Games From the Past

White Whitsun Bird

Material List: Stiff paper 8 x 5 3/4 inches (1 per student)
Hole puncher (1)
Crepe paper 5” x 4” (1per student)
Soft white paper 5” x 4” (1 per student)
String 12” long (1 per student)
Bird Pattern (1)

Student Time: 1 classroom period

Objectives (The student will learn about/learn to):

1. Create from materials at hand unique and useful objects.
2. Name the event Whitsun tide celebrated.
3. Appreciate the timelessness of cultural celebrations by enjoying an activity children did over a 100 years ago.

Teacher's introduction to the activity: (See page 3)

Instruction: First cut out a bird pattern of stiff white paper. For the tail we glue on the crepe paper lengths, and for wings we will fold the soft white paper like an accordion. Then cut a slit ½ inch from the middle of the bird, and slide the wings through. Our final step is to punch a hole directly above the wings, put a string through this hole, and watch your dove fly in the breeze.

Variation: Make birds with different colors, styles of wings, etc.
White Whitsun Bird

Cut out of stiff white paper any appropriate bird shape. Glue on white streamers for a tail out of crepe paper. Make wings of soft white paper and fold as for a fan. Fold in half and slip through a hole in the bird's body until half-way point. Thread string through a hole where the bird will balance when hung from the string.

1. Cut out bird shape in stiff white paper. Pierce hole where bird will balance when hung up. Glue on white streamers for tail.

2. For wings use thinner white paper (NB not drawn to scale).

3. Fold like a fan. Fold in half at x and slip through slit in bird's body.
Whitsuntide

Children used to make White Whitsun Bird in association with “Whitsuntide”, and English event, celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles after they had communed at supper. It is celebrated beginning on Pentecost. Whitsuntide was celebrated in Germany before the Reformation by lowering a large white wooden dove over the congregation through a gap in the loft above. It was followed by a bucket of water! Whoever the water fell on was “Whitsun Bird” for the next year.

In the 19th and 20th centuries Whitsun birds were made from various materials; bread dough was said to be a good representation of Whitsun. In England various parishes had “Whitsunale”, in the vicinity of a church, and played games, ate and drank ale. The White color is symbolic of the white garments worn by baptismal candidates.