

**Little Acorn Learning**  
**Daily Guide**  
~Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns Grow



Nature Based Guides  
for Childcare and Home  
[www.littleacornlearning.com](http://www.littleacornlearning.com)

This Guide was designed to be a “how to” guide for each item listed in the Daily Rhythm. You will need to use the individual Monthly booklets to successfully complete the program with your children.

**Our Daily Rhythm**

Morning Routine  
Morning Blessing  
Morning Circle  
Daily Activity  
Nature Walk  
Children’s Meditation  
Mealtime  
Afternoon Routine  
Rest Time  
Caregiver Meditation  
Outdoor Work & Play  
Evening Routine  
Bedtime Story and Blessing

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## **Morning Routine**

If possible, wake earlier than the rest of your family to allow yourself some quiet and time to focus. When children wake, eat breakfast family style and allow them to help you with tidying up, making beds and doing morning chores before you begin your day.

## **Morning Blessing**

Light Candle with Your Children



Say the following blessing together:

*For this new morning with its light,  
For rest and shelter of the night,  
For health and food, for love and friends.  
For everything Thy goodness sends,  
We thank Thee.*

Blow Candle Out  
Begin Your Day

## **Morning Circle**

Gather children in a circle and hold hands.  
Sing the following song with each child's name:

\*sung to tune of 'Are You Sleeping'

Hello (name), Hello (name)  
How are you?  
How are you?  
We're so glad to have you.  
We're so glad to have you.

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Here at school.  
Here at school.

Have children sit in a circle and share the week's circle time songs (provided in monthly guides)

Children stand up and hold hands in circle again - do ring around the rosie:

Ring around the Rosie  
A Pocket Full of Posies  
Ashes, Ashes  
We all Fall Down

When children fall down teacher taps the ground and sings

The cows are in the meadow, eating buttercups, a-tishoo a-tishoo, we all stand up!

Have children take their seats for the Daily Activity (provided in monthly guides)

### **Daily Activity**

Daily Activities and ideas are provided each day in the monthly booklets.

### **Nature Walk**

Enjoy the outdoors in all but the most extreme weather. Be sure children are dressed accordingly and be prepared for their clothing to get dirty, muddy or wet. If you are a childcare provider, make sure parents know to dress their child appropriately and to send in an extra set of clothes to keep at daycare. You may wish to include this type of information in your Parent Handbook.

In the nice weather, try to allow children 3+ hours per day of outside time. During the colder months or if the weather is very uncomfortable, 1-2 hours is sufficient. Many of the crafts and activities included in the program can even be set up and done outside – consider this when you prepare your day.

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As the children are preparing to go outside, allow them to dress themselves as much as possible.

### How to Do The Nature Walk:

Have children line up behind you and follow you as you walk. If you live in an area with woods, be sure to explore them with the children. You can use a sling to hold very young children and ask another adult or older child to help with the others. Using a buddy system is another great idea for larger groups.

During your walks, tell children to collect items they would like to include in their Nature Notebooks or for display on your Nature Table (these will be explained further in the Monthly booklets).

After you walk for awhile, find a place to sit and ask the children to be silent. Share the Weekly Verse that is included in the Monthly booklets with the children. After the verse, remain seated and do the Children's Meditation (see below).

### **Children's Meditation**

With a long pause in between each, recite the following words to the children:

'Look'  
'Listen'  
'Smell'  
'Touch'

Then ask children to close their eyes and ask them to:  
'Feel' nature with their hearts.

Do not worry if younger children do not understand the concept or participate. Lead by example and allow the experience to touch them in its own way. For example, for 'Listen' you can cup your ear and look up high... for 'Smell' you can bend over and pretend to smell a flower. They will soon get the idea.

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## **Mealtime**

When preparing to serve meals, try to involve the children in the process as much as possible. Consider purchasing special cloth napkins for each child or family member to use. Children can be great helpers. Allow them to wash the fruit, chop the vegetables or help add ingredients. Have them set the table and add flowers or a special centerpiece. Create a beautiful space and eat meals family-style. Before you eat share this simple mealtime blessing or one of your own:

*Back of the bread is the flour,  
And back of the flour is the mill,  
And back of the mill is the wind and the rain,  
And the Father's will.*

At the end of the meal, have children clean up their space. In my program each child places their dirty dishes into a tub of soapy water that I have prepared for dish washing. If you are at home, you can have them put their dishes into the sink filled with soapy water. They are then handed a wet cloth to go wipe their area clean. There are some wonderful recipes and ideas for cooking with children included in the Monthly booklets.

## **Afternoon Routine**

This is when you should do household tasks that need to be done before Rest Time. Children can help with folding the laundry, putting toys away and other tasks.

## **Rest Time**

Rest time is important for children after a busy morning. Putting children to rest should be approached with love and gentleness. If you are caring for multiple children, consider taking the extra time to take each child to his or her own space and tucking them in individually. Rub their head or backs for a bit before putting the next child to rest. Children who are waiting can engage in a quiet activity or work on setting up their napping area or bed.

Children will drift to sleep easier if you remain nearby for awhile. You can sing one or two lullabies as you sit in a rocking chair nearby. This is a good

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time to work on handwork projects such as knitting or embroidery. This is also when I do my *Caregiver Meditation* for the day. When children are asleep you can work on housework or tasks that need to be done that you did not get to earlier. Children who awake early can help you fold laundry, sweep the floor or tidy the house.

When each child wakes, wash their face with a warm cloth and have them brush their own hair if able. I ask childcare parents to bring a soft bristle brush for their child to keep at daycare. Teaching these practical life skills such as dressing, brushing hair, cooking, cleaning, washing, baking, crafting and gardening is a great gift to give young children.

### **Caregiver Meditation**

Choose a time to sit alone in peace each day. You may have to wake before the rest of your family or (like me) take advantage of nap time. In addition, be sure to get enough rest, exercise and eat well. Caring for children effectively requires a lot of energy, both mentally and physically. Each week, use the quote and topic provided to you in the Monthly to ponder during your meditation time. On alternate days, you may consider spending your Caregiver Meditation in silent reflection. My hope is that you use this time to rejuvenate your soul. You deserve it.

During Meditation:

Sit as straight as possible. If necessary, sit against the wall to get used to good posture. Read the daily meditation, close your eyes and relax. Your mind will stray, especially in the beginning. When this happens simply bring your thoughts back gently to your focus and continue. Over time you will be able to focus for longer periods of time.

### **Outdoor Work & Play**

After your nature walk and throughout the day, allow children to play freely outside. Young children can sit with you on a blanket or rest in a comfortable area as the others play. If you have outdoor tasks to complete, allow the children to work along side of you as they wish. Children should have their own tools to use while outside such as child-sized rakes, shovels, gloves and garden tools. If you are unable to purchase these things, provide

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the children with household items such as, kitchen spoons, cups and old plastic garden planters so they can imitate what you are doing. Each week, there will be suggestions on the type of work you can do during your Outdoor Play time in the Monthly booklets.

### **Evening Routine**

The evening routine of each family and program are unique. Take time to make a list of the tasks you need to complete each day and incorporate them into your daily routine to get the best out of this program.

### **Bedtime Story and Blessing**

In the evening, when the dishes have been cleaned up and the children are in their pajamas bring your family together for a Bedtime Story and Blessing. This would be a great time to reread the story of the week so it remains fresh in your child's mind. Children thrive on repetition and routine and will truly appreciate hearing a story retold.

After the story:

Light Candle with Your Children



Say the following blessing together or one of your own:

Bless my pillow  
Bless my bed  
Bless me too from toes to head  
Bless the earth, sun and air  
Bless the children everywhere.

Blow out candle  
End Your Day

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## **Religious Orientation**

While our program is not religiously oriented, Little Acorn Learning does honor a Creator in many of the verses, songs and blessings that we use. We celebrate many seasons and festivals, with an emphasis on Christian saints and holidays. We encourage you to weave your own traditions and customs into the program to make it work best for your family.

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