

Easter crafts keep tots hopping

By Julie Brown
staff writer

An Easter parade just wouldn't be the same without a new Easter bonnet to wear.

The children at the First Step Day Care Center won't have to worry about that, however. Tuesday, the youngsters made brand-new Easter bonnets, gluing ribbons, lace and feathers to cone-shaped hats formed out of paper plates.

Some of the children had a bit of trouble deciding just how much glue to use on their creations. They ended up with glue on the wrong side of the hats — and, in some cases, on their hands as well.

"Why don't you wait to put the glue on until you pick out what you want?" teacher Cindy Myers suggested to the children. They took her advice and ended up with an impressive array of designer originals.

The hat-making was just part of the Easter activities at the day-care center, which is at the Farmington Area YMCA in Farmington Hills.

OTHER ACTIVITIES include making Easter baskets out of empty milk cartons.

"We'll fill those with grass, and we'll have an Easter basket hunt," said Laila Sherwin, the director of the center, which is for children ages 2½ to 5.

Dyeing and decorating of Easter eggs are also on the agenda, as is an Easter parade on Friday. The youngsters will also take a large Easter basket over to the YMCA office staff on Friday.

"We don't build up any more than necessary on holidays," Sherwin said. "With day care, you want to keep it a little more low-key."

"Thursday and Friday, we'll be building up to Easter. One day is really enough."

The youngsters have also been busy with springtime activities, such as growing small plants.

"We've been talking a lot about spring," Sherwin said.



Laila Sherwin, director of the First Step Day Care Center, helps Sabina Kuohn with her Easter bonnet. The youngsters at the day care center, which is at the Farmington Area YMCA, have been keeping busy with a variety of Easter activities.



Lauren Ellis concentrates on making a picture-perfect Easter bonnet, above. Justin Miller and teacher Cindy Myers add decorative finishing touches to his hat, at left.

Passover begins Friday

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

A visiting rabbi once commented that Passover's flavor and texture have become too bland.

"For a week, we should eat the bread of Auschwitz as well as the bread of Passover. To be really living, we must know the pain of suffering," he said.

A series of plagues and miracles took place in Egypt before the Pharaoh decided to allow the Jewish people to be free of his bondage. But through history, the need to seek and secure freedom has been an unending, pain-filled battle.

Jewish people everywhere are preparing to observe this springtime holiday which is mankind's oldest continuous celebration of freedom.

On the evening Friday, April 5, the first seder night of Passover, American Jewish families will recall that Soviet Jewish prisoners of conscience are struggling for their right to live in the Jewish homeland in Israel; to practice the faith of their fathers.

They will think of the plight of Russian Jews arrested, beaten, exiled and imprisoned, painfully separated in many cases from their closest families.

"MATZOH OF HOPE" to be read as part of the service is a message of people people in the age old cry: "Let My People Go." Two nights of seder begin the eight day festival. Families will gather for the feast and retell the story of the leave-taking from Egypt.

Seder means order, and the ritual utilizes prayers, songs, story and ceremonial foods in order of the service. The Haggadah is the narrative story of the exodus, contained in illustrated books frequently passed down through generations.

The seder leader, usually head of the household, directs the reading and all participate, down to the youngest who reads the four questions. The answers to these traditional questions tell the story of Passover.

No leavened bread is eaten during the festival and other foods containing leavening agents or yeast are forbidden as well. During the eight days, separate dishes, silverware, and cooking utensils are used.

A COLORFULLY decorated platter is used for the seder plate with a roasted lamb bone; horse radish (maror) or bitter herbs; chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine (charoset) symbolizing the mortar made to hold together the bricks the Jews produced in slavery; a green vegetable to symbolize renewal (karpas); and a roasted egg as a token of grief for the destroyed Temple.

A cup of wine is poured for the Prophet Elijah, who will foretell the coming of the Messiah, and at a certain point in the service, the door is opened and Elijah is invited to enter.

For children, an exciting tradition is their search for matzoh, hidden by the seder leader, to be redeemed for a reward.

Other traditional Passover rituals are drinking four cups of wine and spilling drops of blood (wine or grape juice) to symbolize the 10 plagues God sent to Pharaoh.

Passover reminds Jews that their forefathers' delivery from slavery means their own freedom was won, that they must be aware of the evil of oppression and righteously strive for justice for all.

Jews tasting the Matzoh and a bit of bitter herb will think of ancient Egypt, of Syria, of Jews behind the Iron Curtain, and perhaps of the latest to win freedom, the Ethiopian Jews, now in Israel.



At Passover time, nursery school teachers like Miriam Moyers of Beth Hayedot at Congregation Shaarey show the children

how to prepare Seder items like the Charoset, made from apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine (grape juice).



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