

The Little Squirrel Story

~ Wendalyn von Meyenfeldt

This story has been used in early childhood eurythmy lessons and will also work as a circle imagination when brought by a classroom teacher who creates beautiful, meaningful gestures appropriate to the group of children.

Bringing rhythm and flow with free play of the arms and hands will help communicate the story in a healthy way. Well-formed speaking carries consonants and vowels as “medicine” to the children. This “medicine” not only helps fashion the children’s speech but will help form their bodies and movement as well.

Young children learn through imitation and repetition. This autumn story emphasizes rhythm, repetition and rhyme so the imagination can “breathe” and dance with the seasons. The story includes activity and rest, speech and song, and some suspense and

humor too. These alternations, along with the refrain, strive to offer a balanced movement story. The tale can be shortened as needed; different animals can be introduced over time as well.

Some themes in this tale are:

- Finding safety, protection and reassurance
- Overcoming or acknowledging fear and worry
- Helping each other and waiting for each other (social cooperation & community)
- An Autumnal theme of seeking quiet and rest with the Earth; connecting the children with the changing year and the whole of life

May we all know and find the warm and safe “secret place” that awaits us as we experience joy with the children in these movements.

Begin sitting down and accompany the narration with gestures.

Deep in the forest, the loving Earth Mother
Awaits her small children—each sister and brother.
She builds them soft and cozy nests,
For Winter is coming and they must rest.

Stand up.

Where trees stand tall, and on the branches
Pretty leaves still do their dances.

Join hands and walk around the circle, singing a fairly short or abridged Autumn song. See Waldorf Music Resources. You might also improvise a melody to the following verse.

“Wind in wood, breeze and blow.
Call Earth’s Children home to go.
Home to go-oh-oh.”

Stand and continue telling the story, accompanied with movement and gestures.

Squirrel Nutkin too was ready
To find a cozy nest,
Where he might hide his nuts and seeds
And sleep and dream his best.

Move with quick steps around the circle as “little squirrels,” with the verse that follows. Hold rounded arms in front of you like a little squirrel’s paws, and if you wish, you can gently roll your arms around as you go. With a younger group, you might take hands and move around the circle together.

He ran among the tall, tall trees
Along the forest track
And there he met a little deer:
A little deer with soft, soft ears
And spots upon her back.

Stand and continue telling the story, accompanied with movement and gestures.

"Oh dear, oh dear," she murmured.
"I fear I've lost my way.
The wind is bold, and nights are cold.
Oh, where can a small deer stay?"
"Come follow me," the squirrel then said.
"I know where we can find a bed."
He waited there for her to follow
And off they went o'er hill and hollow.

*Join hands.
Begin walking around the circle.*

**Walk around the circle, repeating the Autumn song of your choice (see page one), or sing:*

"Wind in wood, breeze and blow.
Call Earth's Children home to go.
Home to go-oh-oh."

Stand and continue the narration, accompanied with movement and gestures.

They went among the tall, tall trees
Along the forest trail,
And there they met a little rabbit:
A grey and jumpy little rabbit
With a soft and fluffy tail.
"Oh dear, oh dear," she murmured.
"I fear I've lost my way.
The wind is bold, and nights are cold.
Oh, where can a small rabbit stay?"
"Come follow us," the others said.
"We know where you can find a bed."
They waited there for her to follow
And off they went o'er hill and hollow.

Jump each time you say "rabbit"

*Join hands.
Begin walking around the circle.*

Walk and sing the Autumn song or the "Wind in wood" melody, as before.

Sit down at the end of the song. Continue telling the story, accompanied with gestures.

The day was growing darker as they made their way along.
The forest night was quiet, for all the birds had flown.
The worn and tired little worms hid under rock and stone.
The busy bugs and beetles small—all hurried, scurried home.
The eensy weensy spiders wove and spun their silken webs,
Then said: "good night" and curled up tight within their dainty beds.
The little snails tucked into sleep, all safe inside their shells.
They said "Good night," while from the heights the Autumn leaves now fell.
And there beneath the tall, tall trees
Along the forest trail,
They met a little mouse-kin:
A small and furry mouse-kin
With a long and curly tail.
"Oh dear, oh dear," she murmured.
"I fear I've lost my way.
The wind is bold, and nights are cold.
Oh, where can a small mouse stay?"
"Come follow us," the others said.
"We know where you can find a bed."
They waited there for mouse to follow
And off they went o'er hill and hollow.

Stand up.

Walk around the circle, taking small steps on tiptoes like a little mouse. Each child can move their arms and hands like little “paws,” or with a younger group, you might hold hands and move all together around the ring.

The mouse-kin crept on tiny feet
With the rabbit and deer and squirrel so fleet.

Continue on tiptoes around the circle, either speaking or singing the little verse below.

“Tiptoe, so, so. Through the forest we shall go.
Tiptoe, so, so. Through the forest we shall go.”

Stand and continue the narration, accompanying with movement and gestures.

The Autumn night loomed dark and black
And it was hard to see the track.
No matter how they rushed and hurried,
Small mouse was looking rather worried.
Just then an owl called from his bough:
“You-whooh are getting closer now.
You-whooh are getting closer now.”
He dropped a feather, like an arrow.
It pointed to a path, straight and narrow.
Then down they went along the trail,
Beneath the branches woven veil,
To find at last the secret place
Where Mother Earth waited, warm and safe.

Note: pronounce “wh” as “h” in you-whooh.

Sit down and continue telling the story, accompanied with gestures.

Upon the earth, serene and brown,
Amid the tree roots, sheltered 'round,
She made them soft and grassy beds
With mossy pillows for their heads.
The four friends crept beneath the covers
As softly sang the dear Earth Mother.
I'm sure that mouse-kin slept the best,
Curled up in her little nest.

Sing a quiet evening song or lullaby to complete the story circle. See Waldorf Music Resources. You might enjoy “Sleep my Little Mousie” by Peter Patterson in the Gateways collection from Wynstones Press. If desired, you can gently rock your arms with the song, as if rocking the four little friends to sleep. ♦

Wendalyn von Meyenfeldt is a eurythmy teacher and therapeutic eurythmist on the West Coast of Canada with a strong background in Waldorf Kindergarten work, having studied under the “wise wings” of Margret Meyerkort. It was her work with younger children and her interest and delight in “circle work” which led her to study eurythmy! After many years of Waldorf teaching in British Columbia, she now lives on Salt Spring Island. There she continues to write stories and teach part-time in several Waldorf Teacher Training Institutes in Canada.