage” (song, page 29)
- “Down at the Dump” (song, page 31)
- “People and Plants” (song, page 47)
- “Soot, Soot, Soot” (song, page 52)
- “I’m Not a Water Hog” (song, page 74)

Musical Selections


“Earth Day” from Happy Everything by Dr. Jean. Melody House. ASIN: B000SM3N0E.


“Plant a Seed” from Sing It! Say It! Stamp It! Sway It!, Volume 2, by Peter and Ellen Allard. 80-Z Music. ASIN: B000056IN.

“R-E-C-Y-C-L-E” from This Pretty Planet by Tom Chapin. Sony Wonder. ASIN: B0004SCCK. Other great songs on this CD include “Happy Earth Day.”

“This Land Is Your Land” from Greg and Steve: Rockin’ Down the Road. Youngheart. ASIN: B00000DGM.


“Tu B’Shvat” from Shanah Tovah, Shanah M’tukah by Joanie Calem. CD Baby. ASIN: B0034PWOXY.

Crafts

Tissue Leaf  This simple craft uses a white construction paper leaf pattern as its base. Orange, yellow, and red tissue paper cut into small squares are then glued onto the leaf pattern. Instructions appear on page 21 and the large leaf pattern appears on page 31 of September Arts and Crafts, Grades 1–3, edited by Susan Walker (The Education Center, 2000).

Earth Day Earth Craft  Instructions and patterns appear on pages 64–66 of Cut and Create! Holidays: Easy Step-by-Step Projects That Teach Scissor Skills by Kim Rankin (Teaching and Learning Company, 1997). The base of the craft is a circle (for Earth) and land areas that are glued onto the circle.
Leaf Pendant  This craft makes a cool-looking leaf, complete with veins! Instructions appear on page 19 and the leaf pattern appears on page 18 of *Arts and Crafts for All Seasons, Grades 1–3*, by the Mailbox Books Staff (The Education Center, 1999).

Handprint Tree  You will need construction paper, brown crayons, fallen leaves, glue, and scissors. Optional items are Easter grass and cotton balls. On the construction paper, trace each participant’s arm from the elbow up, including the fingers. This is the trunk of the tree. Color it brown. Glue leaves on the trunk. If you choose to use the Easter grass and cotton balls, glue the grass at the base of the tree and the cotton balls above the tree for clouds.

Leaf Rubbings  Great leaf rubbing plates are available from Enasco Early Learning. They are Roylco Leaf Rubbing Plates and come in a set of 16 different leaf and seed plates for $7.55. I personally use these and they are just super! Have enough sets of the plates so that you can place a set at each of your programming tables. Provide white construction paper and crayons for participants to use for the rubbings by placing the plates underneath the construction paper.

Easy Shapes Tree Craft  The template is available from http://www.first-school.ws/t/shape treebw.htm. Simple shapes are glued together to form trees. You will want to enlarge the patterns to make them easier for little hands to work with.
Planet Earth Coffee Filter Craft  Instructions for this simple craft are available from http://www.dltk-kids.com/crafts/earth/mcoffeefilter.htm. This craft uses washable markers to color coffee filters, which are then sprayed with a water bottle two or three times. This wicks the colors of the markers on the filter!

Bark Rubbings  Take your art area outside of your building for this craft! All you need are paper, crayons, and trees! Place the paper against the bark of the tree and use the side of the crayon to do your rubbing. Use different colors of crayons to make the rubbings interesting.

Earth Day Crown  Instructions for this craft can be found on page 77 of Little Hands Fingerplays and Action Songs: Seasonal Rhymes and Creative Play for 2-to-6-Year-Olds by Emily Stetson and Vicky Congdon (Williamson Publishing, 2001). The simple crown shape is decorated with pictures from old magazines or seed catalogs. You could also use Ellison flower dies, or other recycling-theme dies to decorate it!

Art with Recyclables  This idea is found on page 35 of Learning and Caring about Our World: Activities for Helping Young Children Learn and Care about the Environment by Gayle Bittinger (Warren Publishing House, 1990). Use items that would normally be thrown away. A list is given. Allow participants to create a piece of recycled art!

Tu B’Shevat Crafts  The Craft Shop website (http://www.thecraftshoponline.com/) offers a variety of craft kits for this holiday. Here are some of the items available:

- Velvet Art Coloring/Pack of 12 pictures for $11.99
- Fruit Beads/ Pack of 375 beads for just $1.99—great for making necklaces with lanyards
- Wooden Tree and Wooden Apple Shapes/$.30 each—great base for painting

Leaf and Fruit/Vegetable Wreath  Cut the middle from a paper plate, using the remaining circle as the base for your wreath. Use leaf, fruit, and vegetable Ellison dies to make shapes to glue onto your circle in a pleasing presentation. What could be easier?
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