March to May

Spring Finger Rhyme: The Ladybird Wakes Up

A ladybird wakes up after the winter, counts her spots with the children and finds out what is already in flower.

Age
from about 3 years

Time
about 20 minutes with the finger rhyme and word cards; the puppet play alone takes about 5 minutes

Puppets
1 finger puppet or hand puppet; you play the second role yourself

Materials
a green or brown cloth, an empty watering can and, if you like, a pot of spring flowers

Puppet play

Read the script through once beforehand. It's fine to read from the page while you play.

Roles

Dotty
the ladybird (finger puppet or hand puppet)

You
in your own voice, without a puppet

Puppet: A ladybird finger puppet or hand puppet. A cardboard ladybird on your finger will do just as well.

Getting ready

Lay the cloth loosely in the middle of the circle, with the ladybird on your hand hidden underneath. Put the watering can beside you, with the pot of spring flowers next to it if you have one. Keep the word cards within reach, picture side down.

Tips for playing the roles

- Give Dotty a light, slightly sleepy voice at first, then let her get livelier.
- Crawling: move the puppet forward in small, jerky steps.
- Flying: sweep your hand through the air in a wide arc.

- ✓ Don't be afraid of pauses. Wherever it says 'let the children answer', wait calmly.
- ✓ Each time a word appears in bold, turn over the matching word card.

Script

Stage directions are in italics. Words in **bold** are on the word cards.

You: *(whispering)* Shh. Someone is asleep under this cloth. They've been asleep all winter. Shall we wake them up?

The children call softly: 'Wake up!'

Dotty: *(crawls slowly out from under the cloth)* Ooh … is it warm already?

You: It's a **ladybird**! Good morning! Yes, the **sun** is shining again.

The children stretch their hands up high and spread their fingers like sunbeams.

Dotty: My name is Dotty. Do you know why?

Let the children answer.

You: That's right, because of all your dots! Come on, let's count every **spot**.

Count the puppet's spots together.

Dotty: I'm hungry. Are there any greenfly yet?

You: Not many yet. They'll come when everything is green. But look what's already in flower: a **snowdrop**.

Dotty: And what's that green thing there, all closed up?

You: That's a **bud**. It will open soon and turn into a **tulip**.

You slowly open your fist like a flower. The children join in.

Dotty: *(crawls on)* Ooh, it's as yellow as the sun over here!

You: That's a **dandelion**.

Dotty: A dandy-LION? Does it bite?

You: No. Its leaves are just jagged, a bit like a lion's teeth. That's how it got its name.

*You hum. The children hum too. Turn over the **bee** word card as you go.*

Dotty: Hello, bee! You're out and about early.

The children hook their thumbs together and flutter their hands.

You: And who's fluttering over there? A **butterfly**!

Dotty: I can fly too. I've got wings tucked under my red coat.

You move your free hand under the cloth.

Dotty: Oh! The ground is wriggling. Who's that?

You: It's a **worm**. Worms dig tunnels in the soil.

*You 'water' the flower word cards or the pot of spring flowers with the empty **watering can**. Everyone goes 'Pitter-patter, pitter-patter'.*

Dotty: Oops, am I getting a shower too? No thank you, I'm wide awake now!

You make soft birdsong: 'Tweet, tweet.'

You: Can you hear that? The birds are building a **nest**.

Dotty: Then I'll fly off and look at everything from up high. One, two, three …

The ladybird flies in a wide arc behind your back.

You: Bye-bye, Dotty! And now it's time for our ladybird rhyme.

You put the puppet down, because the finger rhyme needs both hands. Move on to the finger rhyme 'Seven Spots'.

Finger rhyme: "Seven Spots"

The second time through, pause after 'black as night': the children tap seven spots onto the back of their hand and count out loud.

1. **A ladybird, so small and bright,**
   Two fingers crawl across the back of your other hand.

2. **has seven spots as black as night.**
   Tap spots onto the back of your hand with your index finger.

3. **She climbs a finger, tall and straight,**
   Fingers crawl up the raised index finger of your other hand.

4. **then spreads her wings – she cannot wait!**
   Open both hands outwards like a pair of wings.

5. **One, two, three, and off she flies,**
   One hand flutters upwards in an arc.

6. **up into the big blue skies.**
   Stretch both arms up and out as wide as you can.

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Word cards

The twelve words from the puppet play come as a printable A4 sheet: twelve cards with a picture and a word, ready to cut out. If you like, draw some more cards with the children.

ladybird	**sun**	**spot**	**snowdrop**
bud	**tulip**	**dandelion**	**bee**
butterfly	**worm**	**watering can**	**nest**

Notes for practitioners

1. The set works well any time from March to May, and is lovely on the first warm day after the winter. Real snowdrops usually only flower until about March.

2. A suggested running order: the puppet play first, then the finger rhyme two or three times, and finish with a word card game. For example, 'Animal or plant?': the children sort the cards into two groups. Sun, spot, watering can and nest don't fit either group, so they get a place of their own.

3. The best-known ladybird in Britain has seven spots. Other kinds have two, ten or even more. You may hear that the spots tell you a ladybird's age, but they don't.

4. Outdoors: if the children find a real ladybird, let it crawl over a hand for a moment, then put it back on a plant. Sometimes it leaves a little yellow drop behind; this is harmless and washes off.

5 Snowdrops, tulips and many other spring flowers are poisonous, especially their bulbs. If you bring in a real pot of flowers, it is just for looking at; afterwards, put it out of reach.

6 All twelve words come up in the puppet play. Children who are more confident in English can explain the flowers to Dotty. Dotty can get things mixed up now and then, and that's part of the fun.

7 Home languages: ask the children or their parents what 'sun' or 'ladybird' is in their home language. Dotty repeats the word and lets them correct her.

Suitable puppets: Ladybird finger puppets and hand puppets at Daliono. Many puppets you already have will work just as well.

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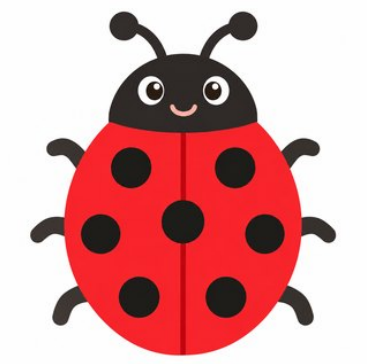
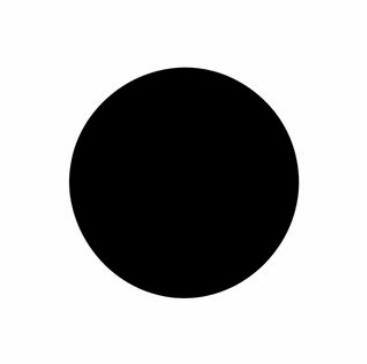


ladybird



sun



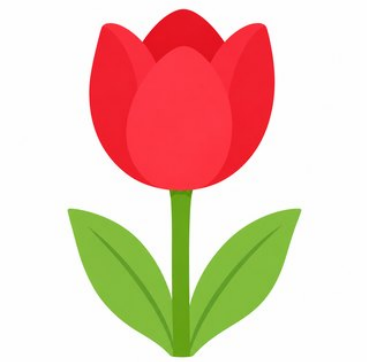
spot



snowdrop



bud



tulip



dandelion



bee



butterfly



worm



watering can



nest

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PUPPET PLAY WORKSHOP

Spring

Dear family,

At nursery we have been playing with our hand puppet, **Dotty (the ladybird)**. Our theme was **Spring**. Along the way, we learnt these words:



Our words


ladybird


sun


spot


snowdrop


bud


tulip


dandelion


bee


butterfly


worm


watering can


nest

Our finger rhyme to join in with

1. A ladybird, so small and bright,
2. has seven spots as black as night.
3. She climbs a finger, tall and straight,
4. then spreads her wings – she cannot wait!
5. One, two, three, and off she flies,
6. up into the big blue skies.

Ideas for home

- Ask your child which words they still remember, then say the same words in your language.
- Talk with your child in the language you know best.
- Do the finger rhyme together, in your language too if you like.

Best wishes from all of us at nursery

You can also find this letter, the rhyme and the words here:
www.daliono.de/puppet-play-workshop/spring/

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