

March is Irish-American Heritage Month

Since 1995, Americans have celebrated Irish-American Heritage Month in March to recognize the many contributions of those who came to America from Ireland and to learn more about Irish traditions and culture.

The shamrock is the symbol of Saint Patrick and Ireland and has three leaves, looking like clover. Saint Patrick is said to have used the shamrock to explain the idea of the Holy Trinity to the Irish people.



Facts about famous Irish Americans

- Many 20th century artists hail from Ireland: bands like U2 and Van Morrison, writers like Frank McCourt and F. Scott Fitzgerald, and actors like Kenneth Branagh, Colin Farrell, and Gabriel Byrne.
- Nancy Corrigan was one of America's first female pilots and military instructors.
- Henry Ford introduced the Model T automobile in 1908 and founded Ford Motor Company.
- Andrew Jackson was the first Irish-American President.
- John Hannon opened America's first chocolate shop in 1765.
- Walt Disney, co-founder of Walt Disney Productions, created one of the world's most famous fictional characters, Mickey Mouse.

Irish Oaten Bread

Materials and Preparations:

- Large mixing bowl, flour sifter, measuring cups and spoons, spoon
- Quick-cooking rolled oats, buttermilk, flour, baking soda, salt, and sugar (The day before you plan to prepare this recipe, mix together 3 cups quick-cooking rolled oats and 3 cups buttermilk. Cover and refrigerate overnight.)
- Wax paper, baking sheet, plastic knives, and butter

Learning Experiences:

- Invite children to sift flour, baking soda, salt, and sugar into a large mixing bowl. Add rolled oats/buttermilk mixture and stir.
- Place mixture on floured wax paper and knead to form a soft dough.
- Shape dough into two round loaves approximately 6½" across and 1½" thick. Place loaves on a lightly floured baking sheet.
- With a plastic knife, cut all the way through so each loaf is sectioned into quarters; do not separate the sections.
- Bake at 350° for about an hour. Cut bread into pieces and serve warm with butter.

Bugs in the Grass

(Taken from [Curriculum for Threes, In the Grass](#))

Materials and Preparations:

- Bedsheet, paint, grass clippings (some short, some tall), glue
- Chart paper and marker, recording of music
- Bug props (chenille stems for antennae, wings, etc.)

Learning Experiences:

- What kinds of bugs have children noticed moving in the grass? Make a list for children to view. Do they think they could make some grass so they could pretend to be bugs jumping, crawling, and hopping in it?
- Children help paint the sky, clouds, and green grass on the bedsheet. They can glue short grass to one side and taller grass on the other side. Hang the sheet.
- Review the list of bugs. Children choose ones they would like to be. Would they feel happier in tall grass or short grass? Play music, encouraging them to move like the bug they chose in the tall or short grass. Adding props like antennae and wings will encourage more complex play.

Rainbows and Rain

(This makes a wonderful outdoor experience!)

Materials and Preparations:

- Light-colored construction paper and tape
- Spray bottles filled with diluted tempera paint
- Tape
- Stencils, cookie cutters, paper, chunky crayons, and children's scissors.

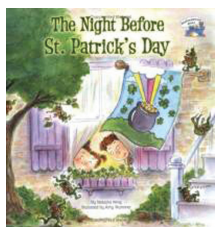
Learning Experiences:

- Invite children to use the stencils and cookie cutters to trace and cut out various shapes, forms, or patterns.
- Have children lightly secure the shapes they cut out to a piece of construction paper.
- Encourage children to spray the entire paper with a "colored rain mist" from the spray bottles. What do they see when colors mix? What new colors are made? Does the mist form any shapes when it lands on the paper?
- When dry, gently remove the taped shapes and observe the patterns created on the paper. What shapes do they see? Why are there places not covered with paint?

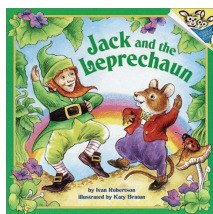
The First Day of Spring – March 20, 2011

The first day of spring is known as the vernal equinox (equinox is Latin for "equal night"). The number of hours of daylight and night are the same on this day.

Books to Share



The Night Before St. Patrick's Day
by Natasha Wing



Jack and the Leprechaun
by Ivan Robertson



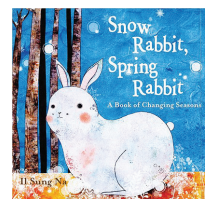
Everything Spring
by Jill Esbaum



Mouse's First Spring
by Lauren Thompson



Duckling's First Spring
by Salina Yoon



Snow Rabbit, Spring Rabbit: A Book of Changing Seasons
by Il Sung Na