

Cultural

A Manual for Early Childhood (Ages 3 to 6+)

Instructor's Album



PREVIEW

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Introduction

This book is a manual to assist adults in their work with the young child. The lessons included herein assume that the trained adult already has foundational experience offering practical life lessons. **The Practical Life Manual is a prerequisite for this one.**

The activities included herein are suggestions of what may be appropriate for children in North American early childhood environments (ages 3 to 6+). But cultural activities are deeply steeped in the child's community and era. Because culture is always evolving and changing, so too must cultural activities. What is appropriate in your children's community, may differ from what is included here. For example, the types of visual art activities will vary depending on the materials typically used and available in the child's life. We must show the child what is contemporary using the real (but child-sized) tools and materials that they are likely to encounter in everyday life.

If some of the activities presented in this manual do not match the culture of the children's community, your responsibility as a trained educator is to create activities that do.

This manual is not meant to replace a formal teacher education program. Neither can it substitute for the support and guidance offered by a community of trained Montessori educators. Do not sell yourself short and rely exclusively on this manual for your work with the young child. Your preparation will be inadequate.

The rationale (theory) for why the activities are offered in the sequence and manner presented here is inseparable from the activities themselves. If you are trying to understand why something is or is not working for a particular child, look to the theory and then back up and look at their foundational preparation in practical life and spoken language activities.

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Key points to do with all exercises

An essential aspect of all the child's self-construction is learning to make an intelligent choice. Children must be free to choose their own work, complete it at an appropriate location of their choosing, do it at their own pace, and repeat it as often as they like. To help honor these needs, the guide adopts a standard procedure for giving lessons as follows.

1. Invite the child to the lesson.
 - Be mindful of the language you use to invite the child to the activity. They cannot be given freedom to decline the lesson until they have knowledge...they may not have this during their first weeks of school.
 - Good options for the first weeks of school are:
 - Get their attention with a brief song or finger play.
 - Say, "It's time for your lesson on how to use the faucet. Come with me."
 - "I can give you a lesson now. Let's go get our work."
 - "Here is the work we need. I'll have a turn and then you can have a turn."
 - "I can show you how to do that."
2. Go together to the work, touch it and name the lesson.
 - Give the exact name listed in the album.
 - Say, "This is the Pouring in a Cup and Saucer Work."
 - Say, "This is a lesson on how to get someone's attention."
3. Model how to carry the work and let the child carry it to a place they choose.
 - Model the carry by lifting it up and then placing it back on the shelf and let the child bring it to an appropriate work area of his/her choosing.
 - If they must use a table, say something like, "Bring this so carefully to a table for us." If they must use a rug, say something like, "We will need a rug for this work. First let's get the rug ready and then come back for the work."
4. Say that you'll have a turn and then the child will get a turn.
5. Demonstrate the procedures for doing the activity.
 - Invite the child to do parts s/he is able to do (e.g., filling the pitcher for pouring into a stem glass after they have had the using a pitcher lesson; emptying or drying the second dishwashing basin).
6. Give the child a turn to do the entire activity.
7. Fade and observe while the child completes the activity.
 - Step in to ask for a turn if needed to clarify a step.
8. Return the work to the shelf together.
 - The work must be completely ready for the next child to use (e.g., including an orange to be juiced; a full pitcher for pouring work; all items clean and dry).
9. Free the child to repeat anytime they like (if they are able).
 - Say something like, "You can do this work any time it is available."
 - If a repeated presentation is necessary, clarify that you will do the work together again another time. Say something like, "I really enjoyed doing this work with you. Let's do it together again next time."

Fine Art



Fine art display cards

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Fine art folders

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

Fine Art

Age 2.5 and up	Prerequisite Lessons Carrying
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To connect the child with the artistic potential of humans • To provide opportunities for logical speech and self-expression • To develop vocabulary 	

Materials:

- Room art: Framed fine art prints displayed on the classroom walls (much white space is left between prints to create a calm visual field)
- Displaying art: Postcards of artwork; several display easels to hold postcards; basket/container sized to fit items perfectly
- Fine art folders: A collection of fine art organized in a decorative folder; One folder remains on the shelf and the contents are rotated every few weeks to align with the children's interests; each collection contains thematic examples of fine art (e.g., impressionism, portraits, pointillism, still life)

Presentation: Displaying art

1. Invite a child to work with you. Go together to the shelf, name the work, and have them carry it to your work area.
2. Take the postcards and place them in a stack on your table. Say, "I'm going to find one that I really like." Look at the first one, appreciate it, then place it face down in a pile to the right of the face-up pile.
3. Repeat for another card.
4. Repeat for another card but this time say, "I like this one" and leave it face up on the stack.
5. Search the easel supply, find one that you like and place it on the table in front of the child. Pick up the card you like. Use your left hand to secure the easel and your right hand to carefully secure the postcard onto the easel.
6. Say, "Let's find a special place to display this." Stand up and tuck in your chair. Lift up the prepared easel with one hand on the easel and one hand securing the postcard. Walk around the room until you find a good spot and place the easel there.
7. Admire it. Say, "Now you can have a turn." Go back to the table together and give the child a turn. Fade and observe.

8. Encourage repetition.
9. When they have done as many as they like, guide them to return the postcard stack to its container and carry the basket back to the shelf.
10. At the shelf, tell the child, “You can display the art postcards any time they are available.”
11. Guide them towards work if needed.

Exercise #1: Fine art folders

1. Invite one or two children to work with you. Go together to the shelf, name the work, and have them carry it to your work area.
2. Carefully remove one fine art piece from the folder. Place it directly in front of one child, name the piece and artist.
3. Discuss what you see. Encourage conversation and remember that all opinions are valid...the child cannot be wrong, this is art!
4. After discussing, place it face up on the top left of your work area.
5. Give each child a turn.
6. Repeat as interest drives.
7. When they are finished, say, “Let’s clean up so carefully. First, I’ll put Da Vinci’s Mona Lisa back. Model how to carefully lift the art card and return it to the folder.
8. Guide the children to take turns doing the rest. Say, “Geniya, will you put Van Gogh’s starry night back?”
9. Go to the shelf together to put the work away and free them to repeat whenever they like.
10. Guide them towards work if needed.

Points of Interest:

- Visual aspects of each piece of art presented

Control of Error:

- The adult

Notes:

Create many different collections of art pieces; old calendars or art books are a good source for these items. Find items that feature children/common situations whenever possible (so we link art directly with the child’s life). Try to feature local artists and invite them in to look at their art together with the children (take their photo and add it to that artist’s folder).

PREVIEW

Continent Puzzle Map



Transition from the globe: Clay hemisphere presentation
Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Presenting the Western Hemisphere
Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

Continent Puzzle Map

Age	Prerequisite Lessons
3.5 and up	Colored Globe (Language); Geometric Cabinet; Sculpting
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To show the link between the globe and the puzzle maps • To expand the child's understanding of the world and to help them link places they hear of with physical locations 	

Materials:

- Continent puzzle map
- Clay, small clay knife, small smooth tray, small sponge (in a container), cloth to dry hands, apron

Presentation: Transition from the globe

1. Invite the child to work with you. Ask them to bring the colored globe to a rug. Place it in the front center of the rug.
2. Go together to get the clay tray. Bring it to your rug and place it in the front left of the rug. Put on your aprons. Remind them that we always wash our hands before working with clay. Go together to wash hands.
3. Say, "Because this is a globe, we can only see one part of it at a time. We have to turn it to see the other parts. But we have a way that we can see the entire globe all at once. Let me show you!"
4. Take the clay and shape it into a sphere. Cut the sphere in half with the knife. Use your palm to flatten one hemisphere.
5. Let the child have a turn flattening the other hemisphere.
6. Clean your palms with the sponge and dry with the cloth.
7. Say, "If we make the globe flat, we can see all of its sides at the same time. Guess what, we have something like this in our classroom...."
8. Go together to get the continent puzzle map and bring it to the rug. Model carefully how to place your hands (thumbs on top) on each side of the map and slowly slide it out of the stand. Put it back in and let the child carry it to the rug.
9. Place it on the right front of the rug (to the right of the globe).
10. Say, "On this map we can see this part of the globe and this part of the globe at the same time. Let's compare it and make sure it's really the same, just flat."

11. Carefully remove the North American puzzle map piece using the pincer grip of your right hand on the knob and your flat left palm on the map. Lift the piece and place it in front of that continent on the colored globe. Examine it and encourage the child to do the same.
12. Put the piece back in the map frame.
13. Encourage the child to check the other continents too.
14. Encourage them to use the clay and repeat the process of turning a sphere into hemispheres and then into a flat map.
15. When all pieces are back, say, “This is our globe, and this is our puzzle map. On the globe, we can only see one side of the world but on the map, we can see everything at once.”
16. Complete the lesson. Clean up together (including rinsing the sponge, cleaning the clay tray, and washing hands) and free them to repeat.

Exercise #1: Manipulate the map

1. Begin the lesson and guide the child to bring the continent map to the rug. Place it in the center front of the rug.
2. Say, “I’ll take out all the pieces from this side.” Take out the pieces from the western hemisphere and place them to the left of the map on the rug.
3. Say, “These pieces are fragile. We have to treat them very carefully. Look at how carefully I can put my pieces back.” Model slow precise movements.
4. Ask the child to do the same for the eastern hemisphere placing them on the rug on the right side of the map.
5. Free them to work with the puzzle map, doing one hemisphere at a time (so there are only a few pieces of the puzzle out at one time).
6. Fade and observe. Encourage repetition.
7. When they are done, complete the lesson, clean up together and free them to use the map any time they like.

Exercise #2: Language

1. After the child has manipulated the map a great deal, begin as in the Presentation by removing three or four pieces from the map (beginning with the continent you are on).
2. Say, “Each of these continents has a name. I can teach you!”
3. Offer a three-period lesson on the names of the selected continents.
 - Period 1: Say, “This is North America.” Repeat for each.
 - Period 2: Say, “Pick up North America and put it back in the map.” Repeat for each. Say, “Put North America here on the rug.” Repeat for each. Repeat this step as needed, keeping it lively and fun.
 - Period 3: Point to a continent and ask, “What’s this?” Give the child hints if they can’t succeed (e.g., pronounce the first sound of the continent’s name). (Keep in mind that not all children will proceed to the third period on the first day.)
4. Complete the lesson, clean up together, free them to repeat, and guide them towards work if needed.

Points of Interest:

- Carefully placing the pieces on the rug and back in the map

Control of Error:

- The dimensions of the pieces and maps and how the pieces fit together

Accommodations:

- When introducing new continent names, repeat one that they know to help build confidence and isolate the new stimuli (e.g., they will be learning only two new ones at a time).
- If the child has tactile resistance to working with clay, use a large piece of paper as follows instead:
 - Take a large piece of paper and wrap it around the globe. Say, “Imagine what would happen if we drew all the continents on this paper. When we opened it up, it would be flat.”
 - Place the paper next to the map. Say, “Now we can see all sides of the globe at once because we made it into a map.”
 - Let them try wrapping the paper around and opening it up.

Notes:

The child should manipulate the puzzle a great deal before proceeding to the vocabulary. You can add interest by encouraging them to trace the pieces with their fingers too (just as with the geometric cabinet).

The child may be interested in sculpting their sphere to include depictions of the continents. You may wish to have a tool available so they can pursue this as independent work after the presentation.

When you introduce the language, offer the names of three or four different continents in each lesson, proceeding at the child’s pace, until all continent names are known. You may also wish to sign a continent song to help them remember all the names!



Presenting the Eastern Hemisphere
Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

PREVIEW

Land and Water Forms



Materials on the shelf



Layout for presentation

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

Land and Water Forms

Age 3 and up	Prerequisite Lessons Using a pail; Colored globe (language)
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To refine the child's fine motor skills • To aid the child in discovering that water is contained by land • To give the child sensorial impressions of the land and water forms 	

Materials:

- Land and Water Forms (basins with a pouring corner) containing relief representations of the following: Island, Lake, Bay, Cape, Peninsula, Gulf, Straight, Isthmus, Archipelago, System of lakes
- Apron, small pitcher (when 2/3s full, the pitcher's contents should fill two basins 2/3s full), sponge (in container), large placemat or table cloth, drying cloth, pail (sized to contain about three pitchers full of water); All contents may be housed in the pail

Presentation: Pouring

1. Begin the lesson. Invite the child to work with you and go together to name the work at the shelf. Choose two opposing land/water form basins (e.g., island/lake). Demonstrate how to carry the materials and guide the child to bring them to a table.
2. Place the pail on the floor touching the front right leg of the table.
3. Place the land/water forms on the table for a moment while you move the chair aside so that the table's accessible edges are unobstructed.
4. Place the land/water forms on the seat of the chair.
5. Put on your aprons.
6. Spread the placemat/table cloth. Place the land/water forms on the front center of the tablecloth. Place the pitcher, sponge, and drying cloth in order of use to the left of the forms.
7. Ask the child to fill the pitcher and place the full pitcher back on the table.
8. Say, "I'll have a turn and then you can have a turn."
9. Pick up the pitcher and carefully pour it into the first form, just enough to fill the water cavity about 2/3's full.
10. Dab the spout with the sponge and put the pitcher down.
11. Admire your work.
12. Repeat for the second form.
13. Say, "Now we'll get it ready for your turn."

14. Pick up the first form and carefully, slowly pour the water out of the spout corner and into the center of the pail. Use the sponge to dab the spout before placing it back on the table.
15. Repeat for the second form.
16. Invite the child to empty and dry the pail.
17. Roll the drying cloth and carefully dry the inside, edges, and bottom of each form, rerolling the cloth as necessary.
18. Get a fresh drying cloth if needed.
19. Give the child a turn. Fade and observe and encourage repetition.
20. When they are finished, guide them to return the land and water forms to the shelf and carefully replace all items within the pail (all items must be dry).
21. Complete the lesson and free them to repeat again anytime they like with the same or different land and water forms.

Exercise #1: Language

1. Begin as in the presentation but once the forms are filled with water, give the language for each one. Say, "This is a lake. A lake is a body of water that is completely surrounded by land." Trace your finger around the edges of the lake.
2. Guide the child to do the same.
3. Repeat for the second form.
4. Continue the 3-period lesson.
5. Complete the lesson as above.

Points of Interest:

- The water rising in the basin
- The land standing above the water
- Pouring out the corner spout into the center of the pail

Control of Error

- The volume of the pitcher, form basins, and pail

Notes:

Let the child have plenty of opportunities to pour and explore the forms before presenting the language. Always present two shapes at a time, those that are mirror images of each other: island and lake; cape and bay; gulf and peninsula; straight and isthmus, archipelago and system of lakes.



Land and water pouring layout: In this example, the tray and bucket are kept on the chair seat rather than the floor

Physical Science



Air as a gas

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

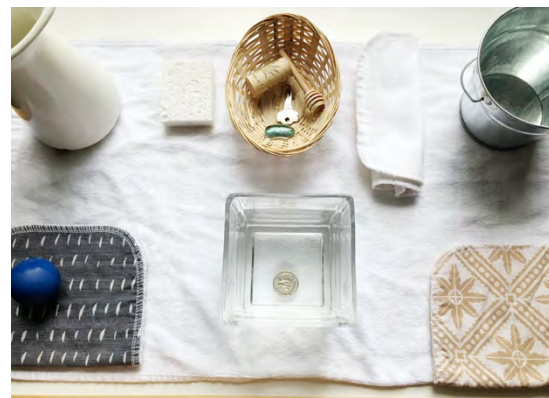


Sink and float layout

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Sink and float step 2: Place the object in the water
Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Sink and float step 3: Floating objects are placed on the left; the quarter sinks and will be placed on the right
Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)

Physical Science

Age 2.5 and up	Prerequisite Lessons Spoken language; Practical life
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce children to the scientific study of the underlying laws of nature (astronomy, chemistry, materials science, and physics) To indirectly prepare the child for future studies in the physical sciences 	

Materials:

- Air as gas: A playground ball that is partially deflated; a hand air-pump with an adapter to add air to the ball
- Magnetism: A magnet (too large to swallow); A collection of everyday objects that are magnetic and that are not magnetic in one container
- Sink and float: A table cloth or underlay, a small basin, a small pitcher (holding enough water to fill the basin 2/3s full), a small pail, a container of objects half of which sink and half of which float, a sponge, a drying cloth, two cloths to sort objects onto

Presentation: Air as gas

- Begin the lesson and invite a few children to work with you. Bring the deflated ball and an air pump to your rug.
- Say, “This ball is deflated. We need to put more air in it. This pump will help us move the air that’s all around us and put it inside this ball.”
- Ask the children to help you hold the ball carefully. Insert the pump’s pin carefully into the ball’s hole. Place your foot on the pump and move the handle up and down until the ball is a bit more full. Touch the ball and notice that there is more air inside but that it still needs more to be fully inflated.
- Invite the children to have a turn.
- Once it is full, quickly remove the pin.
- Say, “Now the air is inside the ball. See how light it is?”
- Complete the lesson. Go outside and have fun playing with the ball.

Exercise #1: Flying a kite

- Bring a kite out with you to a field on a breezy afternoon.
- Teach the children how to fly it.

3. Discuss how the air is pushing the fabric up and how the fabric is floating on the air; the air is supporting it.

Exercise #2: Heat from the sun

1. Begin the lesson informally by stepping into an area in your classroom (or outside) where the sun is shining.
2. Say, “Oh, it’s so warm here in the sunlight.”
3. Take your bare hand and feel the rug or shelf or earth that is in the sunny spot. Then, feel the area nearby that is in the shade. Notice the difference in temperature.
4. Say, “The sun is so important. It makes the world warm enough for us to live.”
5. Talk about things you like to do in the sun (e.g., go for a walk, read a book in a sunny chair).
6. Complete the lesson.

Exercise #3: Light from the sun

1. Begin the lesson informally by noticing that the sun is very bright. Say, “The sun is so bright I can’t see my work.”
2. Show the child how to use a shade or some other object to block the sun.
3. Or, say, “The sun is so bright we don’t need to turn on any lights today.” Turn off the lights. Say, “The sun makes so much light sometimes we don’t even need a lamp!”

Exercise #4: Sink and float

1. Begin the lesson and invite one child to work with you. Go together to gather the materials and bring them to a table.
2. Place the table cloth/underlay on the table. Place the basin in the center front of the table. Place the pitcher, sponge, container of objects, and drying cloth above the basin. Spread one sorting cloth to the left of the basin and the other to the right of the basin.
3. Say, “First we’ll need some water in this pitcher.” Guide the child to fill the pitcher.
4. Pour the water in the basin, dab the pitcher’s spout and place it on the table.
5. Say, “Some things sink in water but other things float in water. Let’s see what these things do.”
6. Take an object that will float from the container and put it in the water. Say, “This floats!” Lift it and watch the water drip off. Give it two brisk shakes to remove excess water and then place it on the sorting cloth to the left of the basin.
7. Repeat for an object that sinks and place it on the cloth to the right of the basin.
8. Guide the child to step in and do the rest. Fade and observe.
9. When the child is finish, discuss the results.
10. Encourage repetition.
11. When the child is finished, carefully dry all items/components, fetch a fresh drying cloth, and tidy up together. Complete the lesson.

Exercise #5: Magnetism

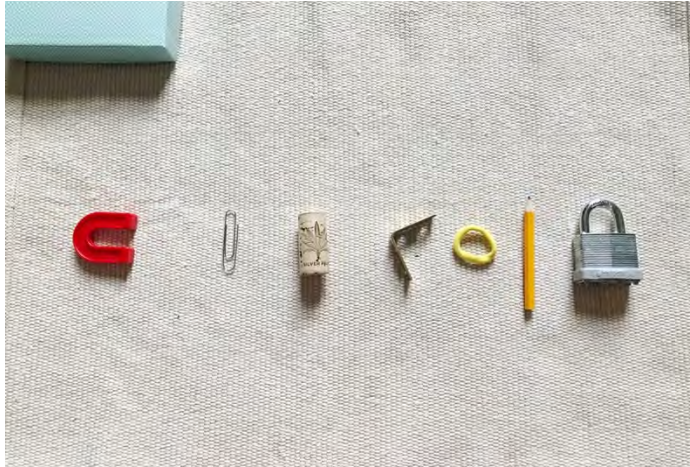
1. Begin the lesson and invite one child to work with you. Go together to name and gather the materials and bring them to your work area.
2. Take the items out of the container and line them up in a row on your work area. Place a light metal object (e.g., paper clip) on the left.
3. Say, “This is a magnet. A magnet attracts some other objects. Let me show you.”
4. Hold the magnet above the paper clip so that the paper clip moves up to connect with the magnet. Enjoy the moment!
5. Take the paper clip and place it in a column to the left.
6. Hold the magnet above the cork...nothing happens. Place the cork in a column to the right.
7. Guide the child to continue for the rest.
8. Fade and observe. Encourage repetition. Complete the lesson.

Notes:

There are other physical science experiments that you may wish to add to the environment. Before you do so, be sure that the experiments are appropriate for the first plane of development (answering the question ‘what is it?’ NOT ‘why?’). Also, be sure they can be done independently by the child and that they are concrete (i.e., do not require abstract thinking to understand). Surface tension is one possible example. Be discerning in what you choose to add. Most of this work happens at the elementary level or is inherently already within practical life (e.g., soap is a surfactant, it creates bubbles when we add air as we stir the dishwashing water...no separate lesson on making bubbles is needed).

There are also one-time events that the trained adult may demonstrate to the children (e.g., sucking an egg into a bottle, how a candle goes out when put under a jar due to lack of oxygen).

Note that magnets may pose a serious health risk to children if swallowed. Neodymium magnets are strongest and, thus, most effectively illustrate the concept but these are not clearly safe in the hands of children. For this reason, you may wish to keep a strong neodymium magnet that the adult guide can use in a one-off presentation to dramatically illustrate attraction and repulsion. This should not be available for the children’s use.



Magnetism layout

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Magnetism step 1: Try to move the object with the magnet

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)



Magnetism step 2: Sort the objects based on their magnetism

Photo by Veritas Montessori Training Residency Residents (2018)