Lesson Plan 07

Sheet 07-7

Nursery Rhymes

Nursery Rhymes – What's included

Included in this pack are:

Suggested Aims
Questions to elicit response
The Rhyme
Things to do
Facts about the Rhyme

A picture depicting the Rhyme

Music and words

for each of the following:

Humpty Dumpty
Jack and Jill
London Bridge
Mary had a Little Lamb
Old Mother Hubbard
Old Woman in the Shoe
Pussy cat, Pussy Cat
Tom, Tom the Piper's Son (Over the hills and far away)

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Humpty Dumpty

Suggested Aims

1. To help children develop a sense of humor
2. To give the children an opportunity to stretch their imaginations
3. To help children appreciate rhythm of rhyme and music
4. To give practice in recognizing colors

Questions to Elicit Response

1. Of what does this startled fellow remind you?
2. Do you know his name?
3. What do you think he is doing?
4. Who are the men on the horses?
5. Do you think they can help Humpty Dumpty?
6. Does anyone see the color red?

Rhyme

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses,
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Things to Do

1. View and discuss the picture.
2. Recite or sing the rhyme.
3. Let each child decorate his own Humpty Dumpty—a hard-boiled egg. Provide bits of felt or cloth, sequins, beads, buttons, chenille wire, tape, crayons or paints, construction paper, and paste. Arms and legs may be made from strips of paper and pasted on, or they may be made from chenille wire and taped on.
4. On tumbling mats, children may "roll" like eggs.
5. Let children make flower pictures from eggshells. Wash the eggshell halves and allow them to dry. Let each child paint one or two eggshell halves with tempera; allow them to dry and then glue them to construction paper for flower blossoms. Stems and leaves may be added with crayons, paint, or construction paper.
6. Play a game with colors. Select colors from objects in the picture: red from soldier's coats, and so forth. Let each child wearing red come to the front of the group. Repeat with other colors.
7. Suggest that children make Humpty Dumpty from modeling clay.

Facts About the Rhyme

The rhyme about Humpty Dumpty is so well known that few people today think of it as a riddle. We do not know when this rhyme first came into use, but scholars suggest that it is probably very old. The OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY lists the words humpty dumpty as having this meaning after about 1785: "A little humpty dumpty man or woman; a short clumsy person of either sex."

While the rhyme originated in England, the first known recording of it was added to a copy of MOTHER GOOSE'S MELODY, which was published in 1803.

In the late 1800's, American writers describe a girl's game called Humpty Dumpty. Seated players held their skirts tightly about their feet. Then, at a signal, the girls threw "themselves backward," and attempted to sit up again without letting go of their skirts. Some scholars believe this game may be older than the rhyme, and have been played by little girls for many years before American writers referred to it.

Robert L. Ripley stated that the original Humpty was probably Richard III, who lived in the latter part of the 15th century. But some other scholars believe that the name may have been derived from pet forms of Humphrey: Demphry and Dump.

Parallel versions of the rhyme appeared in many European countries. In Denmark, for example, in the early 1800's, children chanted:

Lille Trille
Laae paa Hylde:
Lille Trille
Faldt ned of Hylde.
Ingen Mand
I hele Land
Lille Trille curere kan.

Translation:

Little Trille lay on a shelf;
Little Trille thence pitched himself:
Not all the men in our land, I ken,
Can put Little Trille right again.

In the mid-nineteenth century, German children knew this version:

Humpelken-Pumpelken sat op de Bank,
Humpelken-Pumpelken fel von de Bank,
Do is ken Dokter in Engelland
De Humpelken-Pumpelken kurare kann.

Humpty Dumpty

Jack and Jill

Suggested Aims

1. To help children see humorous side of everyday happenings
2. To give opportunity for imaginative play
3. To introduce new ideas
4. To help children learn to express verbally their ideas and feelings

Questions to Elicit Response

1. What do you think is happening to this boy and girl?
2. Do you think the girl will be hurt? Will the boy be hurt?
3. What do you think was in the pail? Where did the children get the water?
4. How do you get water from a well?

Rhyme

Jack and Jill went up the hill
 To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
 And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got, and home did trot,
 As fast as he could caper,
To old Dame Dob, who patched his nob
 With vinegar and brown paper.

(A third verse is given in an 1820 publication.)

Then Jill came in, and she did grin,
 To see Jack's paper plaster;
Her mother whipt her, across her knee,
 For laughing at Jack's disaster.

Things to Do

1. Repeat the rhyme until the children can repeat some of it with you. Sing the song.
2. Discuss the picture.
3. Make a classroom mural on a length of shelf paper. Depending on the maturity of your pupils, let them paint a grassy hill, or paste on a green crepe paper hill. They may cut silhouettes of boy, girl, pail, and woman from construction paper. If your pupils are unable to do this, provide the silhouettes. Children may arrange a scene of Jack and Jill tumbling down hill with bucket; well is at top of hill. To the right, arrange another scene: Jack with brown paper bandage on head, woman with her hand on bandage, Jill watching. Children may add flowers and clouds, as desired.
4. For your housekeeping center today, provide bandages for pretend play.

Facts About the Rhyme

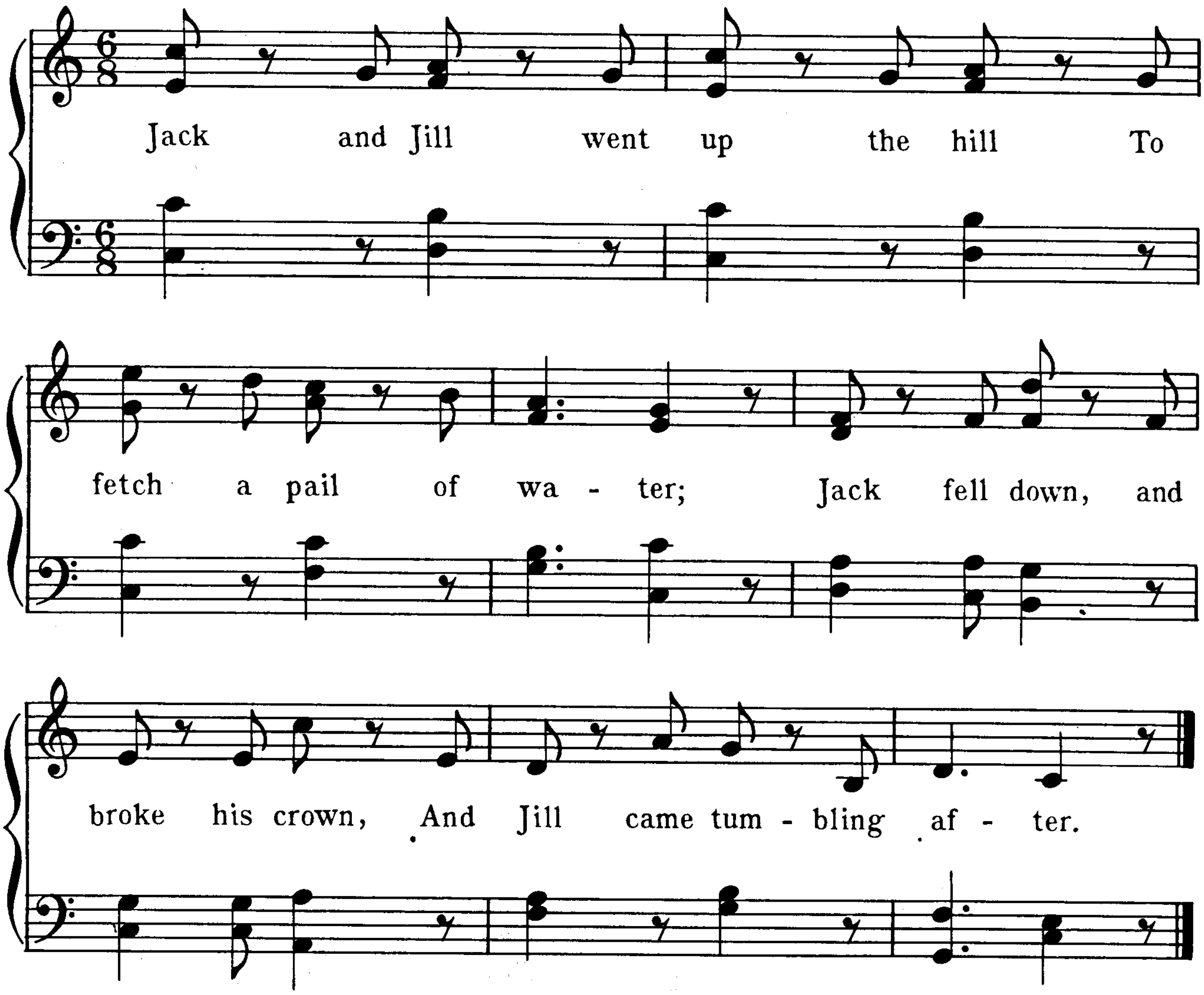
There is much speculation about the origin of the rhyme. One scholar thinks the rhyme may refer to some ancient mystic rite because it is unlikely, he feels, that the writer or originator of the rhyme would have his characters climb a hill for water unless the water had some special significance.

Another researcher, of a century ago, thought that the rhyme referred to an old Scandinavian myth in which the moon captured two children named Hjuki (pronounced Juki) and Bil (which may have been changed to Jil).

The most likely explanation is that it is a simple tale about two children. Jack and Jill probably are used in the sense of lad and lass, and it is doubtful that the names have any significance.

The first verse may have originated in the early part of the sixteenth century since water (wahter) is rhymed with after (ahter). Other verses were probably added later.

Jack and Jill



London Bridge

Suggested Aims

1. To help children learn to participate in group play
2. To give opportunity for big-muscle activity
3. To help children to learn to take turns

Questions to Elicit Response

1. What do you think these children are doing?
2. Does the game look like it would be fun?
3. Would you like to play this game?

Rhyme

London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady.
Build it up with wood and clay,
Wood and clay, wood and clay,
Build it up with wood and clay,
My fair lady.
Wood and clay will wash away,
Wash away, wash away,
Wood and clay will wash away,
My fair lady.

Build it up with bricks and mortar,
. . . My fair lady.

Bricks and mortar will not stay,
. . . My fair lady.

Build it up with iron and steel,
. . . My fair lady.

Iron and steel will bend and bow,
. . . My fair lady.

Build it up with silver and gold,
. . . My fair lady.

Silver and gold will be stolen away,
. . . My fair lady.

Set a man to watch all night,
. . . My fair lady.

Suppose the man should fall asleep,
. . . My fair lady.

Give him a pipe to smoke all night,
. . . My fair lady.

Things to Do

1. Introduce the song-game of "London Bridge." Children line up to await turns to go under the bridge. Two children face one another and clasp their hands. When they raise clasped hands high to form an arch, children in the line hurry under the "bridge." Children may lower their arms and catch a child between them. They sway arms (and child) back and forth in time to music two or three times before letting the child go. Give several children turns at being the "bridge."
2. Sing the song several times until the children can sing it with you.
3. Discuss the picture.
4. Children may enjoy using blue finger paint today to make a painting of a river.

Facts About the Rhyme

This song-game has been traced back to the early eighteenth century, but similar song-games in other countries have been traced back to the early fourteenth century. It is said that the children of Florence, Italy, played the game in 1328. A similar game was played in Germany, and also in France. Following is a French version published in 1830:

Trois fois passera,
La derniere, la derniere;
Trois fois passera,
La derniere y restera.

The idea of setting a man to watch the bridge is significant in folk lore. In the rhyme, the workmen meet many problems. At last a watchman is secured and it is hoped that he can protect the bridge even from nature and time.

Living people have been built into bridge foundations all over the world as watchmen. People believed that the Hooghly Bridge across the Ganges (built in mid-eighteenth century) had to be built on a foundation of children's skulls to appease the river.

A child was encased in the foundation of a bridge in Germany. And a mason's wife was walled up in a bridge in Greece.

And tradition suggests that perhaps London Bridge was the scene of deaths of children.

While the rhyme today is associated with lighthearted play, it is a grim reminder of terrible practices of long ago.

Continued over ...

The bridge illustrated in the picture is the Tower Bridge. Tower Bridge is the easternmost bridge across the Thames River into London. The bridge has twin towers and a covered walkway between the two.

London Bridge is west of the Tower Bridge. London Bridge today is about 100 feet downstream from where the original bridge was built in 1205. Houses lined the sides of the old stone bridge and on occasion, the people of that day were likely to view heads of executed traitors hanging over the entrance of the bridge. Because the old stone bridge was the only bridge over the Thames until 1750, it was necessary to keep it in a state of repair.

The stone bridge was removed in 1832 because by then the London Bridge of today was in place. The bridge today is 63 feet wide and 928 feet long; and while it rests on five granite arches, it is not as interesting to look at as the Tower Bridge is. For this reason, artists often illustrate the Tower Bridge with the rhyme.

London Bridge

Mary Had a Little Lamb

Suggested Aims

1. To help children delight in the rhythm of the rhyme
2. To help children learn to appreciate pets
3. To give opportunity for children to express their ideas verbally

Questions to Elicit Response

1. Can you guess where the boy and girl are?
2. Where do you suppose the lamb is going?
3. To whom does the lamb belong?
4. What do you think the teacher is saying to the girl?

Rhyme

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,
That was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,
But still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.

Why does the lamb love Mary so?
The eager children cry;
Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,
The teacher did reply.

Things to Do

1. Discuss the picture.
2. Repeat the rhyme until children have learned it. Sing the song.
3. Give each child a piece of construction paper on which you have pre-drawn an outline of a sheep. Let children cover the sheep with glue, then gently pat on soft tufts of cotton.
4. Play follow the leader. Pretend that leader is Mary and those following her are sheep.

Facts About the Rhyme

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" is an American nursery rhyme, which some believe to be the best-known four-line verses in the English language. It was in 1830 that Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale, of Boston, editor of JUVENILE MISCELLANY, published the poem in her magazine. She claimed it was "partly true."

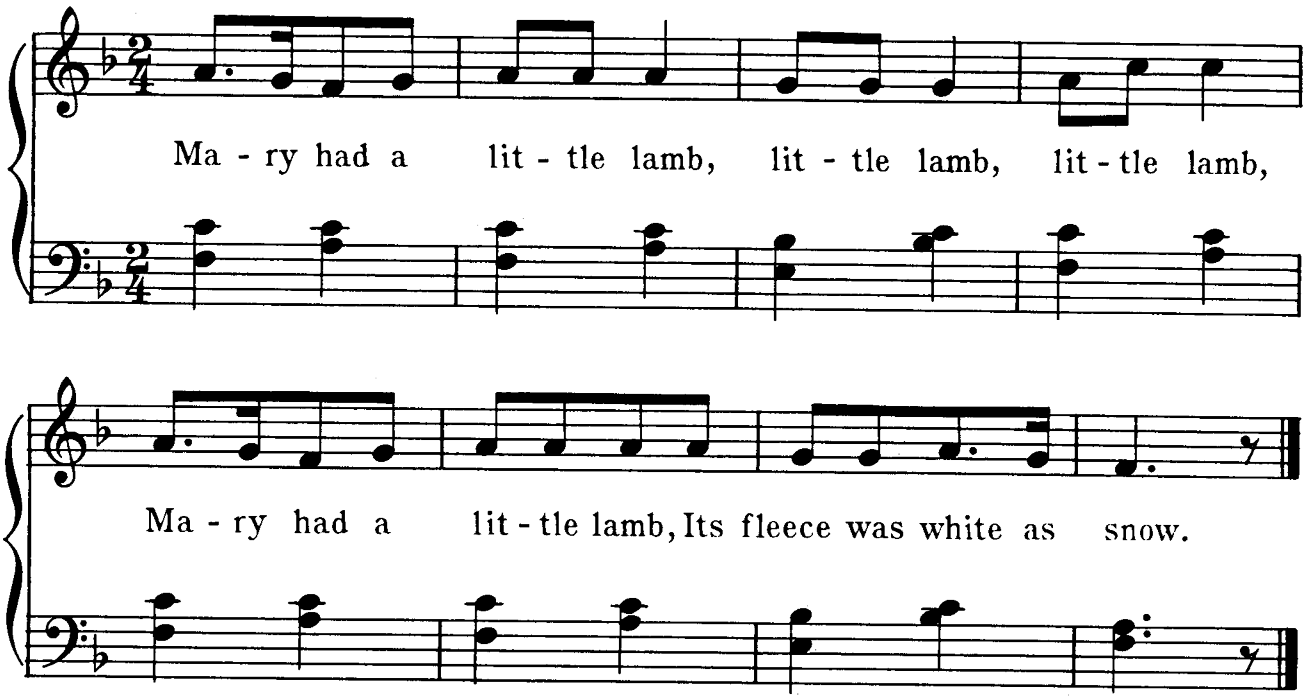
A Mrs. Tyler (nee Mary Sawyer), of Sudbury, Massachusetts, believed herself to be the original Mary. Henry Ford heard the story and collected about 200 "documents" to prove it. But shortly before her death, Mrs. Hale refuted the story. Ford had already restored the old schoolhouse at Sudbury as a memorial.

In those days, it was quite likely that many pet lambs followed children to school.

The poem was set to music and published in Boston in 1832. And it was published later in other books, magazines, and songbooks.

But probably its inclusion in McGUFFEY'S SECOND READER is responsible for its popularity.

Mary Had a Little Lamb



Old Mother Hubbard

Suggested Aims

1. To help children learn to use their imaginations
2. To introduce new ideas
3. To provide opportunity for the children to express verbally their ideas and feelings

Questions to Elicit Response

1. Do you think that the woman looks happy or unhappy? Why?
2. What do you think the woman wanted to find in her cupboard?
3. What does your dog do when you give him a bone?

Rhyme

Old Mother Hubbard
 Went to the cupboard,
To fetch her poor dog a bone;
 But when she came there
 The cupboard was bare
And so the poor dog had none.

She went to the baker's
 To buy him some bread;
But when she came back
 The poor dog was dead.

She went to the undertaker's
 To buy him a coffin;
But when she came back
 The poor dog was laughing.

She took a clean dish
 To get him some tripe;
But when she came back
 He was smoking a pipe.

She went to the alehouse
 To get him some beer;
But when she came back
 The dog sat in a chair.

She went to the tavern
 For white wine and red;
But when she came back
 The dog stood on his head.

She went to the fruiterer's
 To buy him some fruit;
But when she came back
 He was playing the flute.

She went to the barber's
 To buy him a wig;
But when she came back
 He was dancing a jig.

She went to the cobbler's
 To buy him some shoes;
But when she came back
 He was reading the news.

She went to the seamstress
 To buy him some linen;
But when she came back
 The dog was a-spinning.

She went to the hosier's
 To buy him some hose;
But when she came back
 He was dressed in his clothes.

She went to the tailor's
 To buy him a coat;
But when she came back
 He was riding a goat.

She went to the hatter's
 To buy him a hat;
But when she came back
 He was feeding the cat.

The dame made a curtsy,
 The dog made a bow;
The dame said, Your servant,
 The dog said, Bow-wow.

Things to Do

1. Discuss the picture.
2. Repeat the first verse until the children can say part of it with you. Sing the song.
3. Select some of the other verses. Repeat them while children act out the words. Let children take turns being Mother Hubbard as she hurries away to the store. Others may sit or stand in a circle and act out the dog's parts: smoke a pipe, play a flute, dance a jig, read newspaper, say, "Bow-wow," etc.
4. Teach girls to curtsy (place right leg behind left one, bend from the knees, bow head)

Continued over …

and boys to bow (right hand across waist, left hand at back, bow from the waist).

Facts About the Rhyme

Sarah Catherine Martin is credited with writing this rhyme in 1804 while visiting in Devon at the home of John Pollexfen Bastard, her future brother-in-law.

According to tradition, Miss Martin was a vivacious young woman and her chattering interrupted Mr. Bastard's writing one day. He suggested that she go and "write one of your stupid rhymes."

Miss Martin wrote the rhyme and illustrated it with sketches. The following year, J. Harris published the rhyme as a toy book entitled: THE COMIC ADVENTURES OF OLD MOTHER HUBBARD AND HER DOG. It was a bestseller in its day; 10,000 copies were sold within a few months.

Miss Martin probably copied her ideas from OLD DAME TROT, AND HER COMICAL CAT, which had been published the previous year. Verses and ideas are quite similar.

It is not quite certain, however, that Miss Martin actually created the character of Old Mother Hubbard. According to some traditional opinions, Mother Hubbard was a housekeeper in Devon, but some scholars have been led to believe the rhyme may have been intended as a political lampoon. Some believe the rhyme referred to Cardinal Wolsey.

Whatever the origin, Mother Hubbard caught on as a nursery-rhyme character. Cataloged in the British Museum are 26 titles under this name.

Old Mother Hubbard

Old Woman in the Shoe

Suggested Aims

1. To help children develop a sense of humor
2. To give opportunity for imaginative play

Questions to Elicit Response

1. What kind of a house is this?
2. Do you think all of these children live in the house?
3. Who is the lady?
4. Why do you think she is chasing the boy?
5. Do you think her children are good children?
6. Do you think they are glad for all their brothers and sisters? Why?

Rhyme

There was an old woman
Who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children
She didn't know what to do:
She gave them some broth
Without any bread;
She whipped them all soundly
And put them to bed.

Things to Do

1. Discuss the picture. Let the children discover the fun these children have.
2. You may want to use this rhyme just before rest time. Pretend to be the mother, give your children a snack, then put them to bed.
3. Sing the song.
4. Children may want to paint their version of the story today.
5. Make a flannel board game. Cut out a large shoe from brown felt. Cut out windows so the shoe will look like a house. Also cut out of felt a woman and quite a few children. Crayon or paint simple clothes and faces on the figures. Place shoe on the flannel board. Then let children take turns placing figures on the board.

Facts About the Rhyme

The origin of this rhyme is not known, nor is the date of its first appearance. It was published in INFANT INSTITUTES in 1797. This is how it appeared:

There was a little old woman,
And she liv'd in a shoe,
She had so many children,
She didn't know what to do.
She crumm'd 'em some porridge
Without any bread;
And she borrow'd a beetle (a mallet)
And she knocked 'em all o' the head.
Then out went th' old woman
To bespeak 'em a coffin,
And when she came back,
She found 'em all a-loffeing.

The rhyme is probably very old and perhaps has some significance as folk lore. THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF NURSERY RHYMES (Opie, Oxford Press, 1951) records: "The shoe has long been symbolic of what is personal to a woman until marriage. Casting a shoe after the bride when she goes off on her honeymoon is possibly a relic of this, symbolizing the wish that the union shall be fruitful." So, the shoe is a fitting home for the woman and her many children.

Several ladies with large families have been linked with the rhyme, but it is not likely it was intended to refer to any of them. One was the wife of George II, who had eight children. Another was Elizabeth Vergoose, of Boston, who had ten stepchildren and six of her own.

Old Woman in the Shoe

Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat

Suggested Aims

1. To help children discover the fun of chanting or singing rhymes
2. To give opportunity for imaginative play
3. To help children gain an appreciation for humor
4. To provide opportunity for children to verbalize

Questions to Elicit Response

1. Who is the lady?
2. Did you notice something special on her head?
3. Do you think the cat looks angry, or happy? Why?
4. Do you think the mouse likes the cat?
5. Do you think the cat will hurt the mouse, or is he just teasing?

Rhyme

Pussy cat, pussy cat,
Where have you been?
I've been to London
To look at the queen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat,
What did you there?
I frightened a little mouse
Under her chair.

Things to Do

1. View the picture. Encourage the children to express their ideas and feelings about the picture.
2. Let the children chant the rhyme to get the feel of the rhythm. When the children know the rhyme well, divide your group into two sections: Let the groups stand facing one another; let one group ask the questions, the other give answers. Then let the second group ask the questions and the first group give the answers.
3. Make a cardboard pattern of a mouse. On dark construction paper, draw around the pattern with white chalk. Provide one "mouse" for each child. Show each child how to cover his mouse with glue, then sprinkle on sawdust. Glue on a chenille-wire tail.
4. Play a cat and mouse game. Arrange the children in a circle with about two feet of space between each child. Choose one child to be the cat. Choose another child to be the mouse. At your signal to begin, the mouse runs around the outside of the circle, and the cat (running in the inside circle) tries to dart between children to catch the mouse.

Facts About the Rhyme

This rhyme appeared in SONGS FOR THE NURSERY, which was published in 1805; and children in England and America have been repeating it since then.

Probably the queen mentioned in the rhyme was the Tudor Queen Elizabeth. She is depicted in some early illustrations of the rhyme. One scholar wrote that the rhyme was based on a conversation between a nurse of Elizabeth's time and a "truant Tom."

The rhyme has been so well-known through the years, that young children in England have come to believe there is a mouse in the palace. When Lord Ernle was invited by Queen Victoria to a social event, he asked his little daughter if she wished to send a message to the queen. Quickly she replied, "Ask her to give me the little mouse that lives under her chair."

Knowing that the queen delighted in the interesting sayings of young children, Lord Ernle told his daughter's comment to Queen Victoria. She was so delighted that she called a few guests and asked Lord Ernle to repeat the story. Over and over he told it. Finally, the queen called an elderly gentleman to hear it. Apparently he did not see the point of the story. Indignantly the queen inquired whether he had heard the rhyme, and repeated it for him.

It was in 1949 that Queen Elizabeth met a similar question. She was visiting families of the men of the Royal Air Force when a little boy bluntly asked, "Where's the pussy cat?"

When the queen learned that the boy had been repeating the rhyme all day, she apologized for not bringing her cat!

In the mid-nineteenth century, another version of this rhyme was published:

Little girl, little girl,
Where have you been?
Gathering roses to
Give to my queen.
Little girl, little girl,
What gave she you?
She gave me a diamond
As big as a shoe.

Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat

Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son

Suggested Aims

1. To help children to use imagination
2. To give opportunity for verbalization
3. To introduce new ideas
4. To provide opportunity for big-muscle activities

Questions to Elicit Response

1. What animal do you see here?
2. Do you think a boy could carry a live pig easily?
3. What is the woman in the doorway doing? What is she saying?
4. Why do you think she is so unhappy?

Rhyme

Tom, he was a piper's son,
He learnt to play when he was young,
And all the tune that he could play
Was, 'Over the hills and far away';
Over the hills and a great way off,
The wind shall blow my top-knot off.

Tom with his pipe made such a noise,
That he pleased both the girls and boys,
And they all stopped to hear him play,
'Over the hills and far away.'

Tom with the pipe did play with such skill
That those who heard him could never keep still;
As soon as he played they began for to dance,
Even pigs on their hind legs would after him prance.

As Dolly was milking her cow one day,
Tom took his pipe and began for to play;
So Dolly and the cow danced 'The Cheshire Round,'
Till the pail was broken and the milk ran on the ground.

He met old Dame Trot with the basket of eggs,
He used his pipe and she used her legs:
She danced about till the eggs were all broke,
She began for to fret, but he laughed at the joke.

Another rhyme about Tom, which is probably more popular, is often misunderstood by young children and adults alike. (See "Facts About the Rhyme.") We have chosen to illustrate the more familiar rhyme as it is usually illustrated.

It is a curious fact that while a study of the rhyme would indicate that the common manner of illustration is in error, yet this literal illustration continues to be popularly accepted and readily identified with Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son.

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
Stole a pig and away he run;
  The pig was eat
  And Tom was beat,
And Tom went howling down the street.

Things to Do

1. View and discuss the picture.
2. Provide a toy horn. Choose one child to pretend to play the horn and lead other children in a happy dance around the room.
3. Before presenting the short rhyme, which is also set to music, explain that the "pig" was really a cake or bun filled with goodies.

Facts About the Rhyme

As long ago as the late sixteenth century, Tom became a common name for pipers. It is likely the poem dates back at least to that century.

There is some evidence that the longer version of the rhyme was written for a D'Urfey comedy, THE CAMPAIGNERS, in 1698 by P. A. Motteux, but it was not published with the play. It was adapted or imitated in a song in the early 1700's. Even before Motteux's day, the phrase, "Over the hills and far away," had been used by many songwriters and poets.

The rhyme was published in a chapbook—a small booklet sold by a man (called a chapman) who hawked books in the streets. The short rhyme appeared in the first part of the chapbook, the longer rhyme in the second section.

The pig referred to in the short rhyme was not a live animal as illustrators often depict, but it was a pastry filled with currants, with two currants placed at one end as eyes.

Vendors hurried through the streets with their "pigs," calling:

A long tail'd Pig,
Or a short tail'd Pig,
Or a Pig without any tail,
A Boar Pig, or a Sow Pig,
Or a Pig with a curlay tail.
Take hold of the Tail and eat off his head;
And then you'll be sure the Pig hog is dead.

Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son

Over the Hills and Far Away