
Old Gnome's Candlemas Circle

～ Diane Van Dommelen

Editor's Note: *This circle is shared by Diane Van Dommelen from Anchorage, Alaska, where she has taught at the Anchorage Waldorf School and has now had a small Waldorf home program for the last six years. The images of snow, dim light, candles, and the rising of the sun are appropriate images to encourage and reassure. Happy Jack Rabbit and foxy Sprite are surprised to find the candle in the snow, blue and still burning bright. Diane explains that she and the children had been practicing their "blowing" gestures, as well as learning when it is appropriate to blow the candle out in class, so it held some pedagogical guidance as well.*

Author's Note: *I love this story by Suzanne Down, and have performed it as a puppet play in my preschool. Last year I was inspired to adapt it to a movement circle. I emphasized its Candlemas motifs, and added a little extra love because it was also Valentine season!*

Introduction, while sitting:

One dark and misty morning in winter, Old Gnome was out early walking along a hilly path near the open meadow. He was still sleepy and a little grumpy, for he had been up all night...

While rocking back and forth and tapping fists:

Hacking and cracking the rocks and the stones deep in the earth.

While standing:

Old Gnome was tired.

Old Gnome was grumpy.

A frown was on his face.

His feet went thump, thump, thumpy.

Singing freely in mood-of-the-fifth, and walking heavily in rhythm:

Grumpity Grump, Grumpity Grump

Along the path and over the stump (jump "over")

Repeat several times around the circle.

Because it still was dark as night,

He carried a candle, blue and bright.

Singing, and walking:

See the little candle,

Burning, burning bright.

Oh, how I love

To see its light! (Repeat)

Suddenly, the misty air changed and started to turn a golden rose. The sun was beginning to rise.

Old Gnome sang (with gestures, carefully "holding" candle):

Morning has come.

Night is away.

I'll rise with the sun,

And welcome the day.

He carefully put down his candle into the snow and stretched his arms up, up to the sky; then wide, wide to the earth. He even did a few jumping jacks because he was so happy to see the sun!

"I must go and wake my dear wife so she can see this beautiful sight!"

Off he ran.

On the other side of the hill, Happy Jack had just finished his breakfast and went skipping outside looking for an adventure.

Singing and skipping:

The lovely sun is rising,
Up in the sky above.
Good morning, happy morning!
Come fill my heart with love!

Happy Jack met his foxy friend Sprite on his way up the hill. Sprite came trit-trotting along, swishing his bushy tail behind him.

Singing, while trotting and swishing:

Trit-Trit-Trot, Swish, Swish, Swish!
Trit-Trit-Trot, Swish, Swish, Swish!

Just then, Jack saw a candle, blue and bright, shining in the snow.
“I wonder how this came to be here? Let’s have some fun!”

Jack, be nimble!
Jack, be quick!
Jack, jump over
The candlestick!

Repeat, with Sprite, taking several turns, jumping back and forth.

Before they continued on their way, each closed their eyes and made a wish, then blew the candle, blue and bright, out.

The last of the colors still streamed across the sky when Old Gnome and his dear wife came to the meadow. They stood and watched for a long time, breathing in all that beautiful, shining light.

Silent “Halleluiaah” eurythmy-like gestures

After a big, happy breath, Old Gnome’s dear wife turned to him, and said:

“Thank you, dear Old Gnome, for bringing me to the meadow this fine morning to see the sun rise. I love you so!”
“I love you, too, my dear! Let’s go home and have pancakes for breakfast!”

And they skipped off together, singing:

Skidamaring-a-dink-a-dink, Skidamarink-a-doo!
I love you!
Skidamarink-a-dink-a dink, Skidamarink-a-doo!
I love you!
I love you in the morning, and in the afternoon!
I love you in the evening, underneath the moon!
Oh, Skidamarink-a-dink-a dink, Skidamarink-a-doo!
I love you! ♦

Diane Van Dommelen has been involved in Waldorf education since 1992. She began teaching at the Anchorage Waldorf School in 1994. She has also loved teaching handwork, mentoring, and homeschooling in the Waldorf tradition. Since 2017, she has been the grateful teacher of the Pussywillow Pre-school, her Waldorf-inspired home program in Anchorage, AK.