

A-Rhyme-A-Week: Classroom Instruction

Simple Simon Went A-Fishing

Monday

1. Place "Old Mother Twitchett" and "Sing, Sing, What Shall I Sing?" posters on the chalkboard, and review these with the children.
2. Introduce "Simple Simon" poster and vocabulary to children. As we have been doing, focus first on the pictures. First tell children that the name of the man in the suit is Simple Simon. Then ask if anyone can identify the object that Simple Simon is carrying in his right hand (the briefcase). Explain that many people wear suits and carry briefcases when they go to work in office buildings. Then ask what Simple Simon is carrying over his shoulder (the fishing pole). Determine if any of the children have ever gone fishing. Ask if they wore their good clothing when they went fishing, and discuss why Simon might be silly for wearing his good clothing. Then point to the pail. Ask children if they think a fish can be caught in a pail. Next point to Simon chasing the dickie bird. (You might want to point to the additional silliness of this situation by having them think whether a bird would need a parachute). Ask children to think of ways it would be possible to catch a dickie bird. Then point to the salt shaker and explain that Simon thinks that if he puts salt on the bird's tail, he'll be able to catch the bird. Ask what they think of his plan. Finally, help children understand that Simon is a silly fellow and that people used to call such silly fellows Simpletons, or Simple for short.
3. Read the poster to the children. **Be sure to run your fingers under the words as you read them.**
4. Next, sing or chant "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing", running your fingers under the words as you sing or chant. Work with the children to teach them the rhyme, encouraging them to join in.
5. This week, we are changing the listening game to increase children's understanding of the term *word*. Remind the children of the listening games that we have been playing the last number of weeks. Tell them that this week, we are going to listen to some *words* to see if they are the same or not the same. Ask the children to listen carefully. Hold up one finger, and then say, "Hot." Pause. Then, hold up two fingers, and say "hot". Tell children that the two words you've just said are the same. Tell them to listen again. Again, hold up one finger, to indicate that you are saying the first word, and say, "Hot." Pause. Hold up two fingers to indicate that you are saying the second word and say, "elephant". With the children facing you, repeat this with the following pairs of words: tail/tail, tail/apple pie, pail/pail, pail/fishing pond. This is new for the children, and may be difficult, so give them plenty of support.
6. Finish your lesson by returning to "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing". Distribute the hole-punched copies of the rhyming card for "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing" to be placed in children's **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collection** folders at home.

Tuesday

1. Begin by putting the "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing" poster back on the blackboard. Ask children if they can remember why Simon was called Simple.
2. Remind the children that Tuesday is "acting" day. To act out this week's rhyme, you will need 3 children for each performance. One is Simple Simon. The next is a helper from the audience. The third is the Dickie Bird. Explain that the helper comes "on stage" after Simon has failed to get his line into the pail where he is going to try (unsuccessfully) to catch his whale. Also explain that the Dickie Bird comes on stage after the first stanza of the nursery rhyme. Simple Simon is to cast the line of his fishing pole several times, trying (unsuccessfully) to get his hook into a pretend pail. When the children chant "Was in his mother's pail", the helper stands up, and takes hold of Simon's imaginary hook to put it gently into the pail. As the helper is doing this, the children begin chanting the second stanza. The Dickie Bird stands up, Simon sees it, and grabs an imaginary shaker of salt. Throughout the second stanza, Simon tiptoes behind the Dickie Bird and when he gets close, he shakes his salt shaker. Each time, the Dickie Bird hops away. Remind the children that since we are acting both boys and girls can be Simon or any other character.
3. This week you might want to use variations in volume during your chanting. Children can chant or sing the first stanza in their regular volume, but when Simon is hunting the Dickie Bird, you might have them begin chanting or singing very softly, and steadily increase their volume.
4. Consider tape recording the children's choral performances of the nursery rhymes for use in your classroom listening center. Be sure that you have a copy of the nursery rhyme to keep with the tape.
5. Finish this lesson with your cloze activity. Use the following lines in particular:
Simple Simon went a-fishing
For to catch a ____
All the water he had got
Was in his mother's ____.

Wednesday

We have included quite a few pictures in this week's rhyming cards set because there are two different spellings for the rime *ale* (also *ail*). If you have children who are recognizing letters, you may want to limit your pictures to those that go with one spelling or the other. For most children, we are simply working with drawing their attention to the **sound** of the rime.

1. Put the "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing" 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 **whale** and **pail** rhyme, and we are going to learn some other words that rhyme. Introduce these pictures from the picture card set: **bail, hail, jail, mail, nail, pail, sail, scale, snail, tail, whale, and veil**. (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 the children to "bail" out their boats or to hit a "nail".
4. Remind children that last week we sorted by rhyming sounds. As we worked with **ing** rimes last week, we'll contrast the *ap* rime with this week's *ail* rime. Use the following pictures: **gap, trap, lap, and wrap** and **whale, pail, tail, sail**. Call children's attention to the words "whale" and "pail" and "tail" in the nursery rhyme poster. Then, tape the picture for **trap** at the top of one column and the picture for **whale** at the top of the other. Place all other pictures in the chalk tray, saying each one's name.
5. Remind the children that we've been talking about things that are the **same**. When words end the same, we say that they **rhyme**.
6. Call children one at a time to take a picture and decide if it ends the **same** as **trap** or **whale**. 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.
7. Finish today's lesson by chanting or singing "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing".

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 "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing" 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 with the cloze activity 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 **Simple Simon Went A-Fishing**.
2. This week, we are adding another option to **Children's Choice** day, and that is *individual* or *small group* performances. Here, children who are ready to recite a rhyme alone or with a friend can add their name(s) to the Choice list. Because being able to recite the rhymes will ultimately help children with their understandings of "text", we hope that, by the end of the year, all children will be able to successfully recite four to five of the rhymes we are learning. 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 "Simple Simon Went A-Fishing." Have all the children pretend they are Simple Simon. They can all cast their fishing lines (unsuccessfully) and tiptoe behind their very own "dickie birds."
5. Remind children to look at their **My Very Own Nursery Rhyme Collections** with their families over the weekend.