

Winter Movement Journey

Nancy Blanning

Nancy Blanning is the remedial and therapeutic teacher at the Denver Waldorf School and prior to that taught 17 years in the preschool/kindergarten. She remarks, "Seeing the children in our care change so much over the last fifteen years has been striking. Their nervousness, lack of physical confidence and security, and a weakness in all of the four lower senses finally became a crisis call for me. I needed to change my focus to the therapeutic realm specifically. This movement journey is a gesture towards giving movement enrichment, fun and healthy for all and therapeutic for many, that our modern children need so badly.

In the Gradalis Early Childhood Therapeutic Training we concentrate on bringing to consciousness the many movement opportunities young children need for healthy development. These movement journeys brought in the circle time are an expansion of that. The journey is set up in a large room (our eurythmy room) with the necessary props. Supported by the form and imagination of the story, the children have the chance for unrestricted large movement. The imagination guides the movement in healthy ways. The soul experience of healthy self-movement is joy and freedom. The more open and free the movement can be, the more the soul is nourished as well. The classes come one at a time once a week for a 4–6 week block. These can be adapted to the kindergarten classroom as well. The larger space is ideal but the quality of movement and imagination can be shared in any space.

Horse and rider, come this way.
We'll gallop through the snowy day.
On we gallop, then say, "Whoa!"
The snow is deep; we must go slow.

Gallop around the room.

Gesture as though pulling in the reins. Come to a stop then walk deliberately, picking up feet as though stepping in deep snow.

Sticks and stones through snow field deep
Peek up to trip us. Watch your feet!

Have some branches and stones arranged at different heights and distances apart for children to step over and around.

We step along with heavy tread.
To climb a mountain we are led.

Lead children to part of room where stumps or tables are arranged so as to provide "steps" for climbing up and down a mountain.

Up the mountain, climbing high,
We reach the summit, touch the sky.
Then down the other side we go
And meet a river down below.

Climb up mountain and down the other side.

Lead children to "river," a blue cloth on the floor with

To cross the river is our task.
 The water's icy, flowing fast.
 The river stones show us this day
 A path across the river way.
 Stepping watchful, slow and neat,
 Take care that you don't wet your feet.

Across the bridge now slowly go.
 The other bank is up hill, though.

Off we jump...

...and take some time
 To build a warming fire fine.

We'll criss and cross the big logs so

The middle logs on next will go.

And last the tinder of sweet pine
 Will help us make a fire fine.

We strike the match

The flames rise high.

Bright cinders shoot like stars in sky.

We feel so warm
 We want to dance.

So let our feet
 Begin to prance.

Song: "Circle to the left, old brass
 Wagon..."

*river stones arranged in
 a stepping-stone path.*

*Lead children across the
 stepping stones.*

*Have an inclined balance beam next, elevated about
 two feet by a tree stump or small table, which the
 children will be able to jump down from to the floor.*

Climb up the beam.

Jump off. Repeat line until all children have done this.

*Sit down on floor, in a circle, if possible, so that all
 have room to criss-cross legs out in front of the body.*

*Alternate crossing legs, one over the other. Repeat
 2-3x.*

*Alternate crossing arms in front of body, leaning
 forward, as though placing logs on the fire.
 Repeat 2-3x.*

*Repeat crossing gesture with
 fingers, 2-3 times.*

*Cross midline with right arm
 from left to right, as though
 boldly striking a match.*

Arms as flames rising.

Fingers as shooting stars.

*Rise to standing position.
 in a circle.*

Alternate tapping toes.

*Appropriate movements
 as directed by the song.*

A smooth and sparkling field of snow
 Calls us onward; away we go.
 But first a bridge of rickety-rack
 Will slow our going on the track.
 Tipple, topple, rick and rack.
 Step right forward, don't look back.

The snow is right and perfect now
 To roll a snowman. This is how.
 Roll a snowman. Roll him round.

Plant him firmly on the ground.

Give a tall, black, shiny hat.

And a carrot nose like that.

Who smells the carrot?
 Snowshoe hare!
 He's sniffing here and sniffing there.
 He hops around without a sound.
 Slips into burrow underground.

Into his home we, too, shall creep.
 Hush! Baby rabbits are asleep.
 We creep out other burrow door
 And find the shining snow once more.

To home we'd like to go at last.
 Our day of snowy fun is past.

So many fun, bright things this day
 We all did see along our way.

We saw the bunnies sound asleep
 In their rabbit burrow deep.

A jolly snowman round and fat
 We saw with carrot nose and hat.

The bridge of rickety and rack
 Led us further on our track.

We danced all in a circle line

Lead children to teeter-totter bridge.

Walk children across the teeter-totter bridge.

Lead children to floor mat.

Guide children singly in doing a forward roll.

Child jumps firmly, both feet together.

Teacher presses gently but firmly on child's head.

*Both fists brought together
 in front of nose to make long, "carrot" nose.*

Nose twitching, sniffing.

Gesture rabbit ears.

Sniffing.

Bunny hopping, both feet together.

Jump down into crouching position.

*Children crawl or creep on
 tummy though hula hoops or
 (better yet) have two adults
 facing each other join hands to create a
 tunnel -arch low enough to the floor that
 the children have to tummy-crawl through.*

*Take hands and lead children
 into a circle, sitting on the floor.*

Sleeping gesture.

*"O" gesture in front with
 arms.*

*Interlock fingers and tip arms
 back and forth like a teeter-totter.*

In that old brass wagon fine.

We built a fire warm and sweet
That warmed our face and hands and feet.

We walked the bridge across the river,
Walked tippy stones and did not shiver.

We climbed a mountain top so high

And felt that we could touch the sky.
We galloped with the horses gay.
Now we say, "Thanks!" for a perfect day.

Rub hands together, then face

*Gesture hands as though
taking steps, one in front of the other.*

Reaching upward in climbing gesture.

*Gesture as though holding reins.
Nod head on
"Thanks!" for emphasis.*