

Creative Adventures with Literature

#12: *The Lady with the Alligator Purse* adapted by Nadine Bernard Westcott

Introduction

The *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months* focuses on three components of the **Domain: Creativity and Aesthetics**. The components are **Music and Movement, Visual Arts and Drama**. In the book, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*, children will have an opportunity to be engaged in activities that support all three components.

This irresistible book, The Lady with the Alligator Purse adapted by Nadine Bernard Westcott, will have children and adults laughing out loud at the nonsense verses and the hilarious illustrations.

Story Preparation

- Become familiar with the song, “The Lady with the Alligator Purse.”
- Practice singing the song while showing the appropriate pages in the book. Develop felt or magnetic storytelling figures as a vehicle for presenting the story to children. For patterns for the figures See Attachment: [The Lady with the Alligator Purse](#)

Teacher Note: Some recordings of the song are titled “Miss Lucy Had a Baby” and have words that are different than those in the book. Therefore, for the first reading, you should use the words in the book. Then you can explain to children that sometimes the words on a CD are a little different from those in the book. The book is also an adaptation of the poem, “Tiny Tim,” which is included in the *Creative Music Experiences* section.

Story Presentation

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child’s home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Book: *The Lady with the Alligator Purse* by Nadine Bernard Westcott

First Reading of *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*

- Begin to sing the song, “The Lady with the Alligator Purse,” as you take the book to the story reading area.
- Invite children to look at the cover and describe who and what they see.
- State the title of the book and explain to children that this is a sing-along story; that it is to be sung instead of read.
- Sing the song as you show the appropriate pages.
- Follow up by showing the pages where there are lots of bubbles and ask children why they think there are so many bubbles. Accept all answers.
- Follow up further by inviting children to discuss their thoughts about a story that is sung rather than read to them.

Second Reading of *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*

- Take the book and a CD of the song and a player to the story reading area
- Show the cover and invite children to recall the title of the book.
- Invite children to join in as you sing the words to the story.
- Sing the song as you show the appropriate pages.
- Explain to children that you will now play the song and they are to listen to the words and decide how they are different from the words in the book. Prompt children by asking questions and showing specific pages in the book. For example, did the lady in the book and in the song say the same thing about what was wrong with Tiny Tim? (In the book and the song, Doctor said “Mumps” and nurse said “Measles”, while the lady said “Nonsense” in the book and “Nothing” in the song). In the book, the doctor, nurse and lady each prescribe something different for Tiny Tim. (Doctor prescribed penicillin, the nurse prescribed castor oil and the lady prescribed pizza.) The song does not mention penicillin, castor oil or pizza. Show the pages where pizza is part of the illustration. Invite children to discuss which they would rather have: penicillin, castor oil or pizza. Ask children if they think pizza helped Tiny Tim feel better.

Teacher Note: *Children may not be familiar with penicillin, which is sometimes given as an injection, or castor oil, which is a vile tasting medicine. Involve them in discussing the medicines and what they know about them.*

Third Reading of *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*

- Show the cover and ask children to recall the title.
- Explain to children that you really need their help in singing the words to the story.
- Lead children in singing the song as you turn the pages of the book.
- Follow through by explaining to children that they are now going to help you read the book. On page one, read “Miss Lucy had a baby, his name was _____” (Tiny Tim). Run your hand under the words you want children to read. Continue this process with all of the pages of the book.
- Thank children for helping you read the words in the song.

Additional Learning Goal:

EL3.1 Responds to the features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

Teacher Note: *This process of having children complete a sentence is called the cloze technique.*

Telling the Story, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*

- Prepare the storytelling figures as described in the Story Presentation section.
- Take the book, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*, the storytelling figures and felt or magnetic board to the story reading area.
- Invite children to join you in the area.
- Show children the book and ask them to recall the title. Explain to them that you are going to tell the story without the book.
- Present the story using the storytelling figures.
- Follow up by involving children in discussing which way they liked the story the best; with the book or with the storytelling figures and to explain their choice.

Teacher Note: *Place the book, the storytelling figures and storyboard in the Library Center. Observe to see if children tell the story with book and/or with the figures.*

Creative Art Extensions

Learning Goals:

PH2.2 Adjusts grasp and coordinates movements to use tools (*writing and drawing tools, scissors*)

CA2.1 Explores, manipulates, creates, and responds to a variety of art media (*exploration of art, art concepts*)

Activity: Animal Purses

Materials: paper sacks of different sizes and/or small boxes such as children's shoe boxes or cereal/cracker boxes, construction paper in green, brown, white, orange and black, textured wallpaper samples, fabric scraps, yarn, ribbon, chenille stems

Directions:

- Place the listed materials in the art center.
- Take the book, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*, to the Art Center.
- Invite children to look at the illustrations on the page that has these words:
In came the doctor,
In came the nurse,
In came the lady
With the alligator purse.
- Ask children to describe the purse the lady is carrying.
- Say to children, "Suppose you could design/make an animal purse. Which animal would you choose?" Accept all answers.
- Suggest that children may want to make an animal purse.
- Allow children to use the materials in the art center as they choose.
- Ask children who show you their creations if they would like to tell you about it. Record their comments on an index card and, with children's permission, attach it to their creation.

Teacher Note: *Have basic art materials such as crayons, markers, scissors and glue available in the art center*

Creative Drama and Dramatic Play Extensions

Learning Goal:

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Activity: Medical Prop Box/Bag

Contents: white shirt, stethoscope, syringe (without needle), ace bandage, tote bag, 2 boxes about the size that a bottle of cough syrup would come in (one labeled Penicillin and one labeled Castor Oil)

Directions:

- Place the tote bag filled with props in the dramatic play center.
- Allow children to play with the props as they choose.
- Observe children and listen to their comments as they play with the props. Do they pretend to be the different characters in the story, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*?

Activity: Bathing the Baby Props

Contents: small plastic dishpan as container for props, small washable doll, empty bubble bath and shampoo containers, box that soap comes in or a small box labeled **Soap**, washcloth, rubber ducks or other small bath toys, small towel

Directions:

- Place the plastic dishpan with props in the Dramatic Play Center.
- Allow children to play with the props as they choose.
- Observe children and listen to their comments as they play with the props. Do they pretend to be characters in the story, *The Lady with the Alligator Purse*?

Teacher Note: Consider placing the prop box/dishpan in the Water Play Center. Add three to four inches of water in the tub. Place a towel under the dishpan to catch spills. Children are to wash their hands before playing in the tub. Allow one or two children to play in the water at one time. Make sure children understand the rules for water play; for example, keep water in the tub and wipe up spills on the floor to keep people from slipping and falling down.

Remember to throw away the water and sanitize the tub each day.

Dramatic Play Extension:

- Add several purses to the Dramatic Play Center.
- Invite children to add the purses they made to the center.

Creative Music Experiences

Learning Goals:

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

CA3.1 Explores feelings, relationships, and concepts through imitation, pretend play, and sociodramatic play (*exploration of drama*)

Activity: Say and Sing about Tiny Tim

Materials: song, Miss Lucy Had a Baby on CD, CD player, poem, Tiny Tim

Directions:

- Locate a CD of the song, Miss Lucy Had a Baby.
- Invite children to the Music Center.
- Read to them the poem, Tiny Tim. Involve children in acting out some of the words of the poem; for example calling the doctor, nurse and lady with the alligator purse and motioning “out” to doctor, nurse and lady.
- Call attention to the words in the poem that rhyme: Tim and swim and nurse and purse.
- Explain to children that you are now going to play a song, Miss Lucy Had a Baby, and that some of the words may be different in the song and in the poem.
- Play the song and invite children to join in the singing.

Tiny Tim

Miss Lucy had a baby. His name was Tiny Tim. She put him in the bathtub To see if he could swim.	Miss Lucy called the doctor. Miss Lucy called the nurse. Miss Lucy called the lady With the alligator purse.	“Measles,” said the doctor. “Mumps,” said the nurse. “Nothing,” said the lady With the alligator purse.
He drank up all the water. He ate up all the soap. He tried to eat the bathtub But it wouldn’t go down his throat.	In walked the doctor. In walked the nurse. In walked the lady With the alligator purse.	Out went the doctor. Out went the nurse. Out went the lady With the alligator purse.

Extension: Place the CD and the CD player in the Music Center.

Additional Books

Other sing-along stories by Nadine Bernard Westcott and Mary Ann Hoberman include:

Miss Mary Mack

The Eensy-Weensy Spider

I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

Additional “Lady with the Alligator Purse ” Ideas

- Read and sing other sing-along stories with the children
- Place other sing-along books in the Library Center.

Learning Goals:

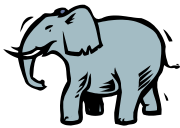

SE3.1 Shows awareness of self as unique individual (*preferences*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

MT1.1 Demonstrates number sense and an understanding of quantity (*number names and count sequence, comparison of quantity, connection of number, numeral and quantity*)

Activity: Graphing Favorite Book

- Involve children in a graphing activity involving two or three of the sing-along stories listed in the **Additional Books** section. Read and sing the stories with the children. Invite children to select their favorite, create a graph of their choices, and write a summary story.
- Make a graph with three columns. In the first column number from the bottom up. Label the other columns with titles of two or three other sing-along books. Add a picture to the titles.
- Read the titles with the children and explain that they are to choose which of the sing-along books they like the best.
- Allow children to vote by writing their names in the column they choose or by placing a name card in the column of their choice.
- Involve children in counting the number of children in each column.
- Write a summary story about children’s choices.
- Read the summary story with the children.

7	Grace	
6	Anna Kate	
5	Lucy	Beckett
4	Peyton	Taylor
3	Amy	Claire
2	Jonathan	Benjamin
1	Elise	Andrew
	Miss Mary Mack	The Eensy Weensy Spider
		

Our Favorite Song

More people in our class liked the sing-along story, *Miss Mary Mack* the best. Seven people liked *Miss Mary Mack* the best and five people liked the sing-along story, *The Eensy Weensy Spider* best.