

Magical Memories



Life As a Mermaid

A child of 3 approached me during free play. All of the other children were deeply engaged in their play, and he quietly whispered to me...."Miss Mirandy, I KNOW your secret...I know that you are REALLY a mermaid." I looked up and saw that his very hushed whisper had somehow been heard, and all of the curious children were surrounding me with demands to share my mermaid secret. I of course could not disappoint them, so I told them how I was in fact both human and mermaid. This impromptu story became an epic tale filled with magical details only they could discover. I had thought that the story would fade out of everyone's memory over the summer, but I was surprised and delighted that in the new school year the returning children had passed on the story of my life as a mermaid to the new students. I have never since received a compliment so pure and lovely as being called a mermaid :)

Red Sled

Stories are magic. Here is how one story took over our classroom with absolute joy! We read the loveliest winter story called "Red Sled." This is a wordless picture book. The pictures tell a story about a child who leaves his red sled outside his house and goes to bed. A bear walking by, sneaks away with the sled in his arms. At this point, the kids were shouting, "He's stealing the sled, he's stealing the sled!" The bear then goes for a joy ride through the snow, and each time he passes another forest friend, that animal hops on and joins them. By the end, there is ten different animals piled on top of one sled until they crash land into a pile of snow.

The bear returns the sled before morning, and the next day when the boy goes out to play with his sled, he notices something- bear footprints! The last picture shows the boy the next night peeking out his window at his sled outside, waiting to see if anything happens to his sled.

This book sparked so much animated conversation. Every child was swept up by the funniness of the story and the trickery on the bear's part. After I shared the story, I went around the table and asked each child to share with us if they had a sled, and if so, what color it was. If they did not have a sled, they could tell us what color they wished it was. One child said, "Miss Mirandy, a long, Long, LONG time ago (it should be noted here that this child was 3 years old haha) I had a sled, but now it's gone. My sled was in the garage, and a bear came and took it back to his cave. And he never brought it back!"

All of the children gasped! They all shouted about how unfair that was! The boy was sincerely upset about it, so I asked him if we should tell the bear how it made him feel to have his sled stolen. He asked me, "how can we tell him? He lives in a cave in Africa!" I suggested that we write a letter to Mr. Bear. ALL of the kids decided they wanted to write a letter to Mr. Bear. I got out paper and markers and the children went to work- all of them very serious. Some drew pictures, letters, words, and some had me write down their words for them. I got an envelope and wrote on the address, "To: Mr. Bear, who lives in a cave in Africa." Each child handed me their letter, and I asked them to tell me (I took notes) what they wrote to Mr. Bear. Here are two of my favorite letters:

"Dear Mr. Bear,

Please bring back my sled that you took to your cave. If you are nice, I will give you a walkie-talkie.

over and out,
your friend"

"Mr. Bear,

Please don't take it ever, Ever, EVER again, and Mr. Bear don't ever, ever, EVER come back to his house."

All of the children had important things to say to Mr. Bear! I sealed them all up into an envelope, and I told them after school today I would mail their letter at the post office- and I did :) The next school day a red sled appeared in our school yard. And the following week we received a reply from Mr. Bear explaining what happened. The "bear stealing" theme continued to be reenacted through the children's play week after week.

Fairy Dust

While outside playing, several children were busy rubbing chalk vigorously over the exterior blue walls. Piles of chalk dust were forming on the ground. I noticed the ever increasing chalk dust and asked what their team project was all about. The children explained, "We are making lot's and lot's of fairy dust! ... So the whole ground can fly!" they answered. Well, of course.

When Do you Become a GrownUp?

I learned today at Singing Tree that I am not quite yet a grown up yet :) What a relief!

A child asked me, "Miss Mirandy, how old ARE you?!?"

Me: "How old do you think I am?"

"Hmmmmm...I think you're definitely a teenager maybe!"

Another child: "I think you're like 20!!!"

Another child: "Ummmmm...you must be ATLEAST 24!!!"

"Wait a minute!... you might even be a grownup!!!"

Me: "When does a person become a grownup? What makes a person a grownup?"

A child: "Hmmmmm....well...it takes about 51 years... you grow older and older...and you get taller too!!!"

"AND, grownups talk different!"

Me: "How do grownups talk?"

"Well, I don't know yet, because I'm still a kid."

Me: "Am I grown up yet?"

"Well... you're maybe 24, so maybe next year you'll be all grown up Miss Mirandy.

And THEN, Miss Mirandy, you will have to start going to work!"

All the children nodded in agreement :)

A Long, Long Name

After sharing an adaptation of the story of a child with a VERY, VERY, VERY long name -- "Tikki Tikki Tembo No Sa Rembo Chari Bari Ruchi Pip Peri Pembo" -- it was fun to ask the children if they would like to have a name this long :) Here were a few of their responses:

"That name was too long!! My ears almost ran out, and my breath almost ran out, and I was counting numbers until we would be done!!"

"If you have a long name, you talk too much, and your voice will get a little weirder, and then you will have to rest your voice."

"I don't like long names because maybe it get's me out of breath"

"No!! Because I think mama and papa can say lots of numbers, but not a lot of name!"

What is a Rainbow?

"A rainbow looks like a crescent with purple....red....yellow....black....and...um... and rainbow sparkles too!"

"It looks like a BIG slide, because it turns over and down...I was thinking if I could find the rainbow slide, I could slide down to get to the gold."

"A rainbow looks like a C, and a C looks like...hmmm... it starts at the bottom, then it goes uuuuup....and slowly forms into a rainbow."

"It looks like a mountain shape, but not really....it's just a rainbow shape."

"A rainbow is a half circle. It goes over....but it doesn't look like a circle."

Shadows

In celebration of Groundhog Day, we explored the topic of shadows. I asked the children, "What is a shadow?"

"It's like a big piece of play doh, but it's a different shape."

"It kind of looks like people, but it isn't- it's made from the sun, and that's how I make shadows outside."

"It's a black thing on the road- when the sun get's on the road, it gets it."

"A shadow is like when the sun is out it reflects on your body and then the sun gets on the ground and then you have a shadow."

"If you move and walk, it does the same thing and copies you."

"I think a shadow is when you're in the sun, and you stay still, and then you can find your shadow."

"When you stand in the shade, it disappears!! But, it's still there- then when you come out in the sun it comes back! It's like magic!"

"A shadow is what you stand on, and sometimes I see it at my house."

Wool Fiber Observations

We closely explored raw wool fiber with magnify glasses, and I asked the children to tell me in their own words how the wool feels, and looks. Here were some of the children's observations:

"Fluffy.....like fluff"

"Fluffy like MY blanket fluff"

"Hey look everybody!! (holding wool fiber up under the magnifying glass)... It looks like a spider web!"

"It looks like a nest when you roll it up"

"It's kind of soft and fluffy like bubble soap"

"It feels like a nice soft cloud"

"It feels like hair on top of a head"

"It looks very wooly and it looks big in the magnify glass"

"It looks like a cloud"

"It feels like wool from a sheep"

(While trying to drop the wool fiber on the table):

"It's very quiet"

"It's very squishy and roll-y and almost catchy"

"It looks like a rain drop falling"

Here were some of the children's words to describe the wool yarn:

"It's kind of squiggly on the inside"

"This is roll-y"

"It's soft and swirly"

"It's stringy, and it doesn't make any sound- not even a drop of sound!"

"It's so straight!"

"It feels long"

While observing the yarn under the magnify glass:

"It's very hairy...there's lines sticking out of the softness"

"It's so stringy!!"

"This smells like shampoo.....it might taste like shampoo"

"This smells like sheep"

"It kind of smells like my mom's jewelry"

While dropping the yarn on the table:

"It looks like a hammock falling"

"It looks like a slug dropping from your hand"

Question: "If you could knit or crochet, what would you make from yarn?":

"I would make a stuffed triceratops and t-rex for myself...a papa t-rex and the baby t-rex, a mama triceratops, and one baby triceratops- and they're both girls"

"France and gold"

"I would make a peacock like me, because I'm a peacock"

"I would make a pretty pretty dress that is soft"

"An orange shirt- because I don't have any any orange shirts"

A Very Merry Un-Birthday!

Several children were busily working at the sand table. I overheard the children giggling, so I approached the table closer to see what they were up to. They informed that they were working on a surprise for me, and that it was not ready yet. So I waited until they were finished. They all shouted with glee, "It's ready, it's ready!" They had each made a perfect sand cake for me! One child suggested we should sing a song before we eat our cake.

I asked, "Well, what song shall we sing?"

The same child shouted, "How about Happy Birthday?!"

"Well, who's Birthday shall we pretend to celebrate?"

"All of our birthdays" they shouted, jumping up and down.

So that is exactly what we did one child at a time. At the end of each singing that lucky child got to blow out their pretend candle and make their own special wish. It was very happy un-birthday indeed!

Thoughtful Quotes by Kids

"When I grow up, I want to be a REAL Mermaid-Fairy-Princess. And what that means is, when there's trouble down in the ocean, I will jump into the ocean, and turn into a mermaid, and I will save somebody. If there's trouble in the sky, I will jump up into the sky and turn into a fairy. I will save somebody if they are falling from the sky. And if there's trouble down on Earth, I will turn into a princess, and help the bad person down on Earth to become a nice person."

"Miss Mirandy, why are butterflies called butterflies?!? Because I don't think butter can fly! hmmm.... I was thinking they are called butterflies because the pollen that they eat looks like butter maybe?"

"At first, swinging on the swing is hard!! You need strength....and you need to believe in yourself, and never ever give up! Just like my samurai-ninja class - never give up!"

"There's a lot you need to know about being a 5 year old....Your 4, and you don't know what you need to be 5 yet....there's lot's of lot's of things: You have to know a LOT about math, and work, and helping your family clean the table...AND, learning how to be brave on really dark, cold nights! You'll learn how to skateboard when your older than 5....oh, and play bumper cars at the fair."

"Miss Mirandy, you know who I'm going to marry?! Mother Earth!!!!"

"I want to be very gentle to Mother Earth's creatures because they're all of her species."

"If I was a SECRET pirate, I would hide dinosaur bones as my treasure. I LOVE dinosaurs! Also, sometimes you can't get to see much of the bones because bugs eat them."

"Do you know how the ocean was made Miss Mirandy?!?! I do! Big meteors filled with water inside hit-ed the Earth...they fell down to the Earth and made a BIG hole! And then, the meteors cracked open and the water inside made the ocean."

After sprinkling children with fairy wishing dust, a few excited children shared their wish out loud:

"I wish I was a flying bear"

"I gave my wish to the Earth... that I could fly in a rocket ship and go to each planet."

"I wish I could be a unicorn and fly to space!"

