

Dear Mom & Dad,

Today the Art Parent presented the Masterpiece of the Month: "Sugaring Off in the Maple Orchard" by Grandma Moses.

We talked about our favorite winter activities. We shared details of what we like to do with family and friends inside and outside during winter.

We learned what "Sugaring Off" means, and we saw a short video clip of an actual farmer in Vermont collecting sap from his maple trees to make real maple syrup. We even tasted real maple syrup!

We heard a poem by Robert Frost called *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. We read it in a beautiful new version by the illustrator Susan Jeffers.

We made up a funny story about what the people in the painting are doing. We discussed what a unique artist Grandma Moses was...she was truly an American treasure! She had a style that was considered primitive because she was able to paint in a clear, uncomplicated way. Grandma Moses is a folk artist, which means she never had any formal training in art. Many of Grandma Moses' paintings are landscapes showing her favorite memories. She had ten children and often included them in her paintings. "Sugaring Off" is a painting of Grandma Moses' town in the winter. By the way, one nifty fact that we learned is that Grandma Moses didn't start painting until she was seventy-five years old. By the time she died at age 101, Grandma Moses had painted approximately 1,600 paintings, and 250 of those were painted after her hundredth birthday! Wow! This really gives any of us out there that are late bloomers quite a bit of hope!

Next, we made snow globes, and listened to music that was inspired by the Robert Frost poem. We can just imagine what it was like to be Grandma Moses and have a scene in our heads that we want to paint.

Ask me about Sugaring Off in the Maple Orchard by Grandma Moses. I will have a lot to share!