

The Blossom + Newsletter

December 2011

Art



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We started off the holiday season by talking about the different holidays we celebrate and about different traditions that we keep during the holidays.

Many children said that they love decorating cookies or gingerbread people with their family for the holidays. We decorated our gingerbread people with sparkly tissue paper, markers, sequins and glitter for frosting. The gingerbread people are hanging in the art room and all over the gingerbread house!

To celebrate Hanukkah, we shaded in menorahs with dark and light blue pastels and then sprinkled on glitter to add some sparkle. We used orange and yellow tissue paper to add flames for the candles. We talked about the eight nights of Hanukkah and how one candle gets lit on every night.

The younger children made stockings to hang up on our fireplace in the art room. We used wrapping paper, tissue paper, sequins and glitter to decorate our stockings.

The younger children also made holiday wreaths that we have put up all over the Blossom. We used the outer edges of a paper plate and painted it green.

Then we added green and gold squiggly paper strips to make the wreath look festive, then baby pine cones collected by Miss Felicitas. Lastly, we added pieces of holly and (of course) glitter!

We also made ornaments that are hanging all over the Blossom. We talked about how some of us like to decorate our Christmas or holiday tree with different ornaments.

Some of us also decorated candy canes. Many of us shared that we love to hang candy canes on our Christmas trees while others said that, instead of hanging them, they'd rather eat them instead!

A few of us decorated Christmas trees with sequins, tissue paper, glitter, and holiday wrapping paper. We then added a star or snowflake sticker to decorate the top of the tree.

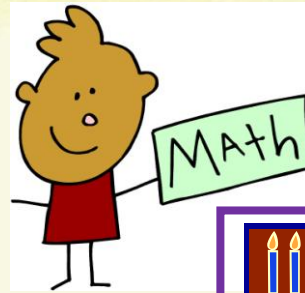
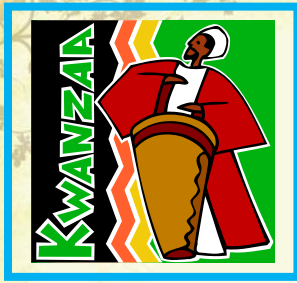
We also used paint and holiday sponge cutouts to create holiday pictures.

We had a great time making holiday projects!

Happy holidays to everyone and have a wonderful New Year!



The Seed: Where Children Blossom



This month we were busy with various holiday math activities and hands-on work. First, we discussed the differences and similarities of Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa.

For Hanukkah, we discussed how the Menorah is a special candle holder that represents the celebration. The children counted how many candles it holds and found out how many candles are lit each day. They made a Star of David using six craft sticks. They learned how three sticks glued together form a triangle. They repeated this process with three more sticks, ending up with two identical triangles. By laying one triangle one on top of the other in opposite directions, they created a six-pointed star. We compared this star with a five-pointed star and discovered a six-sided hexagon in the center of the six-pointed star.

For Christmas, we discussed the shapes, colors and patterns of a Christmas tree (three different-sized green triangles), gift boxes (colorful squares and rectangles), ornaments (circles), and the patterns on a candy cane. This hands-on work is displayed on our bulletin board.

Next, the children made a Christmas chain using the colors red, green and white. This activity allowed the children to create a pattern and count how many rings were in the chain.

This month the children were also introduced to the guessing jar. The guessing jar was filled with different objects every other week. The children were asked to estimate how many objects were in the jar. Finally, we counted the objects and the children compared their estimates with the actual numbers. This helps the children develop the concept of estimation.

Toward the end of this month, we continued to refresh our memory on the subject of measurement: We joined up with Ms. Mirlinda's art class to make holiday cookies with two groups of children at a time.

In the book corner, we read the following books related to math: *My First Chanukah*, by Tomie de Paola, *The Twelve Cats of Christmas* by Kandy Radzinski, and *I Can Count 100 Bunnies*, by Cyndy Szekeres. The children were given the opportunity to retell the stories in sequence and solve the problems using critical thinking.

We will continue to work on measurement in the New Year.

Have a wonderful holiday and a safe, healthy new year in 2012.





Announcements



**Vincent M.
Sarah
Aarush**



Español

¡Felices Fiestas!!
Happy Holidays!! This is what our students are learning to say in Spanish class.
We have so much to decorate with crafts and pictures, and now we are ready to prepare our Spanish greeting cards.

This month the children used their imaginations to come up with fun poses that reflected the up coming holidays. They invented the menorah pose, the dreidel pose, the Christmas tree pose, the gingerbread pose, the reindeer pose, the snow pose, the north wind pose, the Santa-coming-down-the-chimney pose, the elves - making-toys pose, and the present pose.

The children then took the poses and went on an adventure to the North Pole. We got into our car pose and drove to the plane, which flew as far North as it could, but when it landed we were still quite far from the North Pole. So we became reindeer using our reindeer yoga pose (the children loved dressing up in the reindeer costumes), and began traveling still further north. Before we could get very far a big snow storm blew in, and we became snowflakes (snow pose). The north wind pose blew us further north but we were still a long way from the North Pole. As the snow and wind died down, we became gingerbread cookies because they are really fast runners. As we were running we decided to make some ginger bread cookies. We became the tables so we could have a place to put the cookies. Then we imagined we were elves, but we were only the elves who made toys for the good boys and girls who didn't have any toys. We helped put the toys on the sleigh. Then we became the presents. When the children were asked who the presents were for, no one said "for me"; they all said the presents were for mommy, daddy, grandparents, brothers, sisters, friends, and pets.

The children were delighted by the menorah pose, and the dreidel pose was an absolute favorite, because it involved spinning around. To get in the spirit of these poses, we listened to music such as "Hanukkah, Hanukkah," "Hanukkah Menorah" and "The Dreidel Song."

We also listened to Jingle Bells and used the bells as we sang along. We listened to "This is Christmastime," where the children got to act out the parts, such as four little snowmen skipping down the lane. The children's favorite part of this song ("Did you ever see a reindeer?") was pretending to be the reindeer with the red shiny nose. We listened to "Kwanzaa's Here" and the children thought it was great that all the winter holidays were about love and families. We hope everyone has a joy filled holiday and a Happy New Year.



Language Arts

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To start off the holiday season, we read *Gingerbread Baby*, by Jan Brett. The teacher used a stuffed gingerbread baby to help tell the story and make it come to life. The children truly enjoyed trying to catch that gingerbread baby! We followed up the story with some related activities: First, the children were given a gingerbread baby-shaped paper to decorate. Next, they dictated their favorite part of the story for the teacher to write on their "baby". The children really enjoyed sharing their ideas with the class and decorating their gingerbread baby!

To enhance the gingerbread experience, we taught the children a new "Gingerbread Baby" song and gave them gingerbread play dough to help them develop their fine motor skills. (The play dough was scented as if it were the real *Gingerbread Baby* fresh out of the oven!) Everyone was encouraged to make a play dough "G".

We told other gingerbread stories, such as "Gingerbread Friends", and the children heard "The Gingerbread Man" on audio to enhance their listening skills. They enjoyed and benefited from the different variations and various media used in the gingerbread storytelling!

In preparation for the holiday season, we have been reading an array of holiday stories and singing a variety of holiday songs. The children have also been hard at work on their holiday cards to share with their families. The children have signed their names on these holiday cards, which is of course wonderful practice for name-writing and fine-motor skills! They are very excited about the upcoming holidays! I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday and a Happy New Year!



Science



“One, two, three wheels are rolling down!”

This is what all our young scientists were saying to each another while they learned all about wheels.

Everything started when the children saw all kinds of wheels in the science room. Everyone came up with different ideas of what to do with them. The first thing the children wanted to try was to roll the wheels down ramps, and that is just what they did. Everyone helped build ramps with cardboard, long pieces of wood, soft blocks, and they even used chairs to give to their ramps more impressive heights. And down went the wheels!

To support the children’s learning about wheels, we brought in a wheelchair for them to try out. We also discussed the purpose of a wheelchair, the materials used in making it, and we even took the opportunity to measure its wheels.

Since the children were very interested in knowing more about wheels, we jumped to the topic of special wheels: pulleys and gears. This was a great opportunity to introduce them to the wonderful world of simple machines.

The children had a great time pulling things up and down using a pulley. Pulling different kinds of materials up and then letting them go down taught them that some things are heavier than others. The children also got to experience what happens when you pull things up without a pulley, experiencing first hand that the pulleys help to reduce friction. This activity was described by some of the children as “the best science class

ever”!

“Gears” was a very interesting theme for many of our scientists. They observed how gears turn each other in opposite directions, and that a large gear and a small gear can work together without a problem.

Since the children have been exploring wheels this month, we introduced two new exciting subjects: Different means of transportation and different ways of traveling. Our scientists had the opportunity to sort and classify toy vehicles by where they travel—over land, on water, or through the air. They also learned what a car mechanic does and the tools he (or she) uses. Everyone go to be a mechanic in class and helped others solve their car problems. (Move over, Click and Clack!)

In January our scientists will be really busy exploring transportation by road and rail. Be warned, they might be taking their first driving lessons in class . . . !

From our busy and exciting Science Room, we wish you very Happy Holidays. See you next year with more science news.

