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Basic Package

All Aboard the Animal Train Teacher’s Manual and Student Sheets

First Virtues

The Preschooler’s Bible


Sing for Joy CD

animal cookie cutters

My First Crayola Washable Jumbo Watercolors and Brush, 4-color set

2 preschool-sized tweezers (for Sensory Bin)

For more than one child purchase additional Student Sheets and watercolors; for a classroom also purchase additional cookie cutters

Also Included in Deluxe Package

Wedgits Building Blocks and Design Cards

Lotto Animals

Discovery Blocks and Design Book

Number Express

Materials You Will Gather for the Year

☐ 4 magnets (to hold small cards on the fridge)
☐ construction paper in a variety of colors
☐ crayons in these 12 colors: purple, orange, brown, green, red, black, yellow, blue, light blue, white, gray, pink. Also consider:
  Crayola Twistables Slick Stix 12-pack – includes all colors needed except pink, but is not washable so use with close supervision. The very bold, smooth colors are fun and easy to use.
  Crayola Ultra-Clean Washable Markers, broad line 12-pack – includes colors for all units except white, which is not needed.
☐ straws or large wooden craft sticks for puppet handles (need 15; more for optional activities) – Keep in a special place so they’re easy to find when needed.
☐ glue stick
☐ white paper plates (to cut for animal masks)
☐ 13 plastic page protectors and a 3-ring binder (for Story Time poem cards and unit posters)
☐ 5 activities your child can do independently for Surprise Time (see page 7) – 4 toys from Deluxe Package (or things you already own) and Sensory Bin
☐ 5 boxes (plastic storage boxes with lids work well) to store Surprise Time activities

For your convenience, this list is repeated in the Supply List on page 152.
All Aboard the Animal Train is a rich curriculum that will help your child grow. Your child will benefit in many areas:

**Spiritual Growth**
- God loves us, so we love God and others.
- Twelve character traits – love, obedience, patience, kindness, sharing, thankfulness, politeness, friendliness, forgiveness, joy, truthfulness, doing your best
- Three Bible stories and a memory verse for each character trait

**Reading and Math**
- Read-aloud stories and poems to develop reading readiness and a love for books
- Print awareness, phonemic awareness skills (rhymes, etc.)
- Informal alphabet readiness – watch the adult write and read words, enjoy several alphabet stories and an optional alphabet art activity
- Numbers, colors, shapes – a variety of activities to develop true understanding

**Science**
- Twelve animals – what fun!

**Cognitive Development**
- Creative thinking, problem solving, imaginative play
- Songs and fingerplays

**Physical Development**
- Gross motor skills – pretend to be animals, play outside, and more
- Fine motor skills – squeeze play dough, paint and color, and more
- Health – focus on nutrition by enjoying healthy snacks

You will enjoy 12 units this year, each one focusing on a character trait, an animal, and a color. This program is flexible and simple to teach.
- Begin any time of the year.
- Do all the activities, or pick and choose the ones best for you.
- Use the program as written for 36 weeks (3 weeks per unit), or shorten it to 3-6 months (1-2 weeks per unit) if you want to condense the program for an older three year old.

All Aboard the Animal Train is designed for three-year-olds and for two-year-olds who are ready for more focused learning activities and can understand the read-aloud books in the program.

If your child is a young two-year-old, we suggest using “Ideas for Two-Year-Olds” in the appendix before beginning this curriculum. Many children will better understand the character concepts in First Virtues and the content of the other books if they are at least 2 ½. Of course, all children are different. You might look over the first unit and read the first chapters in First Virtues and A Big Treasury of Little Animals to your child to help determine readiness.
Four Daily Activities

You and your child will do four different types of activities every day. To prepare, cut apart the student sheet with four cards for these activities:

- Clean Up Time
- Surprise Time
- Story Time
- Outside Time

Each day, place these four cards on your fridge with small magnets. Flip the card over when you complete an activity, so you and your child can see at a glance which activities haven’t been finished.

1. Clean Up Time / Together Time

Begin your day by letting your child help you with simple chores. It may take more time, but doing these tasks together as part of a routine will make sure you have time to get them done, as well as train your child. He will learn to help with a smile. As he gets older, he will be able to help you more and more.

Be sure to keep Clean Up fun. You might sing or race or put on music. Remind your child that after cleaning up is Together Time—a great reward for being a helper. We suggest starting with three tasks to complete together:

- **Kitchen** – Clean up after breakfast.
- **Beds** – Make the beds and make sure everyone is dressed for the day.
- **Floors** – Pick up toys, clothes, and stuff from the floors in bedrooms and shared spaces.

If you have older children at home, have everyone lend a hand to clean up. Assign the others independent work while you and your preschooler enjoy Together Time.

Right after Clean Up tasks are completed, reward your child with Together Time. Each day, a fun interactive Together Time activity is scheduled in your daily lesson plans. As you enjoy special time together, your child will be informally developing important cognitive skills such as auditory memory and visual discrimination. He will be gaining large motor and fine motor skills, as well as growing socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Be sure to do Together Time at the beginning of the day before you get busy with other tasks. Taking time each day to connect with your preschooler with one-on-one time will make him feel loved and more willing to cooperate the rest of the day.

Note: An optional alphabet art activity begins in Week 10 to familiarize your child with the appearance and names of letters.

**Break** – After Together Time, take breaks as needed to care for an infant or attend to other responsibilities.
2. Surprise Time

To prepare for Surprise Time, gather five activities that your child can do independently and store them in five boxes that you keep out of sight, only to be used for Surprise Time. If you purchased the Deluxe Preschool Package, use the following for the first unit. (Or use the alternate suggestions in parentheses. See page 97 for other ideas you can use throughout the year.)

1. Wedgits Building Blocks and Design Cards (or a simple puzzle)
2. Lotto Animals – see ideas on page 100 (or several pages from a coloring book and crayons)
3. Discovery Blocks and Design Book (or nesting/stacking cups)
4. Number Express (or blocks)
5. Sensory Bin with rice, pitcher, cup – Plan to do this all year, changing the contents for each unit. See page 99 for more about sensory bins.

Label each Surprise Time box with a number from the “Number Cards for Surprise Time” student sheet. Cut out the remaining cards and place them in a plastic sandwich bag labeled “Surprise Time.” Mark a second bag “Picked.”

Each day, give your child the “Surprise Time” bag, let him draw out a number, and read the number to him. Together, find the activity box with the matching number. (This provides daily, informal exposure to numbers.) Move picked numbers into the “Picked” bag until each number has been chosen. Then return all the numbers to the “Surprise Time” bag.

Surprise Time is a great opportunity to train your child to follow rules and play independently. Choose a defined location for Surprise Time. Make sure he understands that Surprise Time has rules. For example:

- Stay on this mat (or this chair) until you are finished.
- If you walk away from the activity, we will put it away.
- When you are done playing, come tell me.

Supervise Surprise Time for the first few weeks to help your child learn the rules and learn to play independently. The first week, sit with your child while he explores the activities. The second week, continue to sit with him, but this time do the activity with him and show him how to complete it.

When your child has tried all the activities several times, start training him to work independently. Give him a specific task like, “Can you put the train together? Put the pieces where they belong.” Or let him explore the activity on his own. Walk away, but stay close to make sure he follows Surprise Time rules. Soon you should be able to trust your child to follow the rules and play on his own with you close enough to watch that he is safe and playing well.

Surprise Time does not always need to be an independent time. Some children will need much more adult guidance and teaching than others. Sometimes you can sit with your child and guide him in an activity, and sometimes you can participate with him and let him lead the play.

3. Story Time

Story Time is when you read the story or poem scheduled in the lesson plans. You can also read other books that you own or borrow from the library. (See the appendix for an optional library book list.) Keep this collection of books in a special place for Story Time.

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You may have tangible wealth untold; Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be – I had a Mother who read to me. —Strickland Gillilan
At the beginning of the year, set aside the books included in the package. Wait to read them to your child until they are first scheduled. This keeps them new and special. Once they are introduced, add them to your Story Time collection. You can read them over and over and over again!

Remember this is an enjoyable time. Read at a leisurely pace, taking time to talk about what is happening in each picture.

As you go through the program, you will make a Story Time binder with poems and unit posters. Put each poem card in a page protector in a 3-ring binder as you learn it. At the end of each unit, also add the poster (love, etc.) to the same binder. Keep the binder with your other Story Time books, and occasionally review what you’ve learned.

4. Outside Time

Playing outside is very important for your child’s development. Gross motor skills (running, jumping, climbing) that he learns now will be a foundation for the future. AND, the best way to learn about nature is by experiencing it. Some of the best science lessons can be learned at a park or in the backyard.

It might be tempting to skip this activity, but it is too important to skip. Find gear so your child will be comfortable no matter the weather, and provide special outdoor activities to make going outside fun. Go to a park, take a walk in your neighborhood, play in the yard, look for leaves or acorns – the possibilities are endless.
You will make a poster for each unit. Today use the love poster from the Student Sheets. Write your names on the poster and explain to your child what the poster says. Display it on your fridge or other visible location for the next three weeks during the Love unit.

Day 3 of the lesson plans has character trait activities. As you complete the activity this week on Day 3, add a photo or simple drawing (of a cookie or whatever your activity was) to your chart, and write a caption such as, “We show love when we bake cookies for Daddy.”
Find the Rabbits

Hide the five rabbit circles from the student sheet. Let your child find them. After playing the game, use these rabbit circles any way you wish.

Note: Some days Sing for Joy music CD is scheduled as part of Together Time. You can find lyrics, if needed, in the appendix.

Color Hunt

Cut out the two red squares on the student sheet. Have your child watch as you point to and read aloud the word red on the squares. This introduces pre-reading skills such as print awareness.

Let your child hold one of the red squares. Go on a color hunt, searching inside and/or outside for things that are red. Give as much help as needed.

Poster: Let your child use a glue stick and help glue the other colored square on your unit poster. Read aloud the words and Bible verse on the poster.

Red Popsicles

Freeze in popsicle molds:

- 100% fruit juice (red)
- small chunks of strawberries (optional)

You’ll notice many simple cooking projects in these plans. Most kids really enjoy helping in the kitchen. At the same time, they are naturally developing important skills – listening, patience, math, fine motor. It may take more effort to let your child help, but it’s worth it!

Make a Cereal Box Animal Train

* need an empty cereal box

You can make a simple train from cereal boxes. This is a fun optional craft to begin now and continue for each unit all year.

For this first unit, make a train engine. Cut an empty cereal box, using the bottom third to make a train engine. Cover with colored paper and glue black wheels near the bottom of the box. Add a yellow window on each side.

For more fun, make a paper rabbit by tracing the rabbit pattern from the student sheets onto colored construction paper. Your child can place the rabbit engineer in the engine.

“God Makes Wonderful Things” and “God Makes Adam and Eve”

After reading the stories, talk about love: God made everything special because He loves us. He made it all for us to enjoy – red and yellow and orange flowers, tiny ladybugs, and huge elephants. God made a special garden for Adam and Eve with friendly animals and yummy fruit on trees. Wouldn’t that have been an amazing place to live! God makes everything special because He loves us so much!

Red Play Dough

Combine in a saucepan:

- 1 c. flour
- ¼ c. salt
- 1 T. cream of tartar
- 1 c. water
- 1 T. cooking oil
- ½ t. food coloring (or 2 packages unsweetened cherry Kool-Aid* for color and scent)

Cook over medium heat 3-5 minutes, stirring constantly until mixture pulls away from the side of the pan. Let cool slightly and knead. Store in a plastic bag.
Joy
Week 29
Together Time and Story Time Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bible Verse Sheep – Make a paper sheep from construction paper, tracing around the pattern provided. Write the Bible verse on it as your child watches.</td>
<td>White Crayon Art (see notes)</td>
<td>Joy – Pretend to be a shepherd finding a lost sheep (your child). Talk about how much you love your sheep. Be really joyful when you find it!</td>
<td>Animals Front and Back Card**</td>
<td>Sheep Sandwich – Make an open-faced sandwich using a sheep cookie cutter. Top with Chicken Salad. (see notes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If You’re Happy and You Know It” – Sing for Joy #10</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lamb Is Joyful” p. 169 in First Virtues</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes

Pretend to Be Sheep

Help your child act out this story as you read it aloud. You may be Mother Sheep and your child may be Baby Lamb. (Mother Sheep is a ewe.)

Baby Lamb was just born. He lives on a sheep farm with many other sheep. Baby Lamb stands up. He looks for his mother. He wants a drink of milk. Baby Lamb grows and grows.

Now Baby Lamb is five weeks old. Baby Lamb chews grass and clover. What good food!

Baby Lamb likes to play. He runs around the field with the other lambs. The lambs play “King of the Hill.” Baby Lamb likes to be on top of the hill. He also likes to climb on top of his mother’s back. Mother Sheep is strong. What fun it is to climb on Mother Sheep's back!

Baby Lamb likes to follow his mother. He walks just where she does, playing “Follow the Leader.” The other lambs come, too. Lambs and sheep like to follow a leader.

Baby Lamb does not walk off by himself. He stays with the herd of sheep – the rams, the ewes, and the other lambs. Baby Lamb likes to be together with all of them.

During the day, many of the sheep sleep. Baby Lamb looks around. Some of the ewes and some of the rams have their huge round eyes open. They are watching and watching. Baby Lamb is so happy to be with the other sheep because they keep him safe. Baby Lamb goes to sleep.

White Crayon Art

Have your child color with a white crayon on a sheet of white paper, pressing firmly. Describe what you see.

Use red and/or blue watercolors to paint the whole surface of the paper (you can leave the outside inch unpainted if you like). Talk about what happens.
Chicken Salad

1 can white meat chicken (drained)
handful of grapes, cut in fourths
handful of chopped nuts
mayonnaise, salt, pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients together. Then ask, “What white foods did we use to make this?” (chicken, mayonnaise, salt) Cut slices of bread with a sheep cookie cutter and top with chicken salad.