

Flower Arranging



Flower arranging setup (Example 1): Bucket and two trays from top shelf are brought to the work table; second shelf contains supply for vases and doilies (child chooses one of each per arrangement); third shelf is cloth supply for flower arranging and other activities



Flower arranging layout (Example 2): Layout on work table; wastewater bucket is on the floor mat on the floor bottom left; child's apron is on chair but would be worn by the child as the first step to layout

Flower Arranging

Age 4 and up	Prerequisite Lessons Plant care; Table scrubbing
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help the child care for the environment by beautifying it • To help the child develop his own judgment (which flower fits into which vase) • To aid the child in following a long but logical sequence of actions • To indirectly prepare the child for math (measuring) 	

Materials:

- Shelf supplies: Flower supply (in a pail or large open-mouthed vase); replacements for all cloths; selection of doilies (housed on shelf on a tray/basket); selection of vases (housed on shelf); tray (to carry vases/doilies)
- Presentation: Cloth apron (preferably with delicate flower print); floor towel; table cloth (optional but preferred); medium sized glass pitcher (for filling water basin); small pitcher (for filling vases); sponge and sponge holder; scissors (for cutting stems); basin (for cutting stems in water); basket for holding flowers; small pail (for waste leaves/stems); medium pail (for waste water); cloth (for drying up); funnel (for pouring water into vases)

Presentation:

1. Invite the child to do the work with you. Go together to the shelf. Touch and name the materials. Start with the bucket that holds the floor cloth and aprons. Bring them to a table of the child's choosing.
2. Place the bucket on the table.
3. Put on your aprons.
4. Spread the floor mat on the floor next to the table so that it is touching the left leg; the front of the cloth aligned with the front of the table.
5. Go to the shelf to retrieve the other items. Place them on the floor cloth.
6. Take out the special tablecloth and spread it on the table.
7. Take the items out and lay them out in the order of use. The bucket should be placed on the floor cloth.
8. Say, "Let's go get some flowers to put in our basket."

9. Go to your flower supply (or outside with pruning shears to cut some fresh) and choose a selection of three flowers. Bring them to the table.
10. Take the empty vase tray to the vase shelf. Choose a selection of 3 vases and coordinating doilies. Place them on the tray and help the child carry them so carefully to the table.
11. Place them on the upper right-hand side of the table.
12. Pick up the medium pitcher from the floor cloth and ask the child to get some cool water.
13. Pour about an inch of water into the center of the bowl that's on the table. Use the sponge to dab the spout. Pour water into the small pitcher. Then, put the medium pitcher back on the floor cloth.
14. Pick up a flower from the basket. Smell it!
15. Choose a vase and place it next to the front edge of the table.
16. Hold the flower next to the vase with the stem hanging below the table's edge.
17. Move the flower up and down to determine the right height for the cut.
18. Use your left hand to pinch the flower's stem at the desired height with your left finger towards the right side of the table.
19. Without releasing your grasp, place your fingers and the stem into the bowl of water.
20. Pick up the scissors with your right hand.
21. Carefully cut off the bottom of the stem just to the right of your fingers while it is underwater.
22. Put the scissors back on the table.
23. Pick up the the lower, cut-off part of the stem and place it in the compost container.
24. With your right hand, carefully pull off the leaves from the lower half of the flower's stem. Discard the leaves in the compost container.
25. Lay the cut flower on the table, just above the water bowl.
26. Place the funnel on top of the vase.
27. Secure the funnel with your left hand and use your right hand to lift the small pitcher and pour water into the vase via the funnel. Use the sponge to dab the spout. (The child may be able to do this part.)
28. Place the flower in the vase and admire it! Retrieve the doily and find a home in the classroom for your arrangement.
29. Give the child a turn. Fade and observe. Encourage repetition.
30. Once all vases are arranged and in a special place, clean up together. The child will already know how to do many of the steps from earlier work so free them to do as much as they can independently.
31. Remove any leaves from the water bowl and place them in the compost.

32. Pour the water from the bowl into the bucket. Dry it with the drying cloth and place it on the floor cloth.
33. Pour any remaining water from the small pitcher into the bucket. Dry the small pitcher with the drying cloth and place it on the floor cloth.
34. Pick up the scissors, open them, and place them on the table. Stabilize them by the handles with your left hand and wipe them away from you with the sponge. Flip them over to do the other side. Dry them in the same fashion using the drying cloth. Place them on the floor cloth.
35. Pick up the flower basket. Clean out any remaining leaves and put them in the compost container. Put the basket on the floor cloth.
36. Wipe the funnel with the sponge, dry it (if necessary), and place it on the floor cloth.
37. Pick up any leaves or stems from the table cloth and put them in the compost bucket.
38. Pick up the vase tray and wipe it clean with the sponge. Dry it with the drying cloth and place it on the floor cloth.
39. Bring the compost container to the compost bin and empty it. Use your hand to wipe out all of the contents. Bring it back to the table. Wipe it with the sponge, dry, and place on the floor cloth.
40. Empty any remaining water from the medium-sized pitcher into the bucket. Dry it with the drying cloth and keep it on the floor cloth.
41. Bring the bucket to the sink and empty it. Bring it back to the table, wipe it with the sponge, dry it, and place it on the floor cloth.
42. Use the sponge to wipe off the tablecloth and dry it with the drying cloth. Fold it and place it in the bucket.
43. Place the bucket, then the basket, and then the tray on the table.
44. Pick up each item from the floor cloth and return it to its proper location in the tray, basket, or bucket.
45. Take off your aprons, dry with the drying cloth, and fold. Put it in the bucket.
46. Touch the drying cloth and notice that it is wet. Hang it up on the drying rack. Get a new cloth and place it where it belongs.
47. Repeat for the floor cloth, replacing if wet.
48. Return the bucket, vase tray, and basket to the shelf.
49. Free the child to repeat. Say, "The flower arranging work is one of my favorite works. It makes our class so beautiful! You can do it anytime we have flowers available."
50. Guide them toward work if needed.

Points of Interest:

- Removing leaves
- Pouring water into the basin and vases
- Cutting the stems under water
- Choosing different vases for different flowers
- Choosing a stem length
- Choosing where to put the vases
- Seeing beauty in simplicity

Control of Error:

- Visual
- The volume of the basins, pitcher, bucket, and vases
- The size of the funnel

Notes

This is one of the quintessential early childhood lessons. It awakens in the child not only their aesthetic sense, but also a deep appreciation for nature. They must exercise judgment, patience, care, attention, and logical sequence to complete this exercise. It is foundational for future math work.

The children must know how to use the scissors or pruning shears before you start using them here.

You can put the leaves in the compost or you can save them, dry them, and use them for art collages.

You want a collection of different size vases as well as lovely little bowls (for placing blossoms with broken/no stems). Maintain a tall bucket for holding the uncut flowers in water, awaiting arranging. You may also need a smaller pail to hold short stemmed flowers.

Encourage families to pick fresh or donate purchased flowers. If a child arrives with flowers, you should go together to place them in the water bucket, even before they take off their coat. You can often make arrangements with the local grocer to take flowers they would otherwise discard (but still have life in them). Greens can be used in winter.

Be sure to learn the names of the flowers so you can include this in your language lessons.

This can also be set up as a year-round flower arranging stand with vases and doilies on the back of the table (against a wall) and flower buckets on the floor next to the table. Adapt all steps accordingly.