



As August approaches, it is time to begin thinking about the next school year. I like to start the year being inspired by stories of other amazing teachers. It sets the tone to help me plan an exciting and stimulating year.

If you're teaching this summer, I love implementing a vacation theme. Many of your students have just returned or are planning to go on a vacation. This provides great background knowledge for everyone!



#### Marcy's Message:

I love teaching, but I do get frustrated and weary at times too. I think that, no matter what job you have, there are times that you feel tired of doing it.

At the beginning of the school year though, I am usually filled with optimism and anticipation. I can't wait to see who will be in my "family" over the next 10 months. Even so, I love to read stories about other teachers that have made a difference. This helps me to fine-tune or hone-in on how I want to begin the year. It enables me to set clear goals. Do I want to reach out to every family once a month? Perhaps I want to generate more hands-on or project approach activities for each unit. I might even decide to compliment 4 or 5 children per day. By reading other's positive impacts on children, I get new ideas and methods to implement those ideas.

Here is a heart-warming story that might make you want to be the best teacher you can be! Enjoy!

#### The Friend List:

One day a teacher asked her students to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper, leaving a space between each name..

Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down.

It took the remainder of the class period to finish the assignment, and as the students left the room, each one handed in the papers.

That Saturday, the teacher wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and listed what everyone else had said about that individual.

On Monday, she gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling. "Really?" she heard whispered. "I never knew that I meant anything to anyone!" and, "I didn't know others liked me so much," were most of the comments.

No one ever mentioned those papers in class again. She never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with

themselves and one another. That group of students moved on ...

Several years later, one of the students was killed in Viet Nam and his teacher attended the funeral of that special student. She had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. He looked so handsome, so mature.

The church was packed with his friends. One by one, those who loved him took a last walk by the coffin. The teacher was the last one to bless the coffin.

As she stood there, one of the soldiers who acted as pallbearer came up to her. "Were you Mark's math teacher?" he asked. She nodded: "yes." Then he said: "Mark talked about you a lot."

After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates went together to a luncheon. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting to speak with his teacher.

"We want to show you something," his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it."

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded many times. The teacher knew without looking that the papers were the ones on which she had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.

"Thank you so much for doing that," Mark's mother said. "As you can see, Mark treasured it."

All of Mark's former classmates started to gather around. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, "I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home."

Chuck's wife said, "Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album."

"I have mine too," Marilyn said. "It's in my diary"

Then Vicki, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. "I carry this with me at all times," Vicki said and without batting an eyelash, she continued: "I think we all saved our lists"

That's when the teacher finally sat down and cried. She cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.

The density of people in society is so thick that we forget that life will end one day. And we don't know when that one day will be.

So please, tell the people you love and care for, that they are special and important. Tell them, before it is too late.



**Words of Wisdom!**

Neil Armstrong celebrates his birthday this month – August 5<sup>th</sup> to be exact. Here are 2 quotes that may give you inspiration:

“Mystery creates wonder and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand.”

“I believe every human has a finite number of heartbeats. I don't intend to waste any of mine.”

**Ready to Sing and Say?**

**Song:**

WE ARE GOING ON VACATION!

Sung to: I've been working on the railroad

We are going on vacation, to see and try things new.  
We are going on vacation, so many things to do.  
I may drive a car to get there, honk, honk, here we go.  
Driving down the highway, it's so fun I know!

**Chorus:**

Vacations are so fun, vacations are so fun  
Traveling with my family.  
Vacations are so fun, vacations are so fun  
Traveling along so merrily.



We are going on vacation, to see and try things new.  
We are going on vacation, so many things to do.  
I may fly a plane to get there, zoom, zoom, here we go.  
Flying high in the airways, it's so fun I know!

**Repeat chorus**

Add motions and change the transportation vehicles to keep the song going!

I may ride a train to get there, chug, chug, here we go.  
Riding along the tracks, it's so fun I know!

I may sail a boat to get there, ahoy, here we go.  
Sailing the ocean waves, it's so fun I know!

This is another MUMS (Made Up Marcy Song!)

**Language & Literacy:**

ABC VACATION BOOK

Use catalogues and magazines to have the children locate pictures for their ABC Vacation Book. You can choose to make a large classroom book or individual books. Plan to work on this for a few days or over a few weeks.

**Preparation:** (15 minutes)

You will need:

- Copy paper folded into booklets
- Crayons/markers/colored pencils
- Digital camera
- Lots of catalogues, promotional flyers and magazines
- Chart paper
- Scissor
- Glue/glue sticks



**Activity:**

1. Begin the lesson by talking about vacations. Encourage the children to think about things that they do, see, wear, eat, places they might go and how they might get there. You can even brainstorm about tools and equipment used on a vacation such as a tent or skis.
2. As they call out answers, write down their ideas. If possible, add a simple illustration so that they can “read” the list.
3. Divide the class into smaller groups and pass out the catalogues, magazines, newspapers along with scissors and glue. Encourage them to work together selecting and finding pictures for their books.
4. Meet with them one-on-one to help to write their alphabet pages. Or, pair a writer with a non-writer to work on this task together.

**Science Exploration:**

VACATION PET CARE

As families travel away for summer vacations, it is a great time to discuss the options, experiences and types of animal care for the stay-at-home pets. Here are some open-ended questions to discover, explore and investigate:

- Who can take care of your pets when you are gone?
- Where can you take your pets while you are vacationing?
- What kind of care do your pets need?
- What would you tell someone who is taking care of your pet?
- Can your pet go along with you? Why or why not?



Invite employees from a local kennel, pet walking business and pet sitting services to share their stories, experiences and job descriptions to enhance these explorations!

**Amazing Art:**

KEEPSAKE SUITCASE

This can be used to place mementos or pictures of place the children have visited or wish to visit!

**Materials Needed:**

- Large shoe box
- Duct tape
- Construction paper
- Glue sticks/craft glue
- Tape
- Crayons, markers, or paint



- Pictures – from home or magazines
- Thick ribbon

Preparation:

1. Either collect or send a note home to obtain a shoe box for each child. Send a note home to request photos and mementos from a previous vacation.
2. Attach the lids using the duct tape so that it is hinged like a real suitcase.
3. Place the glue, tape, ribbon, markers, crayons or paint along with scissors and construction paper on the tables for easy access.
4. Make a Keepsake Suitcase yourself!

Activity:

1. Gather the children and begin a discussion about vacations. Allow the children to share the places they have gone that they've enjoyed.
2. Pull out your Keepsake Suitcase and pull out each of the mementos, explaining a little about each of them: where you got it, why you saved it and the memory that accompanies the object.
3. Explain that they will make their own Keepsake Suitcase. Point out the materials on the tables as well as the collections sent in by each child. If nothing was sent in, encourage the child to think about somewhere they would like to go and point out the magazines and materials to use.
4. Then let them fill their "suitcases"!
5. Allow time to share their suitcases when finished: either to the class or a classmate.

Cooking Corner:  
FRUIT SUNDAES

Instead of ice cream, try filling the waffle cones with delicious fruit. It can be eaten inside, outside or on the go!

For 12 fruit sundaes, you will need:

- 12 waffle cones
- 3 cups strawberries
- 3 cups of other fruits: apples, bananas, kiwi, plums, or peaches
- Spray whipped cream (optional)
- Plastic knives
- Paper plates
- Large spoon or ladle



1. Purchase the fruits or write a note asking for donations.
2. Place the washed fruits on the table and have paper plates and knives handy.
3. Allow the children to select fruits to slice. When they have about 1/2 cup of sliced fruit, demonstrate

how they can spoon their fruit into their waffle cup. Top with the spray whipped cream if desired.

4. Serve with spoons and let them eat away!

SUITCASE RACE

You will need:

- Adult sized: shirt, shorts, socks and shoes/ 1 set per team
- Suitcase/1 per team
- Cones, rope, tape or chalk to mark team starting lines

1. Place a set of clothes in each suitcase.
2. Mark a starting and turn-around line for each team using the cones, rope, tape or chalk.

Activity:

1. Gather the children around 1 of the boxes with a set of clothes. Hold up each item and explain that they will be participating in a relay in which they have to put on and take off all these clothes. Demonstrate how to quickly toss on the shirt and slip on the shorts, socks and shoes and remove them again.
2. Divide the class into 2 or more teams and point out the starting line. Place the suitcase at the turn around line. Explain that they must run up to the suitcase, put the clothes on, then immediately take them off and run back to the starting point. The next player runs and does the same thing and play continues until each team member has finished. The first team to finish wins.



Variations:

- \*\*Play the game with just a shirt and shorts.
- \*\*Split each team into 2 and have each half on opposite sides of the room/yard. 1 member puts on the clothes, races across to the other side, takes them off and hands them to the first member in line. They put them on and race back to the 1st line to take them off and pass to the next member, etc. This helps with dressing skills and it's hilarious to watch. Young children may need help or extremely simple items.

Have you tried...

Going on a canoe trip?

You will need a 20 ft. long X 2ft. piece of paper (the kind that comes on a roll, doubled thickness is best, three preschool sized chairs, a canoe oar (tape a cardboard paddle on to a broom), life vests, an environmental sound recording of rushing water and another of crickets, and campsite props.

In making the canoe, line the chairs, one directly behind the other, spacing them where seats on a canoe would be located. Wrap the paper around the legs of the chairs to

make the sides of the canoe. Staple the ends to make a bow and stern. Have the kids wear the life vests, turn on the rushing water sounds, and have fun paddling the canoe. Afterwards, set up your campsite with a fake campfire, tent, sleeping bag, marshmallows, lantern, etc., and switch on the crickets. It makes a great photo opportunity.

Magical Math:

**HOW MANY WHEELS?**

As the children go on vacation, many experience a variety of vehicles on their trip. This activity will allow the children to learn about travel vehicles and math at the same time!

Preparation: (15 minutes)

You will need:

- Vehicles with wheels
- Pictures of wheeled vehicles
- Chart paper
- Markers



1. Collect a large variety of real and pictured vehicles. Make sure to represent vehicles with 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and more wheels.
2. Prepare the chart paper by writing, "How many wheels?" across the top and columns with corresponding numbers across the bottom.

Activity:

1. Lay the vehicles and/or pictures on the floor in the center of the room. Have the children seat themselves around the collection. Give them a few minutes to view and comment on what they see.
2. Select various vehicles and/or pictures and have the children name each. Reinforce their answers, "Yes, Eva, that is a sail boat." as they respond.
3. Ask the children to select a vehicle/picture from the collection on the floor and to look at the wheels. Tell them that you want to know how many wheels it has. Go around the group asking them to count and name the number of wheels. Write the vehicle name on the chart paper as they identify them and add a simplistic picture if you can. If a child makes an error in counting, say, "Let's try to count that together, 1, 2...."
4. If you have enough vehicles/pictures, do this 2 or 3 times having them name the vehicle and its wheels.

Objects work much better, because pictures often do not show all the vehicle's wheels.

Variations:

- Take the children outside and, using chalk to create a grid or chart, sort toy vehicles
- Do a vacation vehicle show and tell. Ask children to bring in a toy or picture of a vehicle they rode on in

one or more vacations. Use these to sort and categorize.

- Create a Summer Vehicle Venn. Draw 2 intersecting circles outside on the sidewalk or blacktop. Give each circle an un-similar category such as: red/4 wheels, water/motor, or holds many people/recreation vehicle. Have the children sort the objects they brought in or from the classroom into the Venn.

Fun and Fantastic Field Trips:

Sometimes it is so much fun to have the "field trip" come to you! With vacation as a theme, try one or more one of these ideas:

- Invite an AAA employee to come and discuss favorite or popular vacation destinations. They could even talk about modes of travel and interesting sites in various locations such as children's museums, theme parks and national parks. As a follow up activity, use travel brochures and have the children cut out pictures from the travel guides and make a collage on paper. Ask the children to dictate a story about their vacation destination!
- Ask parents to come and share a favorite vacation they took with their families. Encourage them to bring photos, souvenirs, maps, etc. to share with the children.
- Contact a local travel agency. Ask if they will come and talk about popular vacation locations and activities. Again, encourage them to share photos, brochures, etc. Have the children set up their own travel agency in the housekeeping and/or writing area!

Have You Read?

**Pictures from Our Vacation** by Lynne Rae Perkins. Greenwillow Books. (April, 2007)

**How I Spent My Summer Vacation** by Mark Teague. Dragonfly Books (July, 1997)

**Carl's Summer Vacation** by Alexandra Day. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing (May, 2008)

**Stone Soup** by Marcia Brown. Aladdin, (August, 1987)

**Vacation Doodle Book** by Scholastic. Scholastic Books, (May, 2009)

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