

A-Rhyme-A-Week: Classroom Instruction

Old Mother Twitchett

Monday

1. Place "Baby and I Were Baked in a Pie" and "Sing, Sing, What Shall I Sing?" posters on the chalkboard, and review these with the children.
2. Introduce "Old Mother Twitchett" poster and vocabulary to children. As we have been doing, focus first on the pictures. Point first to the needle and thread in the upper left-hand corner. Ask children if they have ever seen anyone use one of these before. Then, ask if anyone knows the name for the object. Next, point to the eye of the needle and ask if anyone knows the special name for the hole on a needle. If no one does, tell the group that this is the eye of the needle, and that unlike people, needles have only 1 eye. Then, focus on the thread of the needle and ask if anyone knows what happens to the thread on a needle. Explain that it gets used up as it is used to fasten buttons or sew seams. Next, point to the picture in the bottom right-hand corner. You can talk about the objects that belong in a sewing basket and/or you can discuss how people put in pins to hold fabric until they are ready to sew it. Explain to the children that this week's rhyme is a riddle, just like the riddles they've been solving on Thursdays. Read the poster to the children. **Be sure to run your fingers under the words as you read them.** Ask if anyone can guess who Old Mother Twitchett might be. Help the children out if they have difficulty.
3. Next, chant "Old Mother Twitchett", running your fingers under the words as you chant. Work with the children to teach them the rhyme, encouraging them to join in. Let them know that they can use this nursery rhyme as a riddle for their families to solve.
4. Remind the children of the listening game that we played last week. Play the listening game with the children, again selecting objects from the classroom. For example, you might tear a sheet of paper or you might sharpen a pencil or you might open and shut a closet door. Remind children that we have been talking about things that are the *same*.
5. Tell that you are now going to play a listening game, and they must listen carefully to tell if the two sounds you make are the **same** or **not the same**. Demonstrate the actions and sounds as the children watch you. Then, have the children turn so they are not facing you. Say, "Here is the first sound" and make one of the classroom sounds. Then, say, "Here is the second sound", and make your second sound. (Vary whether your two sounds are the same or not.)
6. Tell children to face you and let you know whether the sounds were the same or not. Repeat this four or five times.
7. Finish your lesson by returning to "Old Mother Twitchett".
8. Distribute the hole-punched copies of the rhyming card for "Old Mother Twitchett" to be placed in children's **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collection** folders at home. We are doing this on Mondays so that families and children can work together on the rhyme at home at the same time we are working with it at school.

Tuesday

1. Begin by putting the "Old Mother Twitchett" poster back on the blackboard. Ask the children if they can remember what has only 1 eye.
2. Remind the children that Tuesday is "acting" day. To act out this week's rhyme, you will need 4 children for each performance. One, of course, is the needle "Old Mother Twitchett". Another is the thread that follows her as the first stanza is chanted. The other two children represent the "gap" that Mother Twitchett and her thread must sew. During the recitation of the first stanza, Mother Twitchett (with her thread following close behind) can walk about in your performance area pointing to the center of her forehead where her single eye might be located. During the second stanza, Mother Twitchett walks between the two children who are the "gap" and leaves her thread behind. As the recitation is finishing, the thread and two sides of the gap should join hands as all three bow to Mother Twitchett.
3. This week you might want to introduce the line-by-line variation. Divide the children into 2 groups that sit facing each other. This makes your performance area in between the two groups. Group 1 recites the first line "Old Mother Twitchett Had but one eye", then Group 2 recites the next " And a long tail, Which she let fly". Continue this pattern with the second stanza. Because this is a new pattern, the children may need a bit of extra support. As always, you can vary the type of chanting you use.
4. You might want to begin tape recording the children's choral performances of the nursery rhymes for use in your classroom listening center. It may prove entertaining for children to talk about how they were divided to produce the chant on the tape.
5. Finish this lesson with your cloze activity. Use the following lines in particular:
And every time
She went over a ____
She left a bit of tail
In a ____.

Wednesday

1. Put the "Old Mother Twitchett" poster on the blackboard, then run your fingers under the words as you chant the rhyme. Repeat the cloze activity from Tuesday, having children fill in the missing words.
2. Remind the children that **gap** and **trap** rhyme, and we are going to learn some other words that rhyme. Introduce these pictures from the picture card set: **cap, clap, flap, gap, lap, map, nap, rap, snap, strap, tap, wrap, and yap**. (There are other pictures you may include as well.) Be sure to explain to the children what the word and picture mean. Take the time to talk about the pictures, relating them to what your children have seen and know. Always remember, **if there is a picture that you feel is unsuitable for your particular classroom**, you can eliminate this picture from the set.
3. Most of these words can be pantomimed or acted out. For instance, you can ask children to demonstrate how to "tap" or how to fasten the "strap" underneath their chins.
4. You will also want to call attention to the homophones "rap" and "wrap". At the end of this file, you will find two word cards to match to the words on the picture cards. While we don't want to spend much too much time on this point, we can show children how the words "rap" and "wrap" differ. Incidentally, *rap*, to strike quickly, is most likely Germanic in origin while *wrap*, to fold around something, comes to us from the Middle English verb *wrappen*.
5. Remind children that last week we sorted by rhyming sounds. As we worked with *ing* rimes last week, we'll contrast the *ing* rime with this week's *ap* rime. Use the following pictures: **gap, trap, lap, and wrap** and **sing, string, king, ring**. Call children's attention to the words "gap" and "trap" in the nursery rhyme poster. Then, tape the picture for **sing** at the top of one column and the picture for **trap** at the top of the other. Place all other pictures in the chalk tray, saying each one's name.
6. Remind the children that we've been talking about things that are the **same**. When words end the same, we say that they **rhyme**.
7. Call children one at a time to take a picture and decide if it ends the **same** as **trap** or **sing**. Keep in mind that many children are working to hear and understand "rhyming" and "same-ness". If a child is hesitant, go ahead and support him or her with the task.
8. Finish today's lesson by chanting "Old Mother Twitchett".

Thursday

1. Select 5 or 6 of the downloadable riddle cards that you think are best suited for your students.
2. Begin by putting the "Old Mother Twitchett" poster back on the blackboard. Ask children to chant the rhyme, allowing 2 or 3 at a time to chant or sing the rhyme for the class.
3. Set the pictures from the picture card set on the chalk tray. Tell the children that today we will be guessing the answers to some riddles. The answer to the riddle will be one of the pictures we looked at yesterday.
4. Put the riddle cards on the board one at a time. Read the riddle, then help your students decide which picture best answers the riddle. Tape the picture at the bottom of the riddle card. You read the riddle, letting the children fill in the missing word, completing the rhyme by saying the name of the picture.
5. Finish the lesson as you did on Tuesday, having the children supply the missing word at the end of each line of the rhyme.

Friday

1. Remind the children of the various activities you've done this week, and tell them that this is **Children's Choice** day. Display 3 different rhyme posters -- **Old Mother Twitchett**, **Sing, Sing**, and **Baby and I Were Baked in a Pie**.
2. Let the children decide which rhymes they would like to act out, to chant, to sort pictures for, or to do the riddle rhymes for.
3. Record the children's choices on the board using the written list as the order to follow. Then complete the activities.
4. Finish by chanting "Old Mother Twitchett" Have all the children pretend they are Mother Twitchett. They can all point to their foreheads and look behind them at their "tails" as the "sew" their ways around the classroom.
5. Remind children to look at their **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collections** with their families over the weekend.

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