

# WEDNESDAY

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## ACADEMIC LESSON

### STORY TO BEGIN THE DAY (READ BY AN ADULT)

#### **Solange, 7 years old**

This morning I played with my little brother Simon while the others were finishing breakfast. We are always finished first! We pretended that I was the mom and he was the dad and we had three babies but there was a baby boy who cried a lot and two twin baby girls who were very calm in their cradle. Simon took the one who cried a lot because he loves to comfort babies and he cradled him while walking and singing a song to him. I changed the diapers of the twins, then I put on their pretty warm dresses, and then I breastfed them both at the same time.

Camille is lending us her doll right now, that's why we have three babies. It's a lot of work!

Simon had to keep doing it all by himself because it was school time.

First, we sang our songs and said our poems and then we could call our cousins! I could not wait! I immediately told them that yesterday we made the most beautiful fairy house we have ever made! Antony described it to them,

"We found a very nice hollow tree stump. The little ones picked up lots of fine branches and stones and Hippolyte and I made a stone sculpture in the hollow of the stump. Camille and Lucien made a very round house with the twigs, it took them some time but it was so beautiful! And during this time Léonie made a whole path of stones which went from the stump to another smaller stump and there we made another even more tiny house!"

"What was Charlotte doing?" asked Rebecca.

"Oh, I don't know..."

"Me I was climbing trees and brought them little pine cones when I found them," said Charlotte.

"Yes," I said, "we made a mini-garden for the gnomes in front of the stump with the pine cones! »

"You're so lucky," said Lucia with dreamy eyes.

"But we also had a lot of fun my dear, didn't we?" said his mom.

"Yes, that's right," she cried out, "we danced again and dad played the violin even better because now he practices a lot every day! He even teaches Antonio! And we made a mini house with beeswax, to place at the base of my plant!"

"Where did you find the beeswax?" asked Rebecca.

"We took it from what melted from our candle in the morning," said Lucia very happy.

"Well are we going to start the lesson or not?" asked Antonin who loves learning.

"Oh yes!" I said. "I wish you would tell us more about the trees. Do they talk to each other for example?"

The others laughed but Melody said it was actually a very good question!

She said,

"One day we will talk about trees for a whole month. They are fascinating! There are a lot of things we don't yet know about them ... Because for example, if they communicate with each other, they don't use speech, so it's not so easy to know ... But the scientists have discovered more and more things about trees in recent years. For example, that yes, they can communicate with each other, through their roots, they can even warn of danger to each other!"

"Oh wow, I want you to tell us more!" I cried out.

"Another month I will, because now we are going to focus on building. You Solange, you can go continue your drawing from yesterday during this time?"

And so off I went.

*For children under the age of eight, you could stop reading here.*

*If you continue reading for older children, the younger ones can at this point change activities for example they can draw a picture of the story or play calmly.*

## MEMORIZATION

(AROUND 10 MINUTES)

Ask the children to tell you what they learned about trees the day before.

## READING

*Depending on your child's reading level, you can ask him to read the text (partly silently and partly out loud), or you can read it to him, or alternate reading it out loud.*

*When he reads it out loud, help him to read slowly and clearly and follow the punctuation (pause when there is a period, give expression to exclamation and question marks, etc.)*

### **Antonin, 8 years old**

"When the dead leaves fall, what happens?" asked mom. "They have been falling for thousands of years, so why isn't the whole earth covered in dead leaves and rotten fruit?"

It surprised me that I had never asked myself this question before. It's true that we are talking about the landscape and all that, but the landscape would have disappeared under the piles of all that dies, if it did not decompose. But how it all breaks down is the question.

"It's the little animals that eat the dead leaves," said Charlotte.

"And then?" asked mom.

"Then they digest them, and their poop is decomposed dead leaf," I said laughing.

"Yes, and then?" asked mom.

"Well, yes after." said Charlotte. "There is something after, otherwise the earth would be covered with decomposed dead leaves, it would be ugly obviously."

"Dead leaves are not ugly!" I protested.

"No, they are not ugly, but if there was only that, it would not be great." said Lucien.

"Yes, that's right," I said "and then no flower could grow under a big carpet of decayed dead leaves."

"I know what happens next," said Camille. "Smaller critters eat decayed dead leaves and their droppings are even more decomposed and even smaller critters eat them and so on until ..."

"Yes, until it becomes what?" I asked. "Could it disappear completely?"

"No," said mom "but it gets so small and transparent that you can't see it anymore. They are called mineral salts. This is what nourishes the plants when it mixes with water."

"And why isn't there a big carpet of mineral salts on the surface of the earth?" I asked.

"It's thanks to the work of earthworms," said mom. "They continually mix the dead leaves with the soil that is already there. They eat the earth and the dead

leaves, so it mixes together inside the earthworm. As a result, their excrement is very good soil that has become rich and good thanks to the leaves of trees that have been dissolved. Then microscopic living things which are called bacteria, digest these feces in turn, and it becomes even richer and more alive. This is how humus is formed."

"Humus..." I repeated, because it was such a beautiful word to have in the mouth.

"Humus is all the good, fertile soil that is on the surface of the ground and that allows plants to grow."

"And all the other dead things, who breaks them down?" I asked. "Dead insects, dead animals, rotten fruit, dead branches ..."

"There are a multitude of small animals that feed on all this, and also insects, and even fungi, and thus everything decomposes and mixes with the earth thanks to the work of earthworms which mix the earth with the rest."

"That's amazing!" said Lucien. "Is that why earthworms look like long intestines? They are the intestines of the earth ..."

"Yes," said Melody "earthworms and all the bugs in the ground and in wood, and the fungi, and the bacteria; they are the intestines of the earth. And they are the tiny builders of the soil. Without them the soil would be a compact mass where nothing could grow, but they dig kilometers of tunnels and holes in the soil, and in these tunnels, roots can grow."

"But roots can just grow in the ground," said Charlotte.

"Sometimes we believe that the roots dig the earth, but no, they are fine like a hair at the beginning, it would be very difficult! What they do most often is that they get into the holes, so for example they lie down in the tunnel of an earthworm. They are so thin that they can pass almost everywhere, even into the crack of a pebble for example. Then they will gradually grow and burst the pebble. So, the roots also participate in creating humus! Thanks to them, the soil does not remain stony, but the stones gradually mix with the earth, give it their minerals, etc. If it's too rocky of course it's very difficult for plants to grow."

I was taken aback to imagine the root getting bigger and popping the pebble. We were all a little dreamy eyed trying to imagine all this. We didn't say anything. Then mom continued the lesson.

"Plants can even dissolve stones! Their roots are covered with absorbent hairs which can extend to touch the earth on the walls of the tunnels, so that they can feed themselves by absorbing the water which is present in the earth and is full of mineral salts. But their hairs can also produce chemicals to dissolve a pebble! Or to feed bacteria that will dissolve the pebble!"

"Do all the plants have hairs like that on their roots?" asked Charlotte.

"Tree roots do not have absorbent hairs, but a tiny fungus dwells on them and forms hairs in their place. The absorbent hairs of these fungi are capable of

sucking water even through rocks! It's great for trees, because they need huge amounts of water to grow, and these fungi absorb it for them from the ground."

"And how does water go into the earth?" I asked.

"Well it goes in, that's all," said Charlotte with a little irritation.

Sometimes she finds my questions boring.

But mom said,

"It's not that obvious. There are soils where water does not penetrate, because there are not enough earthworms. So, it just penetrates a little bit, and the rest flows away or accumulates on the surface, as if it were a road, and it can cause floods and even devastate fields!"

"But why doesn't it go into the ground like when I water the plants in the garden?" asked Camille.

"For the water to penetrate, the earth has to be like a sponge," said mom.

"Oh yes!" cried Charlotte. "When doing the dishes, we use a sponge, not a cloth, because in the sponge there are lots of small holes and small tunnels, so the water can really get in and stay there!"

"Exactly!" said mom. "The surface of the ground is a sponge full of water, and it is this water that nourishes plants. In addition, earthworms leave a lot of mucus along the kilometers of tunnels that they dig; sliding on the mucus allows the

water to circulate more easily. This is how water can move well, everywhere in the soil, and go to nourish all the roots, and allow the plants to root very deeply."

"Wow, I adored earthworms, now I love them even more!" said Lucia.

We quickly hung up to go do our exercises. I was really looking forward to spring and being able to dig in the earth to find earthworms. I heard that to know how rich and alive humus is, you can tell by the number of earthworms you find when you dig.

## LESSON 1<sup>ST</sup> AND 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE

*Please see the document "Academic Exercises".*

## LESSON 3<sup>RD</sup> - 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

*(around 60 minutes)*

Each day I will propose a text for children from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up.

It should be copied into their beautiful notebooks and if possible illustrated.

Afterwards you can do different exercises based on the text and depending on what you want your child to work on.

Please see the document "Academic exercises" to choose the exercises you want to do.

### **To be copied in the beautiful notebooks**

#### *Soil Builders*

*There are little animals that decompose what is dead to mix it with the earth and make the soil ever more alive! They build the soil and create humus on the surface; a fertile, spongy material that is full of water and is welcoming and nourishing for plants.*

*These soil-building decomposers are earthworms, certain insects, and a multitude of much smaller organisms, including microscopic bacteria. Fungi and even the roots of plants also act to create humus.*

## **ARTISTIC LESSON**

MANUAL ACTIVITY OF YOUR CHOICE

### **Twisted string**

Easy for all children even Kindergarteners.

You can make a pretty giant earthworm to decorate the nature corner in your house. [Tutoriel here.](#)

### **Finger knitting**

An activity that is a little more difficult at first, but wonderful for the development of children of all ages, even Kindergarteners.

They can make bracelets, necklaces, and even scarves.

[Tutorial here.](#)

### **Cooking**

Here are some great recipes to do with kids:

[Apple pie](#)

[Pear crisp](#)

[Pear and Leek Soup](#)

## END OF MORNING STORY

*TO BE READ BY AN ADULT*

*The following story is adapted especially for the 3rd grade and up. For the 1st and 2nd grades, it is better to focus on the evening story and the one that opens the morning, otherwise it would be too much for them.*

**Léonie, 8 and a half years old**

I really liked the story about Joseph, especially when it finally ended very well. But now it is a disaster again for his people and even worse than before! I can't wait for Melody to tell us more.

First, she asked us to tell our cousins what had happened to Joseph and his brothers. So, I tried to make a good summary without forgetting anything but without taking too long either.

I told them,

"It started a long time ago with Abraham. He heard a voice speak to him and say to him, "Leave your country, go to the country that I will indicate to you." And he trusted, he left for a whole new country, and his wife Sarah also trusted him and she left with him, and also his nephew. Many adventures and things happened to them, and they became very rich, with many cattle and many servants. And Sarah ended up having a son, when she and Abraham were already very, very,

very old, and they were so happy to finally have a child together! Later, their son Isaac also had a son, Israel, and when he became an adult, Israel had twelve sons. His eleventh son was called Joseph; he was very intelligent, very beautiful and he had a pure heart. So, everyone loved him and his brothers became jealous of him ... "

I stopped suddenly and said,

"I don't want to tell it all in summary, it ruins everything! It's such a beautiful story, you have to read it for yourself, or have someone tell it to you one day. I can just tell you that Joseph ended up in Egypt after terrible events. And all his brothers eventually joined him, so that the twelve great grandchildren of Abraham and all their descendants, now lived in Egypt where everything was going very well for them because Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had given them land and a lot of wealth. What surprises me a little is that the One who had spoken to Abraham, then to Isaac, and finally to Israel, He always said to them: "This land that I give you, it will be yours and your descendants forever", and yet now their descendants lived in Egypt and were doing very well there, and they had no intention of leaving it, even if they were very far from the country where this voice had promised they would go."

Melody said that was exactly it, and that the children of the twelve sons of Israel had children who had children who had children and so on, so in the end they became a whole people.

And she continued to tell the story,

"Even though they were happy in Egypt, they never forgot that they were the descendants of Abraham, the man who had left his country because a voice had spoken to his heart. The descendants of Israel settled all over the country of Egypt, and they lived with the Egyptians as friends but they kept their own customs, and in particular the custom that Abraham had transmitted to them, to worship a single god who speaks to the heart, and to remain a people, united among themselves.

One day, there was a pharaoh who had never known Joseph, who did not remember all the good things Joseph had done for Egypt, or who did not care ... And this pharaoh began to have fear of the descendants of Israel.

So, he gathered his people, all the Egyptians, and to those who could not come, he sent messengers, and to all he said this,

"Look at this new people, the people of the children of Israel. They are now more numerous and more powerful than us. It is a great danger to our people. If they continue to multiply in this way, they could take power over our country. For example, if we were at war with another country, the sons of Israel could join our enemies, they could fight against us, and then they would leave the country with all their riches!"

Some of the wise men of the kingdom would have liked to ask the pharaoh why the people of Israel would have wanted to fight them if they wanted to leave the country, that they could do it without having to fight, since they already had a lot of wealth and they needed nothing. Besides, the sons of Israel had always lived with the Egyptians as friends.

But at that time, it was not at all allowed to question the pharaoh when he had announced something, it would have been a crime against his majesty. So, the wise men of the kingdom fell silent, and the pharaoh continued to speak to his people.

And the Egyptians were listening to him, and they suddenly started to be very afraid. Very afraid of these people who had always been their friends and who now, who knows, could fight them.

Then the pharaoh said to them, "Do not be afraid, I have a solution to all of this. We are going to give them hard work, they will no longer have the energy to spend time together and have children, and eventually they will become fewer and weaker than us, and there will be no more danger."

The Egyptians were very relieved. And they imposed on all the sons of Israel slave masters who overwhelmed them with very hard, exhausting and discouraging work.

The sons of Israel had to build two great cities for the pharaoh to store the kingdom's taxes! These were the cities of Pithome and Ramses. But they did not

lose heart, they did not exhaust themselves despite the overwhelming work, and they continued to spend time together and have children and multiply. So, the Egyptians began to be afraid again. They said to themselves that the sons of Israel were too strong for them and they began to hate them. And they thought that the only way to stop being afraid was to break them with hard work, so that these people would eventually weaken.

And that is what happened. The Egyptians subjected all the sons of Israel to increasingly terrible slavery. Those who were their friends a few years earlier, were now their slaves and the Egyptians treated them like they were less than nothing!

All because they were afraid ...

And they continued to be afraid.

So, they went to the pharaoh, who had another idea of how to weaken the people of Israel.

This other terrible idea I will tell you about tomorrow."

"Oh no," we all shouted. "Keep on going!"

But she smiled and told us to go do our lunch chores. I had to wash the salad. So, we said goodbye to our cousins and we shut the computer. For them it was time to go play a little before supper.



## **NATURE ACTIVITY**

### ***IF WALKING OUTDOORS IS POSSIBLE***

During your walk, try to see if you can spot some of the little soil decomposers. Maybe earthworms, insects, fungi ... Look closely at the stumps of trees, near roots around dead branches ... everything that is dead and waiting to be decomposed can shelter insects. And by digging into the earth a little, you can often find earthworms.

If you are in Quebec it will be a little more difficult because the little creatures are still in their winter sleep. But maybe you can find some traces they left a few months ago. For example, if you pick up a branch and peel the bark, with a little luck you will see traces left by digging insects.

### ***IF WALKING OUTDOORS IS NOT POSSIBLE***

Do you know that there are also insects in homes? Perhaps you will be able to discover some.

And to see roots grow, you can do any of the following:



- Take a celery heart and place it in a bowl with a little water at the bottom. Put the bowl in the sun. Change the water regularly to keep it pure. Wait a few days and you will see small shoots and roots appear.

You could then plant it in a large pot.



- Take the base of a leek and immerse it in a bowl of water, with the small filaments down. Change the water regularly and wash the roots once a week. The leek will grow again from its roots, and you can eat its beautiful green leaves!



- Save the core of a lettuce. Cut the core to about 3 cm and place it in a bowl of water, submerging it to the middle. Place the bowl in a sunny location. Wait a few days, and change the water regularly. The lettuce will

produce roots and new leaves, then it will grow back and you can eventually eat it again!

