

Preschool Themes Newsletter – October 2019

Hello Everyone,

Welcome back to Term 4. It's the final countdown to the end of the year and all the crazy that goes with that time of the years. I trust you enjoyed your break if you were lucky enough to get one. Our break in NZ is a bit later but we don't close over the holidays as we are a full day child care facility. I certainly miss having that time off to recharge the batteries. Luckily I don't work full time so I do get a day or two off per week which really makes a big difference. We have been very busy with lots of lovely creative activities to share with you in this newsletter. I hope you enjoy them and get a chance to try some of the ideas or techniques in your classrooms.



Creative activities

In NZ preschools we don't work with themes. (Yes it's my biggest frustration of working in a NZ preschool) which then doesn't give me a direction for planning art activities. So I often decide on what art to do with materials I have been given or discovered in a shop or charity shop. I was given about 200 small plastic plates (and forks but I am yet to find an activity for those) so I decided they needed to be used. One problem with the plastic plate is that the usual white glue doesn't stick to plastic very well and often paint does not adhere to the plastic either. But this spider web activity worked well. **I did use a special fabric glue to stick the spiders to the plate. It's a plastic type of glue that is flexible. Bostik will also work well.**

I have been enjoying doing what I like to call layered art work – a background and then something to go onto it and often even something onto that... I like the way it extends the activity and develops more skills, looks effective and helps children persevere to the end product. I often include a process art activity which is when the children just enjoy the technique or materials for no purpose or end product. But I just can't help myself to use process art but then give it a purpose such as the activity below where the hand printing became my background paper. Which essentially misses the point of process art? Or perhaps it doesn't... it's still about the process.

Spiders, spider webs and a leafy hand printed background

**Do the spiders and spider webs first as the hand painting is messy.
Or do the hand printing on a different day.**

Themes: Spring, spiders, garden visitors

Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds

Skills: Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

Materials: Hand printed background

- Background paper – I used light cardboard and A3 size in dark green but white is fine
- Green and white paint to make a light green that would show up on the dark green background
- Plastic lids for the paint – Ice cream container lids are perfect for this



Materials: Spider and spider web

- Small pieces of paper or I used circles of lightweight card I punched with a card making punch
- Something to draw with – pens, wax crayons, koki pens
- Black wool cut into shorter lengths (the diameter of the plate and a bit extra)
- Paper or plastic plates - small



Method: Teacher: Prepare the plates by cutting small slits in the edge of the plate spacing them around the plate (about 8) Cut the wool into smaller pieces. Prepare the paper for the drawing.

Child: Spider webs

The child draws a spider on the small circle or the square of paper. The children wanted to have several spiders in the web. Some scribbled while others drew spiders depending on the age of the children. I pasted the spiders to the base of the plate using the fabric glue but if using paper plates, which are preferable, then use white glue.

The child secures a piece of wool in the one slit of the plate and takes the wool to the other side of the plate and secure the wool in another slit pulling it slightly taut. Continue until the spider is in the web using all the slits. A few children may need some help but most managed really well.

Child: Hand printed leafy background (process art)

The child places their hand into the paint on the flat tray and makes a hand print on the page. This is repeated until there is no more paint on their hand. The hand is dipped again and the process repeated until the page is nicely covered with hand prints which I think look like leaves.





Notes:

- Some children used their hands to smear the paint instead of doing hand prints. This just made a messy smeared background
- A few children needed help inserting the wool into the slits
- Depending on the age of the children some scribbled spiders while others drew spiders
- I used plastic plates but paper plates are probably better and stick with the regular white school glue
- This activity was particularly enjoyed by the boys



Cupcake flowers with garden visitors

I was given a few hundred paper cupcake cases that had a strong odour so they could not be used for baking. Children love using them in creative activities so I do suggest you ration them out otherwise one child will use them all.

I cut some more circles with my circle punch and we used them to draw our garden visitors on and then pasted them to the centre of the cupcakes which became our flower centres. I loved the end products and even the 3 1/2 year olds managed well.



Themes: Flowers, garden visitors

Ages: 3 1/2 - 5 year olds

Skills: Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

Materials:

- A3 paper – It can work on A4
- Paint – I used flower colours. I specifically excluded green as I knew the younger children would use it for the petals
- Cupcake cases
- Glue and glue brushes
- Something to draw with – pencil or wax crayons or koki pens
- Paper circles – cut with a card making punch



Teacher: Prepare the circles and paint

Child: The child draws a garden visitor on each circle and pastes each circle to the centre of each cupcake. The cupcake cases are pasted to the paper. Using the paint, the child paints petals around the cupcake cases.

Optional: Teacher can write a label under each garden visitor.



Circles – printed and collaged

Once again this activity developed from a large collection of plastic spoons and cotton reels I had collected over time from sewing. I have layered and extended this activity as above. Prepare the printed background first so it has time to dry while they make the paper plate collage.

Themes: Shape – circles, hands (printing)
Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds
Skills: Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination



Materials: Printed background

- A3 paper – It can work on A4 or a piece of newspaper
- Paint – I used primary colours
- Flat lids or trays for the paint
- Round items to print with – cotton reels, sewing thread spools, lids, firm cardboard rolls and toilet rolls



Materials: Circle collage

- Paper plates – 1 small per child
- Glue
- Milk lids and any other circle collage material such as buttons – the little lids in this picture are from medicines
- Paper circles – cut with a card making punch



Teacher: Prepare the circles and paint

Child: Printed background: The child dips the printing spools into the paint and presses down carefully on the paper making a print. This is repeated until the page is covered with printing. Encourage the children to try different circles and to print smaller circles inside larger circles. Leave to dry

Child: The child selects the circle collage materials and pastes them to the round paper plate. Make sure the children use sufficient glue otherwise the plastic lids will fall off the painting. I wanted the circle collage to be on the paper plate but several children pasted lids onto the printed area which was also effective. If you don't want this to happen have the children collage the paper plates at another table. I had them do it at the same table which was why that happened.





Notes:

- The children really enjoyed this activity and many boys did the creative activity which is good
- If you don't have paper plates either just cut some large circles or collage the circles onto the printed background
- Some children attempted to use the printing materials to smear the paint. Discourage this



Salt painting two ways – Process art and structured

I was given a big bag of kitchen salt so I looked up some creative ideas to try using salt. The first one was not as successful as I had hoped it to be and I think the error is that I used kitchen salt when it should have been the coarse dishwasher salt. But as they say you win some and you lose some and it was a lovely sensory activity.

I tried a second activity which was more successful. So I have documented both.

This is quite a messy activity so cover the table and have flat containers to tip the excess salt into.

Salt on wet school dye or food colouring

This activity was done on some special watercolour paper we had ordered. It was a lot thinner than I had expected but it allows the food colouring to spread easily. Regular paper will work fine too but may just not run together as much. Newspaper will give the run effect but it gets quite hard to pick it up when it's wet.



Themes: Flowers, Food, My home – the kitchen, five senses

Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds

Skills: Small and large muscles, eye hand co-ordination

Materials:

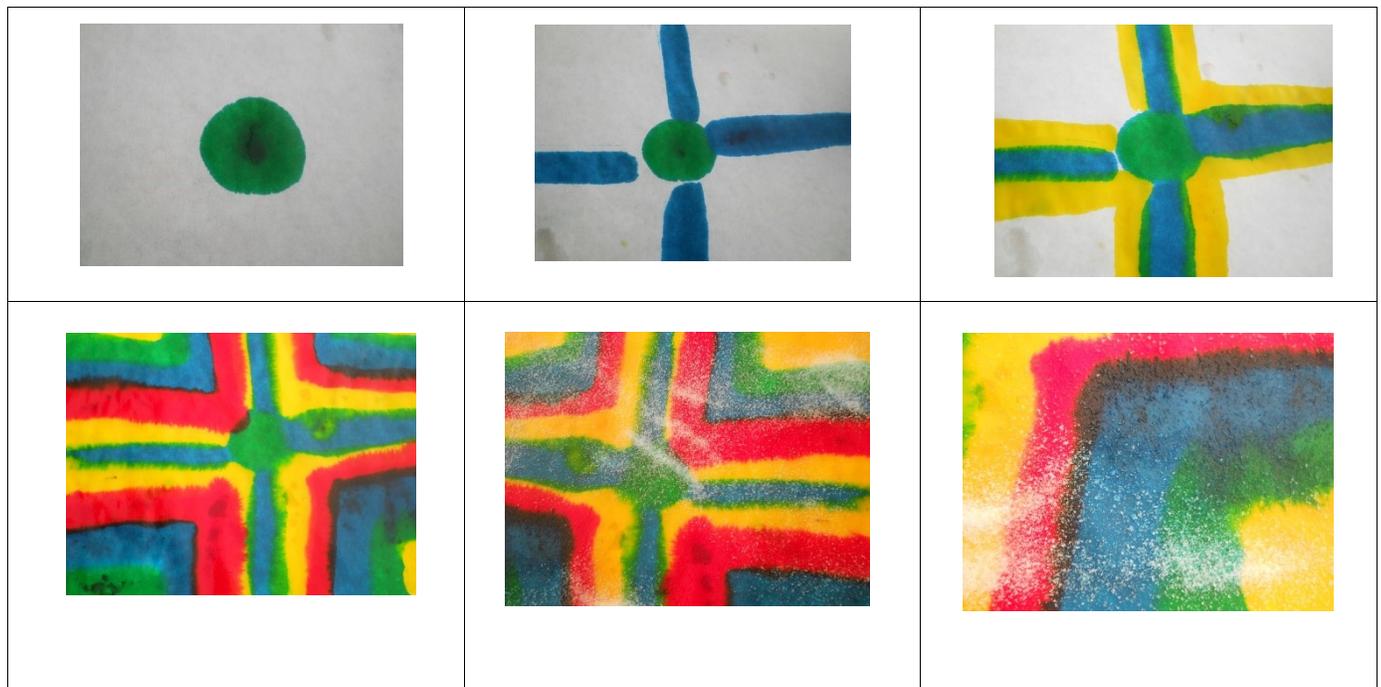
- Paper
- Food colouring or school dyes – three primary colours so they blend to make nice new colours – diluted a bit but you need the water for it to run together
- Thin paint brushes
- Salt and spoons (in a flat container)
- Plastic spoons
- Optional: Flat containers to collect the excess salt



Teacher: Prepare the food colouring

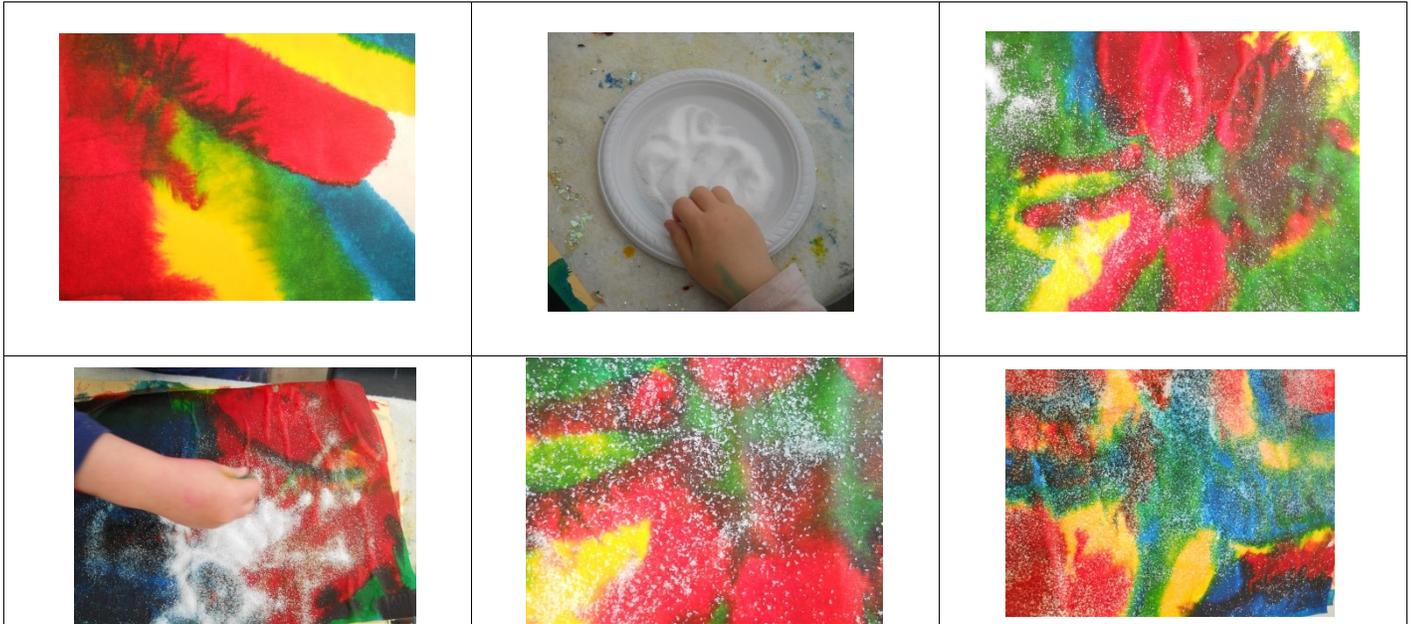
Child: The child paints a picture using the food colouring. Once the painting is completed and still nice and wet the child sprinkles the salt onto the art work. This gets left until the painting is dry. It was supposed to create a pretty speckled pattern when it dried but the salt was too fine and it did not give me the effect I had hoped for. When I researched it I realised that I should have been using coarse dishwasher salt. The biggest issue was that the children covered their art work in salt instead of lightly sprinkling it on.

This is what I had in mind but it was too complicated for the 31/2 and 4 year olds



The children's creations





Notes:

- Some children used an excessive amount of salt
- Some children used an excessive amount of school dye which I mopped up with some Carlton roll
- The salt was supposed to make speckles on the painting where is dried but it was not a great effect
- The salt burned some children's fingers where they had small cuts



Salt and glue pictures

After the first salt activity was not a great success despite the children really enjoying the activity I decided to try it with glue to create the picture and I really liked the effect. Consider drying these pictures flat.

Themes: Shapes, Myself, Science, Trees, Gardens

Ages: 3 ½ - 5 year olds

Skills: Large muscles, small muscles

Materials:

- Glue and glue brushes
- Table salt
- Diluted food colouring or school dye
- Thin paint brushes
- Paper – I used black but any colour will work. Heavier is better as the salt becomes heavy



Method:

Teacher: Prepare food colouring

Child: The child paints/draws a picture using the glue. Encourage the children to use a good amount of glue otherwise there is nothing for the salt to adhere to. The child covers the glue picture with table salt and carefully tips the salt off. The child carefully paints on the raised salt using the diluted school dye. The salt absorbs the food dye.



Notes:

- Quite a few children just made a 'picture' which was great as this was very much a process art activity
- The children enjoyed the sensation of painting on the salt
- The salt cracked off when the painting dried so it was quite messy
- The salt is quite heavy so you need a firm base.

**Happy teaching
Regards Karin**