Fairytales and Folktales

Our December theme of Fairytales and Folktales was full of learning through storytelling. We moved furniture and built a stage in the Green Room using our large wood blocks for enacting each weekly focus story. We created props and made space in front of the stage for an audience to sit, watch and participate. Concepts introduced at Circle Time were expanded through imaginative play, games, puzzles, math and science activities and art. We began by discussing the differences between real and pretend. Most fairytales and folktales have their roots in folklore, stories orally passed down from generation to generation. They often begin with the line “Once upon a time,” or “Once long ago,” and end with “And they lived happily ever after.” These are phrases that indicate that the stories are make-believe. Many of these stories have a lesson or moral to be learned. With all stories, we emphasize who the authors and illustrators are. The children and the teachers had a great time reading variations of the same stories, comparing and contrasting similarities and differences and discussing their impressions. We also discussed the parts of stories (beginning, middle and end) and typical characteristics of fairy and folktales (good, bad and helper characters, magic, and lessons to be learned.)

We read many classic fairytales and folktales during the unit. Following is some information and photos that bring to life the three stories we concentrated on: Cinderella, Abiyoyo, and Delicious.
The familiar classic fairy tale of Cinderella was our first production. Many of the children playacted the story multiple times, each time trying different roles and improving on using their bodies and voices to represent the characters and tell the story! Some children used the basic style of the story to create their own versions such as “The Cinderellas” and “Cinderella and Cinderello.” The dramatic play center was transformed into Cinderella’s shoe store complete with cash register and play money, and actual shoes, boots, ties and handbags to try on and purchase. The children made their own magic wands using paper, glitter, ribbons and bells. We also created many different colored “slippers” that we traced, cut, and “designed” using glitter, buttons and ribbon. Some children made crowns for costumes, and others glued photos of themselves and another friend or two in a castle shape to create a Castle Play Date scene. The children played the “Cinderella’s Lost Slipper Game” in which the children take off one shoe and cover their eyes as the teacher hides the shoes. The children then try to find their own shoe and return to the circle to play again. We played many other small and large group games, such as the Gem and Crown Counting Game. Some different and fun versions of the Cinderella story included Dogerella, Cinderella Penguin, and Princess Furball.
Cinderella
Our second focus story was Pete Seeger’s Storysong, *Abiyoyo*, based on a South African Lullaby and Folk Story. In the story, a small boy and his father are sent to live on the edge of town because the boy’s ukelele playing and the father’s practical jokes of making things disappear with his magic wand are annoying to the townspeople. When the giant Abiyoyo comes to town, the boy and his father are able to play and sing him into a tired frenzy, and then make him disappear with the magic wand: “ZOOP, ZOOP!” The grateful townspeople host a wonderful celebration. A shadow screen, shadow puppets, an old guitar and a magic wand were added to our stage area to enhance the children’s storytelling. Since music plays an important part in this story, we made maracas from paper tubes and shakers from wood and old bottle caps. The children experimented and played their own tunes as they explored xylophones and autoharps. It was wonderful to hear Pete Seeger tell and sing the story and play the ukelele as we listened to the story on CD. We also recorded our own CD of the children singing some of their favorite songs to be given as a gift from the teachers. We hope you enjoy listening to the music! Some other favorite activities were playing the “What Rhymes Listening Game”, drawing self-portraits on a “stage” for locker tags, making and eating letter “A” Cinnamon Bread for letter A week and Abiyoyo, and learning about how cooperation works in the sequel, *Abiyoyo Returns!* The Green Room friends shared the stage with many others as the Extended Morning friends and younger preschool friends visited the room. Everyone had the opportunity to participate in multiple “shows.”
Abiyoyo
Our third classroom production was based on a story called Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story by Helen Cooper, in which a group of animals try some different homemade soups. Our stage set became a house and marketplace, and we used props collected by the children from our Dramatic Play Housekeeping Center. After just a day or two of prompting, the children once again enthusiastically recreated this story over and over. The children chopped vegetables such as squash, potatoes, beets, onions and peppers for roasting and taste tests. We did “What Mixes In?” experiments to see what items would dissolve and not dissolve in water. The children made Nursery Rhyme books to take home and share with their families.

We continued to read and discuss many different classic and not so familiar fairytales and folktales such as Goldilocks and the Three Bears; Jack and the Beanstalk; The Three Billy Goats Gruff; Pumpkin Soup and a Pipkin of Pepper (also by Helen Cooper).
Birthday Celebrations and Special Visitors

The Green Room friends celebrated several birthdays this month:

Elena’s and James’ families visited and brought special books to read to the class.

Yasmin’s Mom and brother visited for her birthday. We had frozen yogurt with sprinkles for snack.

Lola’s family came and made pizzas with the afternoon friends for a special birthday snack.
Birthday Celebrations and Special Visitors

Ruby’s family brought a story, and ate popsicles with us to celebrate her birthday.

For Gwynnie’s birthday, her mom read a story and then stayed for frozen yogurt with sprinkles.

A fond farewell to Ailee and Tripp as they move and attend new schools next semester.

We will miss them!

We hope for a happy and healthy Winter Break for all of our Green Room families.

See you in January!

Estelle, Jean, Jillian and Krissy