

The Village Pot: An Active Circle Imagination

~ Nancy Blanning

Look! Here is a pot.

Arms gesture big circle in front of chest.

Bend knees and do a little squat on "pot"

It can cook a lot.

Incline head to look down into the pot

Let's look inside.

Shake head to say "no"

The pot is bare.

We need some food

To put in there.

Refrain

A B A

Pot gesture as above

Here's our pot.

A D D A

Stirring with right hand, left hand suggests holding the pot

Stir it a lot.

AA A A B B B

Hands, palms up, cupped like a bowl

Into it some vegetables

Tip hand down to pour veggies into pot

B A D A

Clap hands on thighs with each "plop"

We'll plop, plop, plop

Jump legs open on "first," then crossed on "some," open on "wood," crossed on "let's," open on first "chop," crossed on 2nd "chop," then open on last "chop." This line and jumping sequence can be repeated 3-4 times (can add in arms mimicking leg movements)

But, first, some wood let's chop, chop, chop

Arms snake up, criss-cross, like flames rising

Repeat this line 3-4X

To make a fire big and hot

Refrain

Gestures as above

Here's our pot.

Stir it a lot.

Into it some vegetables

We'll plop, plop, plop

Hold up one index finger. Hands gesture "small," one palm held over the other

Here's a carrot. It's small, you see.

Shake head "no"

Not enough for you or me.

Gesture "small" as with first line

It may be small

Index finger rises to show growing

But it's grown this tall.

Chop one hand against the other

Let's chop it for the pot

Even if it's not a lot.

Gesture down to earth, hands horizontal to the floor (but stay standing upright)

For Earth

Rain

Hands held palms down at mid-chest, parallel to the floor, fingers gently moving to suggest falling rain

Wind

Swish arms over head airily or twirl once in place in a “windy” way

and Sun

Arms make circle above head as sun

Have worked so hard to grow just one.

Refrain

Here’s our pot.

Gestures as above

Stir it a lot.

Into it some vegetables

We’ll plop, plop, plop

(Cup hands like a bowl before speaking)

Words spoken quietly

These few grains of rice are all I have.

Indicate one hand cupped and other picking individual grains and letting them drop

To have so little makes me sad.

Gentle, sad head shake

There may be few,

But they will do!

Drop them in the pot.

Extend cupped hands and tip forward to pour rice into the pot

Though they may not be a lot.

For Earth, rain, wind, and sun

Gestures as above.

Have worked so hard to grow each one.

Refrain

Here’s our pot. Stir it a lot.

Gestures as above

Into it some vegetables we’ll

Plop, plop, plop

With our shovel now we’ll dig

Hands/palms together to suggest the blade, digging gesture—stomp foot and thrust down to same side as shovel digging into dirt

Maybe we’ll find something big.

We dig and dig, yes, we do toil.

Continue digging then flip “shovel” up over head to fling the dirt to drop on our heads

(Pause in speech to let the “dirt” fall on our heads)

We’re workers covered now with soil.

Gesture from head down “covered with dirt”

Brush dirt off from head

Rub down body from head

Arms, tummy, knees and toes

to these other body parts. Can also ad lib other parts

There’s even dirt upon my nose!

Rub nose

In the ground, is there a treat?

Here's a yam, potato sweet
But only one for us to eat.
It is not much. It's small, you see.
But earth gave it to you and me.
We'll clean it off
Chop
Then plop
For Earth, rain, wind, and sun
Have worked so hard to grow just one.

Refrain

Here's our pot. Stir it a lot.
Into it some vegetables we'll
Plop, plop, plop
Here we have an ear of corn.
Let's rub off the kernels,

Let's rub off the kernels,
Let's rub off the kernels.
Now the cob is shorn.
Now here's another ear of corn...
Scoop up the kernels.
Gently drop them in the pot.
Each tiny piece will help to feed a lot,
For earth, rain, wind, and sun
Have worked so hard to grow each one.

Refrain

Here's our pot. Stir it a lot.
Into it some vegetables we'll
Plop, plop, plop.
Now one more carrot,
Some celery sweet,

Three green beans

And a round, red beet!
Chop them.
Plop them.
Into the pot they go.
Now we have a soup just so!
For earth, rain, wind, and sun

*Hands holding the potato
Shake head*

*Rub hands together
chopping gesture
Hands clap on thighs
Gestures as above*

Gestures as described above

*Extend one forearm as ear of corn
Circle wrist of one arm with other hand and
move hand up with twisting motion to elbow"
(switch arms for variety)*

*Repeat using the other arm up to 'Now the cob is shorn'
Scoop hands together
Tip hands forward into pot gently*

Gestures as above

As above

*Extend index finger up as carrot
One forearm parallel to floor as celery;
stroke forearm with other hand
Hang hands, fingers down, move index finger,
middle finger, and then ring finger sequentially
as speaking, one finger per word
Cup hands to gesture round beet
Chopping motion (repeat line 2-3X)
Plop hands on thighs
Gesture toward pot
Raise hands in delight
Gestures as before*

All worked so hard to grow each one.

*(Sit on floor. Act as though smelling
and then eating the soup)*

Soup is delicious. Tummies are fed.

Rub tummy in satisfaction

Now let's have a rest.

Let's lie down and make our nest.

Lie down for little rest.

*(Rest for a short while. To "awaken",
sit up and very quietly sing the refrain,
doing small gestures with hands and fingers.)*

Alternative movements for the refrain:

When we can again hold hands and be close to each other—

When the refrain is sung, "Here's our pot," we can take hands and step together into the center of the circle, standing close together, to form the "pot" ourselves. "Stir it a lot"—move circle gently counter-clockwise.

"Plop, plop, plop"—drop hands and clap hands on our thighs.

Intentions of this circle

Sensory focuses:

- Provide active movement in place, at a time when children are restrained from moving freely through space.
- Maximize the opportunity for self-touch (rubbing, brushing body with hands) when normal opportunities for touch are not allowed.
- In future when touch is again allowed, group movement is cultivated. This nourishes experience of healthy boundaries—where each of us ends and another person begins.

Social / soul focuses:

- Direct consciousness of the natural, elemental world for its gifts to our lives.
- Hold gratitude for what we are given, even if it seems small and inadequate at the time.
- Picture that combined generosity to give what we can—even if it seems small and insignificant—creates community and "feeds" everyone.
- Rhyming couplets give assurance that there is a pattern of predictability, giving reassurance to the soul that some things can be depended upon, fostering a sense of security.
- Emphasizes the power of the social group cooperating.

Academic / pedagogical focuses—

- Rhythmic speech as speech model, modulation, pace.
- Modeling of sequence—discrete steps in an important order to lead to the desired result.
- Strong emphasis on rhyming couplets to prepare the ear for phonemic perception.
- Rhyming couplets prepare the capacity to anticipate what will come next because we can depend upon it.