



ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS

Rhyme a Day Challenge: 11th – 15th November 2024

We have chosen 5 popular nursery rhymes for this year's 'Rhyme a Day' challenge and will focus on each song in the following order:

Monday 11th November:	Twinkle Twinkle
Tuesday 12th November:	Old Macdonald
Wednesday 13th November:	The Big Ship Sails
Thursday 14th November:	Incy Wincy Spider
Friday 15th November:	Five Currant Buns

Acknowledgements:

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Activity Ideas

Over the following pages, we have put together some suggested activity ideas for each of the 5 rhymes. Please share your own activity ideas with us on social media, we'd love to see what you have planned for the week!

We have an Early Years Planning Group you can join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1067746640035417>

Other ways you can connect with us on social media:

Website: www.worldnurseryrhymeweek.com

Facebook: @WorldNurseryRhymeWeek

Instagram: @worldnurseryrhymeweek

Please help us by using the following hashtags on social media #worldnurseryrhymeweek #wnrw24 #musicbugs

With grateful thanks to our Early Years Advisor and Foundation Stage teacher Lisa Skene (BEd. Hons and MA) for her assistance and advice in compiling this resource.

Disclaimer

The activity ideas provided over the following pages are just suggestions that may be suitable for a broad age group with varying abilities.

By using or following these activities you agree to take full responsibility for the safety of the children in your care. We recommend that a risk assessment is carried out prior to implementing any activity and that all children are constantly supervised throughout.

Some of the suggested activities involving food or baking may not be suitable for children or practitioners with allergies.

Please note, some activities may need parental permission, others will not necessarily be appropriate for younger children.



Twinkle Twinkle

Discussion, what else can you see in the night sky? Use the Sky View Light app (or other similar free app) to examine stars, constellations, the sun, moon and planets. You can view the app indoors although a darker room will be more effective. You might even be able to find the International Space Station, Hubble Telescope or the James Webb Telescope!

Make salt dough stars and decorate them. You can use them as Christmas decorations for the tree in December.

Make star shapes by drawing around triangles. Or you could use a pentagon shape in the centre and 5 smaller triangles around the outside. Or a hexagon with 6 smaller triangles.

Cut out different sized stars and then arrange from smallest to largest.

Make a dark den and use torches or fairy lights to create a night sky effect.

Build a model rocket using cardboard tubes and boxes. Decorate and add orange/yellow/red tissue paper to the rocket boosters.

Look at videos together of rocket launches. Count down with the controller to blast off! Think about the astronauts on the International Space Station. What might life be like on board? If they looked out of the window, what might they see?

Plan a trip into space. Where will you go? what will you need to pack? Invite a friend and design an invitation for them to join you on your space voyage.

Wish upon a star – write wishes onto star shaped pieces of paper or card and hang from a tree.

Make star shaped biscuits – what different flavours can you add?

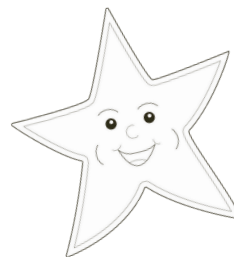
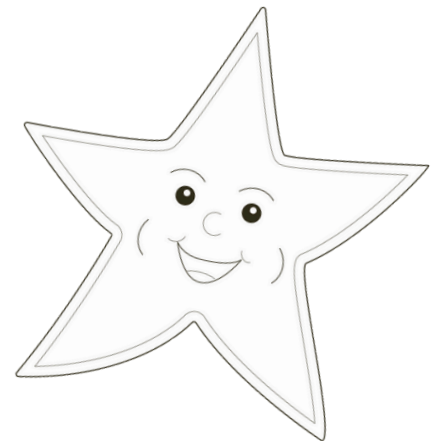
Go on a shape hunt for other 2D shapes (stars, circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, hexagons)

Use 2D shaped pieces of card to create a matching game. How many sides does each shape have?

Make a wand using sticks or branches and star shaped card. You can grant 3 wishes to your friends. What wishes will you grant?

Hide small cardboard or plastic stars into a sensory bin using rice or shredded paper and retrieve the stars using large tweezers.

Make paper plate planets or a moon using paint and different printing techniques (such as scrunched up paper), to add detail and texture.



Old Macdonald

Group farm animal figures into sets and count how many of each animal you have. Now take one away, how many do you have? Older children could add up total number of legs, ears, eyes etc.

Organise the children into groups and assign them a farm animal which they each have to individually draw for a class book/display. Can they write out the name of the animal? Older children can write additional information including what food the animal eats or where it lives (sty, barn, pen etc).

Create a picture of a Scarecrow to scare away the birds from Old Macdonald's crops using a range of different materials. Or make a life-size class scarecrow.

Section off an area (either indoors or out) and create a pretend farmyard. Use items with wheels to transport the farm animals around the farmyard. Create a route for wheeled toys to drive around as farm tractors. Make homes for the animals out of construction materials.

Create a farm animal washing station with mud or paint, water and brushes. Take before and after photos of the animals.

Discuss the many different jobs on a farm. Who takes care of the animals? What time will the farmer need to be awake in the morning? How do they manage in bad weather? What will the farmer need to do if an animal gets sick? With older children you can discuss the differences between arable and livestock farming. Which animals do we get wool from? Which animals do we get milk from?

Pick one of the animals from the nursery rhyme. Write a list of all the jobs the farmer would need to carry out to care for that animal?

Match up pictures of farm animals to the words. Older children could write labels themselves or choose from 3 different spellings e.g. which is the correct spelling? Duk, duc or duck?

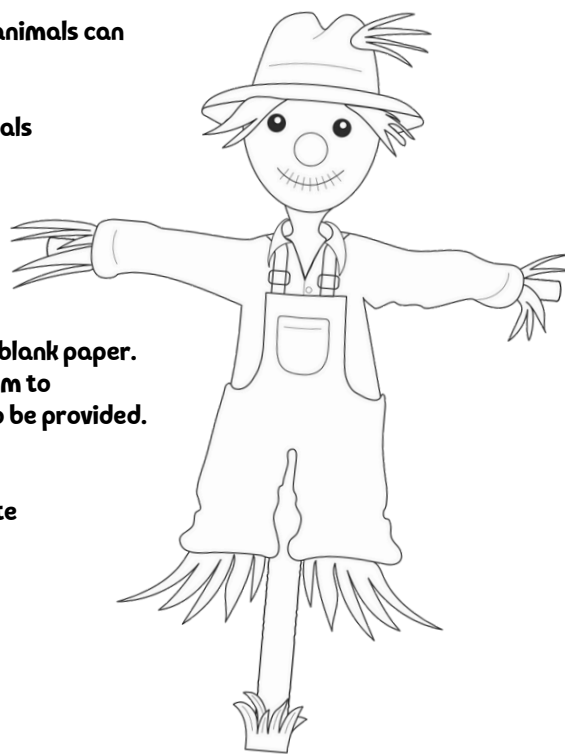
Plan a visit to a local farm, or out into the countryside to see which animals can be found there.

Make a group collage of a farmyard featuring all the different animals from the rhyme.

Matching name quiz. Match the adult animal name to the baby animal, (sheep/lamb, horse/foal, pig/piglet, goat/kid, cow/calf, duck/duckling, dog/puppy)

Animal drawing. Provide cut out pictures of farm animals and some blank paper. Provide children with a range of paints or pencils and encourage them to paint or draw their own animal. Tracing paper and pencils could also be provided.

Create a farmyard tuff tray activity using wooden or plastic farm animals. Add soil, straw, shredded paper, lentils and cereals to create different 'zones' or areas of habitation for the farm animals.



The Big Ship Sails

Plan an ocean voyage using a globe or map to decide the countries and cities you will visit. Which oceans will you have to cross to get there? Look at cruise itineraries, for examples. Design an invitation to invite your friends on the voyage with you.

Discuss the role of a ship's captain. What skills might she need in order to take charge of a large passenger ship? How can she keep her passengers safe and what day to day responsibilities will she have?

Think about different boats and the function they carry out. E.g a ferry boat for ferrying passengers. Also cruise liners, speedboats, tankers, rowing boats, fishing boats, rescue boats, tug boats.

Find some videos or other examples of sea shanties (e.g. What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor, Roll The Old Chariot Along, John Kanaka). What are sea shanties? How were they used by sailors on long voyages and how did singing these songs help them?

Walk the plank! Draw a chalk line in the playground or line up benches and challenge the children to walk the plank!

Make some grog for thirsty sailors with fruit juice and coconut water. Add a squeeze of fresh lemon or lime juice to keep the old scurvy at bay!

Using cardboard tubes, make binoculars for your ocean voyage. What can you see?

Make potato print boats – you'll need to cut out triangles for the sail, rectangles for the mast, a trapezoid or semicircle for the hull and small circles for the port holes.

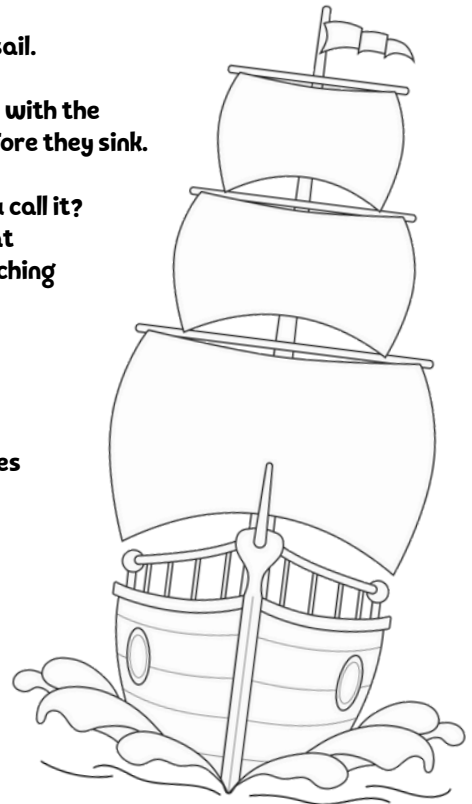
Make margarine tub sailing boats by attaching wooden sticks and a paper sail. Float them in a water tray and use straws to blow the boats from one side to the other. Children can partner up and have races. Carry out experiments with the margarine tub boats to see how many objects can be added to the boat before they sink.

Decide on a name for your ship and plan a launching ceremony! What will you call it? Invite a 'VIP' (such as a parent or member of staff), to launch the ship. Look at videos of dignitaries or royalty launching ships such as Queen Elizabeth launching the QE2 in Scotland!

Label the different parts of a boat. Hull, keel, rudder deck, sail, mast, bow and stern.

Make a pirate's treasure chest. Fill with play jewellery, old cutlery or watches and chocolate coins. Devise a treasure hunt for the children to find the lost treasure.

Make colourful jelly fruit boats using scooped out orange or lemon halves. Use the juice to make the jelly and enjoy!



Incy Wincy Spider

Group Activity. Design a home for Incy Wincy. What would her home look like? What can she do to try and ensure her home is safe and secure?

Using plastic spiders, count and sort them according to size. Then introduce the concept of 'one more', "if I give you one more, how many do you have now?" For older children, encourage adding and subtracting in higher numbers.

How many legs does a spider have? Make spiders using round balls of play dough and pasta quills or pipe cleaners for legs. Compare this to other animals and insects such as a bird or a millipede! Which animal has the most legs? Can you think of animal without any legs?

Using a paper plate, punch holes around the edges and use wool to thread through the holes to make an intricate spider's web.

Circle Time. Have the children hold hands in a circle. Lead one child towards the other end of the circle and have them duck beneath a pair of linked hands. Other children may follow. Repeat this step a few times so that the children will be 'tangled in a web'. Then encourage them to untangle themselves from the spider's web without letting go of their partner's hand.

Water Play. Fill a large tray or tub with water. Add plastic pipes and spiders plus small watering cans and jugs. Encourage the children to experiment with pouring and measuring.

Exploration. Go on a bug hunt, and try and find your own 'Incy Wincy Spider'. If possible, take photos of their webs.

Hold a group discussion about the weather, do your children prefer the sunshine or the rain? What other types of weather are there? Using a phone app, look at the weather forecast for different countries around the world.

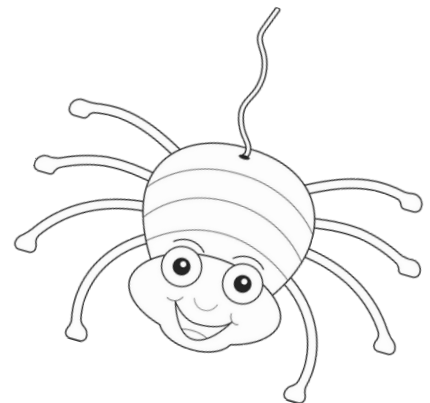
Spider pizza. Make a pizza base with fresh dough (or use ready-made). Create a circle in the centre using grated cheese (for the spider's body). Then add pepperoni or carrot slices for eyes and thin strips of pepper or asparagus stems for the legs.

Weaving activity. Use 4 twigs of equal length (or lolly pop sticks). Cross them over in the centre and fix in place with glue or string. Then use scrap wool or string to weave in and out and around and around the sticks to create interesting spider web patterns.

Create a large-scale spider web either indoors or outdoors using rope or string. Tie it around different objects to create a spider's web obstacle course!

Spider and fly game. Assign one child to be the spider and everyone else to be flies. Choose some music, when it plays, the 'flies' can move freely around the space. When the music stops, the flies have to freeze and the spider chooses a fly to eat. Keep going until all the flies have been eaten. You can add a blindfold to the spider to make it more challenging.

Marble webs. Place a sheet of plain paper inside a tray and add some marbles that have been dipped in paint. Roll the marbles around in different directions to create an interesting web design.



5 Currant Buns

Weights and measures. Weigh out the correct amount of ingredients following a simple recipe. Or use balanced weighing scales to measure out equal quantities of dry ingredients (e.g dried pasta/lentils).

Bakers Shop role play. Sell real or pretend cakes or buns to friends. Write out a price list and use real or pretend money or 'pennies' to purchase goods. You could act out the rhyme as you sing, taking it in turns to each buy something.

Five currant buns are 'round' in shape. Organise a shape walk to find other round objects in the environment. Take photographs of what you find or write a list then share your discoveries with the group.

Flour tracing (or swap for sand). Trace out the numbers 1-5 with fingers or sticks.

Group discussion. What might you find at a bakery? Use images of appropriate items (e.g. flour, mixing bowls, wooden spoons, an oven) and mix these images up with other non-related items such as a spanner, a dog lead, a car tyre, some headphones). Identify which items might be useful in a bakers shop, and which items are less useful.

Make real dough (or use playdoh), and shape into round buns. Now count and add five currants or buttons. What happens if you take one away? How many do you have left?

Coin rubbing. Use real or pretend coins and provide paper with pencils or crayons. Compare the different shapes and sizes of the rubbings. Can you identify the coin underneath? Now place the correct coin on top of the rubbing to match the different shapes and sizes.

Plan a visit to a real bakers shop!

Blindfold game. Cut out the numbers 1-5 from cardboard. Add texture to each number by gluing sand, sawdust, lentils, salt, string or tissue paper. Encourage the children to explore the shape of each number by tracing it with their hands. Can they now do this blindfolded?

Cake case numerals. Place 5 cake cases into a muffin tin or tray and number them 1-5. Provide currants and ask the children to count the correct number into each cake case.

Bake real buns. Plan or follow a recipe and weigh out all the correct ingredients. Take turns mixing and adding the ingredients to the bowl and 'working' the dough.

Decorate buns (either homemade or ready-made) with icing sugar. Add currants, raisins, cherries or sprinkles and enjoy!

Plan a proper tea party for friends or guests. Design and write out some invitations and plan a list of sweet and savoury foods that you will provide for everyone.

Cake cutting. Cut cakes or buns into equal pieces so that you have enough to share with everyone else. How will you divide a cake into two equal halves? How many pieces will you need for 3 guests, or 4?

