

Dear parents,

We turned Dr. Seuss's birthday into a full-on, week-long celebration, reading, rhyming, writing, and making art to pay tribute to someone we agreed wrote some pretty amazing books! The children were all quick to notice that Dr. Seuss makes extensive use of rhyming words. We first introduced rhyming words in January, and the children have really caught on. Rhyming stories are such an important pre-literacy tool, as they expose children to word families, initial sounds, and the help contextual clues give us - all things emerging readers use as they begin to master reading. And Dr. Seuss classics like *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Lorax*, and *The Cat in the Hat* provide the perfect opportunity to practice these skills, since they are predictable, rhyming, and very catchy. The children especially enjoy thinking about the kind of silly, made-up rhyming words that populate Dr. Seuss's books (for instance, a "thneed," which as we all know is "a-fine-something-that-all-people-need"). We have filled our bookshelves with lots of Dr. Seuss, alphabet, and rhyming stories, and we love seeing the whole group reading these books enthusiastically and practicing their rhyming words together.

We kicked off our Dr. Seuss week on **Monday** by reading *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*. With fish on our minds, we decided it might be fun to undertake a fishy science experiment. We poured water, vegetable oil, Coke, and vinegar into Mason jars and dropped Swedish fish into the liquids. The class made predictions about what might happen - some of our hypotheses included "turn to lava," "explode," "turn different colors", "get bigger," and "totally disappear." We were all excited to check in on them throughout the morning. Even in the first half hour, we noticed some changes, but we speculated that the fish would undergo still more transformations overnight. At snack time, we ate - what else? - Goldfish; we also found a second good use for our leftover Swedish fish (you can probably guess what that was).

Because the weather was so uncooperative and Parish Hall was occupied, we took the opportunity to try two new ways to move and play. First we went down to the undercroft with the Blue class to do an informal yoga and movement class led by all the 4s teachers. Although we are no competition for Ms. Melissa, we all had a great time nonetheless. We also had the fun of exploring the Blue 4s classroom during playtime. Both classes enjoyed checking out their friends' different toys, cars, and dress-up gear, and they were keen to go back later in the week (and thanks to Mother Nature and her rainy ways, we had several opportunities).

Tuesday was the day we celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday and Read Across America with our fun-filled pajama party. To get the party started, we let each student tell the class a bit about their book and show us a favorite page. Our books ran the gamut, featuring family, princesses, dinosaurs, vehicles, and all kinds of animals. Thank you all for sending your children in with pajamas and a favorite book. They had a wonderful time showing off their snazzy sleepwear and sharing their books with each other and with us. We love you

children's enthusiasm for reading! To commemorate a great day, everyone got a Dr. Seuss bookmark to bring home.

In the art room, the children used torn paper to create their own versions of the fish we read about on Monday. This required some careful planning (how many fish do we need, and what colors should we use?), and hard work (after all, five fish is a lot!), and the children did a beautiful job. We also took a look at our Swedish fish after their 24 hours soaking in various liquids. Ms. Pam put her chopstick skills to work and carefully removed our fish. We then recorded the results: the fish in the water got faded and squishy, and they turned the water pink; the ones in oil showed no change at all (and were still edible, as some intrepid friends discovered); the fish in soda totally disintegrated and turned into "fish goop;" and the vinegar fish dyed the vinegar and became pale pink, mushy and very stinky. Thankfully no eruptions or explosions! While our predictions may have been a little off, it was very interesting to compare the before and after. During lunch, we read Dr. Seuss's classic *Green Eggs and Ham*. Votes were about evenly split on whether we would be willing to eat green eggs and ham.

With Dr. Seuss's birthday celebration still in full swing, we read *The Lorax* during our morning meeting on **Wednesday**. It is a long story and we thought at first we might need to make use of one of our new bookmarks to mark our spot so that we could pick up where we left off the next day. But the children were determined to push through to the end - go, Team Red 4s, go! Then we did two Dr. Seuss-themed activities. In the art room, the class created Lorax windsocks using cardboard rolls, foam shapes, tissue paper, and googly eyes. Our windsocks, along with some *Truffula* treetops, are now hanging from our classroom tree limb. And, with Dr. Seuss's famous *Green Eggs and Ham* phrase "I do not like green eggs and ham!" as a prompt, the children illustrated and wrote an All About Me entry identifying what they *do* like to eat. Pasta and candy were the big winners, and we even had a few friends who said they really did love green eggs and ham.

After snack time, we read *Wacky Wednesday* (by "Theo. LeSieg" a Seuss pseudonym) featuring a young boy who encounters a host of improbable and incongruous sights as he moves about town. Then we decided to take advantage of our nice-ish weather and go on a wacky walk of our own. We kept an eye out for anything out of the ordinary as we walked to Manor Park - we saw a sausage dog wearing a fancy pink sweater, a few of us spotted an uneaten hotdog in the middle of the street, and some of us could almost swear we heard the ducks saying "hello" to us while we quacked at them - wacky! We can all agree, it felt absolutely great to venture outside. More outdoor adventures to come soon, we hope!!

Thursday was all about letter **M**. We went around the circle brainstorming M words and came up with 11 winners (including **Mila** and a universal favorite - **Mommy**) before our fine motor skills practice got underway. Just when we think a letter is going to be challenging for the children to write, they prove us wrong - our upper-case M was apparently not a **m**ountain too high for the children to climb, and they all did a great job with their letter M worksheets. They also decorated our classroom letter M with a delicious item beginning

with M (hint: it makes a frequent appearance in lunchboxes). Since rhyming words and letter M are top of **mind** this week, we read Dr. Seuss's *Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?* This is a fun rhythmic book requiring lots of audience participation, and the children really enjoyed anticipating the rhyming words and joining in with Mr. Brown as he moo-ed, cock-a-doodle-doo-ed, klopp-klopp-ed, and dibble-dibble-dibble-dopp-ed his way through the book. [Here](#) is a read-aloud of the book your children might enjoy mooing along to with you.

We also returned to the undercroft for another **movement-intensive** few **minutes**, and this time it was all about letter M. We channeled **mice**, **monkeys**, and **monsters** as we sang and danced our hearts out. It's official: "We like to **move** it, **move** it!" And at snack time we celebrated letter M by **munching** on some yummy **mini-muffins**. The overwhelming majority of us decided we did like to munch mini-muffins. (We love offering these tangible, slightly special experiences, like eating Kisses, licking lemons, and munching mini-muffins, as we find they are great tools for helping cement the letter skills we're working on - that muffin your children munched today may well be at the forefront of their **minds** the next time they think about the letter M and the sound it **makes**).

Friday's Show and Tell was **magnificent** - our M objects included a **maraca**, two **mermaids** and a photo of **Mommy**, a **millipede**, **Minnie Mouse**, a **monster truck**, **money**, a **Mets** necklace, a **mouse**, and a **monkey**. After Show and Tell, we spent the rest of the **morning** with our rascally friend *The Cat in the Hat*. We think you all would love to have been flies on the wall as we talked about the big dilemma facing the children in the story. **Mom** returns home after the kids have had some extremely rowdy visitors - should they tell her? We posed the question to our group and got some hilarious responses, which gave us a bit of insight into their personalities. Some decided that they would 'fess up right away, since it is always better to tell the truth. Others said they would never admit to the goings on, knowing that Mom might be less than thrilled.

At snack time, we had another Dr. Seuss-themed snack - not fish this time, but cats. Using a **marshmallow** (bonus M word!) and slices of banana and strawberry, the children created an edible version of the Cat in the Hat. We decided it was as much fun to see the Cat tumble to the ground as it was to construct him, but most fun of all was eating him! The class then made a second Cat - after having written the letters of their name on alternating red and white strips of paper on Thursday, they built the Cat's Hat from the top down and then gave him a cute, smiley face. We ended the day with more dancing and a fun half-hour playing with the Blues class in our two classrooms.

Books we read this week:

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish

The Foot Book

Green Eggs and Ham

The Lorax

Wacky Wednesday

Mr. Brown Can Moo! Can You?

The Cat in the Hat

Are You My Mother by P.D. Eastman

And 11 favorite books from home, which we loved looking at, talking about, and reading together - thank you again!

Looking ahead to next week:

- Our Friday Show and Tell will feature the **letter N**.
- With the temps warming up, we are hoping we'll finally be able to be out on the playground. There will likely be some wet, muddy patches, so please send your children in all week with **boots or similar weatherproof footwear**.
- We still need lots of **shoe boxes** for our upcoming fairy tale diorama project. Please send in any you've got at home by the end of next week. Thank you!

Wishing you a happy weekend,
Pam and Carolyn











