

LITTLE PUPPET PLAYS
(As Given in Other Schools)

We learned from Elisabeth Haas, Bern, and Bronja Zahingen, Austria, both of whom came to give course in the Early Childhood program at the Detroit Waldorf Teacher Training Institute, that puppet plays can be given for the children on an open table. Scenery consists of bark, logs, branches covered with silky green cloth for trees, mushrooms, shells, a stump covered with different colored cloths for a castle, etc. One may have candle lights at the border of the table. All is played with the person behind the table openly visible. The figures are moved by hand as needed, with some figures on sticks or strings. (This is the way the child will want to play himself.) It increases the expectancy and surprise if the scene is covered with soft materials before the play begins. We usually play the lyre while the children enter one by one quietly and seat themselves in a half-circle. After the play, the children exit quietly to lyre music.

THE GREEDY CAT

Create the hungry cat in front of the children. You will need one square of cotton cloth, preferably red. Take two corners on the same side and tie them together into a knot. These are the cat's ears. Then put your hand between the two ears, and grasping the cloth, make a fist; this loosely forms the cat's face. Then wrap the remaining cloth around your arm for the body. When you come to the part in the play where the cat says, "But now I'll eat you, for I'm hungry still," take your free hand and slip the fingers into the hand that is the hungry cat, draping your cloth that's around your arm over the woodcutter, little girl, etc., to conceal them. Be sure that all the figures remain in your hand unseen until each one comes out at the appropriate time, when the goat takes them home. When everyone is home, you say, "To all a good-night," unknot the hungry cat and lay it over the scene.

A hungry cat went on his way
He looked for food, he looked for prey.
Now tell me true, and who are you?

I'm the man with the ax, the woodcutter good,
A-cutting the trees and chopping the wood.

Good-day, Mr. Cat, and how are you?
You've come a long way. Did you dine well today?

Oh, no! Just half an egg and a little stew
But now I'll eat you too, and I'll have my fill
For I'm hungry still.

A hungry cat went on his way
He looked for food, he looked for prey.
Now tell me true, and who are you?

I'm the little girl with the pretty curl
A-dancing along and singing a song.
Good day, Mr. Cat, and how are you?
You've come a long way. Did you dine well today?

Oh, no! Just half an egg and a little stew
The man with the ax, the woodcutter good
A-cutting the trees and chopping the wood.
But now I'll eat you too, and I'll have my fill
For I'm hungry still.

A hungry cat went on his way
He looked for food, he looked for prey.
Now tell me true, and who are you?

I'm the little gnome, living under a stone,
Good day Mr. Cat, and how are you?
You've come a long way. Did you dine well today?

Oh, no! Just half an egg and a little stew
The man with the ax, the woodcutter good,
A-cutting the trees and chopping the wood.
The little girl with the pretty curl
A-dancing along and singing a song.
But now I'll eat you, too, and I'll have my fill
For I'm hungry still.

A hungry cat went on his way
He looked for food, he looked for prey.
Now tell me true, and who are you?

I'm the snail called "Oh-so-slow"
I carry my house wherever I go.
Good day, Mr. Cat, and how are you?
You've come a long way. Did you dine well today?

Oh, no! Just half an egg and a little stew
The man with the ax, the woodcutter good
A-cutting the trees and chopping the wood.
The little girl with the pretty curl
A-dancing along and singing a song.
The little gnome, living under a stone.
But now I'll eat you, too, and I'll have my fill
For I'm hungry still.

A hungry cat went on his way
He looked for food, he looked for prey.
Now tell me true, and who are you?

I am the goat, the Capricorn
With the shaggy coat and the golden horn.
Good day, Mr. Cat, and how are you?
You've come a long way. Did you dine well today?

Oh, no! Just half an egg and a little stew
The man with the ax, the woodcutter good
A-cutting the trees and chopping the wood.
The little girl with the pretty curl
A-dancing along and singing a song,
The little gnome, living under a stone,
The little snail called "Oh-so-slow"
Who carries his house wherever he goes.
But now I'll eat you too, and I'll have my fill
For I'm hungry still.

Oh, no, Mr. Cat, that will never do
With my golden horns I shall finish you.

Now all come out of the stomach stout
First the snail called "Oh-so-slow"
Who carries his house about.
Oh, how slowly, oh, how slowly
Creeps the snail along his track
Seven days he needs a-creeping
Just for half a yard and back.

Come along, little snail, and sit on my back
I will take you home and carry you back.
Many thanks, Mr. Goat, I'm safely home!

Mr. Goat takes all the others home in turn, for which they thank
him.

Now you're all safely home and we say goodnight,
May you all sleep well 'til the morning light.

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THE LITTLE BOY WHO ALWAYS WANTED TO BE TAKEN ALONG

A dear little boy all bonnie and gay
Went out for a walk one bright sunny day.
He hopped and he skipped and went dancing along
With a hey! and a ho! and a merry song,
Til at last his feet were getting all sore
And he cried aloud: I can't walk any more.
I do wish that someone would listen to me
I wish someone would come to carry me!

And behold a streamlet, a running brook
Came flowing by and the little boy took
Through the waves, through the water the journey did go
And the little boy said, I like it so
But the water was cold, of course you know,
And he cried aloud: I don't like it, no!
I do wish.....

And lo! there came a fine little boat
And he sat down inside; the boat was afloat
Along the waves did the little boat go

And the little boy said: I like it so
But the boat, alas, was narrow and small
And the little boy was afraid to fall
And he cried aloud: I don't like it, no!....etc.

A snail came along, his fear was eased
He sat high on his house and was very pleased
And safe and steady their ride did go
And the little boy said: I like it so.
But the snail was no horse, of course you know
And the little boy cried, I don't like it...etc.

Then a kindly horseman came passing by
He seated the boy on his saddle high
The little boy on the horse-back sat
And merrily said: I do like that
But the horse, you know, was galoping fast
Over sticks, over stones, over stiles at last
That shook the little boy to and fro,
Til he cried aloud: I don't like it.....etc.

Then a tree picked him up by his curly hair
And lifted him right into the air
And hung him up in his branches high
But did the little boy then die?
Oh, no, he is dangling still in the tree's green crown
Come one, little (child's name), you take him down.

MASHENKA AND THE BEAR

Play music first. (Follows script)

Once upon a time, by the edge of a forest there lived
an old grandfather and a grandfather and a grandmother. They had
one grandchild, a little girl called Mashenka. One day Mashenka
said to her grandparents:

Grandfather dea, grandmother dear
I will no longer tarry here.
Into the forest let me go
Where berries sweet and mushrooms grow!

So the old people said, "All right:

Just run along, Godspeed, dear child.
Pick all the sweet berries that you like
On stalks so small, on stalks so tall.
But mind the way, run not too fast
Come home ere yet the day has passed!

This Mashenka promised. She said good-bye to her grandparents
and went into the forest. She picked sweet berries and mushrooms
and all the time she found still nicer ones further and further
into the woods. And when she stopped to look around, she had

lost her way. Then she began to run, but she only went deeper and deeper into the forest until at last she came to a hut that was built of tree trunks. She knocked at the door and said,

Please let me in, please let me in.
Who liveth here? No one within?
Who liveth in this little house?
No little bird, no little mouse?

But, as nobody answered, she just went inside. When the evening came, the owner of the house returned. It was a big brown bear, and he said:

Gruff and grum, who is on my floor?
Now you shall leave me nevermore.
Go light the fire, cook my food,
And bake the bread, all brown and good!

And when he saw the girl he would not let her go away. So Mashenka had to stay with the bear and cook for him, light the fire, and make the bread. At last, she had a good idea, since she longed to go home again. She got some flour and milk, mixed it, and baked a nice cake. Then she fetched a big basket and said to the bear:

O dearest bear, I ask you fair,
Please to the village let me go
Just for a visit's sake.
That my old people I may see
And bring them this fine cake.

But the bear would not let her go and said:

Gruff and grum, that cannot be,
The basket pass along to me.
I will put it by their cottage door
But you shall leave me nevermore!

But that was what Mashenka wanted. She said:

All right, all well, the basket take.
Inside it I shall put the cake,
But mind you do not taste of it
Nor even do uncover it.
I will sit right on the oaktree there
And I shall notice if you dare!

So the bear went behind the house to see what the weather was like. And Mashenka put the cake on her head, jumped into the basket and put the cover on top. When the bear returned there was no Mashenka to be seen. But there stood the basket. So he picked it up and started on his way. When he had wandered a while, he got tired and hungry, and the cake smelled so sweet. So he said:

On the tree trunk I will sit
And from the cake I'll taste a bit.

But Mashenka in the basket called out:

I'm watching you, I'm seeing you,
I notice what you want to do.
Get up, get up, the basket take,
And to the old ones bring the cake.

The bear was very surprised and he shook his head, saying:

Dear me, dear me, how sly is she!
She sees me from the great oak tree.

He picked up the basket again and went further. The smell of the cake was so sweet that having gone so far he thought he might safely have a try again. He said:

On the tree trunk I will sit
And from the cake I'll taste a bit!

But Mashenka in the basket called out:

I'm watching you, I'm seeing you
I notice what you want to do.
Get up, get up, the basket take
And to the old ones bring the cake.

The bear wondered:

Oh, she is sly, how she can spy
With her bright eye-
She sees me from the tree tops high!

So with a sigh, he heaved the basket and carried it to the village to the cottage door. He knocked on the door and called:

Rum bum de dum, unlock the door.
Pick up the basket from the floor!

But when the dogs of the village heard the bear they began to bark. They barked so loud that the bear just placed the basket before the door and ran back to the forest as fast as his legs would carry him. When grandfather and grandmother came out of the cottage and saw the basket, they said:

What might in this fine basket be?
Take off the cover, let us see
A crisp brown cake for you and me
And dear Mashenka, safe and free!

How happy were the old people to have Mashenka back again and how happy was Mashenka to be with her grandparents! They all began to dance and sing!