



volume 1, issue 28

**Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!**

**Welcome to issue 28 of Minis at Home newsletter.** Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

**This week's theme = Kites**

Did you know that April is National Kite Month? Why April, though? Spring has arrived, the weather is warming, and people are celebrating the return of outdoor activities. For many people, spring is a time of hope, joy and renewal as they put away heavy winter clothes, spring clean their homes and yards, and get ready for summer fun. Kite flying is a great way to welcome spring.





People have been flying kites for thousands of years! The tradition probably began in Ancient China 3000 years ago. The earliest kites were made only of wood and paper. Then, kite-makers introduced bamboo sticks, which are very strong, and covered them with silk cloth. They added a long tail and line made of twine or string. Kites were made to look like animals or geometric shapes such as diamonds. Many of these decorated kites depicted real or mythical animals such as flying insects, butterflies, dragons or birds. These kites were painted and decorated with colorful and detailed drawings. Kite flying used to be a hobby or sport for wealthy people who could afford to buy kites made out of fine silk and paper.

The word "kite" in Chinese is feng zheng which means "wind harp." Many people would attach wind instruments (like flutes and recorders that make sounds when the wind blows through them) to their kites so that the kites would make music when they flew.



In India there is a holiday called Makar Sankranti. Kite flying is a key part of the festivities. This holiday is also known as the International Kite Festival or Uttarayan in Hindi. It is held every year on January 14th to celebrate the lengthening of days, the harvest season, and looking forward to spring. Millions of kites all over the country are flown all day! The picture above shows a kite maker with the colorful threads used to fly his kites.

Kite flying is now a hobby for people; many people also participate in kite flying competitions, attend kite festivals or have kite races or fights.

People have learned a lot from kite flying as well. Kites have helped scientists and inventors learn about the weather, about how planes fly, and about electricity. **Ben Franklin** was a famous scientist, inventor, and politician. He was one of the founding fathers of the United States. He demonstrated that lightning is made of electricity by flying a kite during a thunderstorm. His kite picked up an electric charge from the storm and he watched the little threads of the kite string stand up towards the sky. The painting below shows Ben Franklin conducting his kite experiment. Don't ever fly a kite during a thunderstorm, though. It's not safe. You could actually receive a serious shock!



Kites were also important in helping people understand how objects could move in the air. The **Wright Brothers** were the first people to build and fly in an airplane, and they used kites to help them understand how to build their airplane.

Kites were and are used for fishing in some countries. Large banana leaves were sometimes used as kite's "sail", and fish bait was tied onto a long kite line. The kite was attached to the boat or held by the fisherman. When the kite flew high above and behind the boat, the baited line would drag far back behind the boat, catching lots of fish.

Before cars were invented, one man even used 2 large kites instead of horses—which were expensive to own—to pull his carriage!

Kites can be made into many different shapes, colors and sizes. They can be shaped like boxes, diamonds, and other geometric shapes, or they can be shaped like animals or insects. Today, you'll see kites that look like butterflies, sharks, and almost anything else you can think of!



Some kites are made to be showy and colorful; others are made just for flying high and fast. Many kites are also now inflatable, similar to a large balloon. How many different kinds of kites can you spot at the beach or a park?

The smallest kite ever made that can actually fly is about an inch long while the largest is 1/2 mile long! Did you know that the kite is named after a bird called a "**Kite**"? Kites are birds that are known for their beautiful wings and tail feathers that help them glide and soar gracefully in the sky.

### Tips for Kite Flying:

- Make sure there is wind!
- Make sure you are in an open field or at the beach.
- Stand with your back to the wind, holding the kite line.
- Have a friend stand in front of you holding the kite as high in the air as they are able. Slowly walk backwards, keeping your back against the wind, and unroll your string until the kite catches the wind and stays up in the air.
- Keep letting out string to see how high your kite can fly.



### Activity: Craft

#### Paper Plate Kite



#### Materials:

- Thin, white paper plate
- Markers, paint or dot markers
- Hole punch
- Yarn or string for kite tail
- Kite string (optional)
- Scissors
- Fabric scraps or ribbon
- 1 craft stick or a real stick from the ground

**Procedure:**

Cut out the center of your paper plate so that the rim is about 3 inches wide all around. Decorate both sides of the plate with markers, paint or dot markers.

Punch 3 holes in the rim; two holes at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions, and one at the 6 o'clock position

Measure out and cut about 15 feet of yarn for the kite's long line (great counting activity). You can also use fishing line for this.

Take another piece of yarn or string to use as the kite's tail (about 2 or 3 feet long) and tie it to the single, 6 o'clock hole. Tie pieces of ribbon or fabric strips onto the tail line. Thread one end of the long kite line through both 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock holes and tie to the line.

Tie the other end of the kite line to the stick and then wrap the line around the stick.

**Activity: Move and Sing****Songs and Rhymes About Kites****I'm a Little Kite** (original source unknown)

(sung to *I'm a Little Teapot*)

**I'm a little kite up in the sky**

**See me flying, oh so high**

**When the wind begins to blow and blow**

**I'll twirl and swirl, just watch me go!**

**Five Little Kites** (original source unknown)

**Five little kites flying high in the sky**

**Said hi to the cloud as it passed on by**

**Said hi to the bird and said hi to the sun**

**Said hi to an airplane, oh what fun!**

**Then which went the wind, and they all took a dive  
Down to the ground,**

**One, two, three, four, five!**

**Color Kites** (adapted from [preschoolexpress.com](http://preschoolexpress.com))

(sung to *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*)

**Red kites, blue kites flying by  
Yellow kites, green kites, in the sky  
They fly high and they fly low  
Twirling whirling 'round they go  
Red kites, blue kites flying by  
Yellow kites, green kites, in the sky**

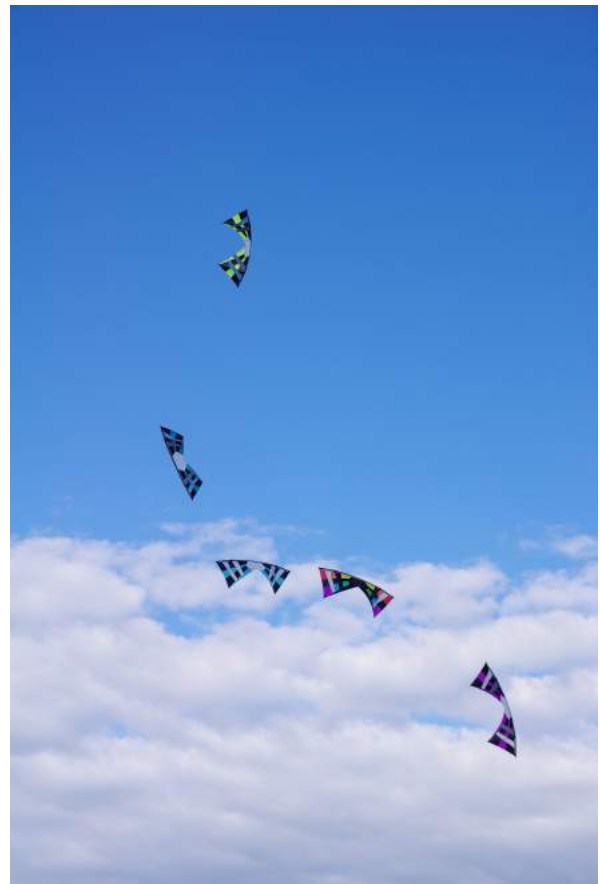


**Let's Go Fly a Kite** (original song from Disney's *Mary Poppins*)

You may listen to it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNSler7jBWs>

With tuppence for paper and strings  
You can have your own set of wings  
With your feet on the ground  
You're a bird in a flight  
With your fist holding tight  
To the string of your kite  
Oh, oh, oh!  
Let's go fly a kite  
Up to the highest height!  
Let's go fly a kite and send it soaring  
Up through the atmosphere  
Up where the air is clear  
Oh, let's go fly a kite!  
When you send it flying up there  
All at once you're lighter than air  
You can dance on the breeze  
Over houses and trees  
With your fist holding tight  
To the string of your kite  
Oh, oh, oh!  
Let's go fly a kite  
Up to the highest height!  
Let's go fly a kite and send it soaring  
Up through the atmosphere  
Up where the air is clear  
Let's go fly a kite!



**Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

**Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together**

***The Story of Kites*** by Ying Chang Compestine

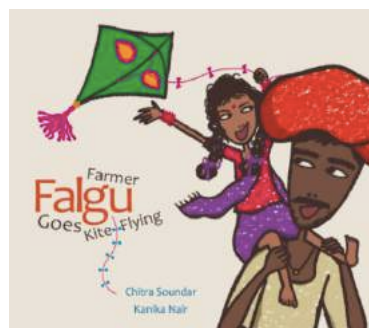
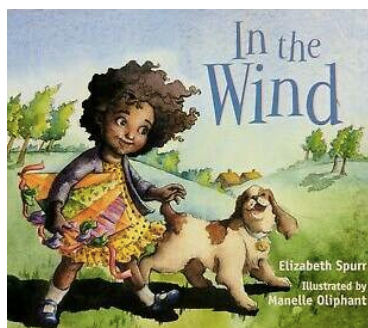
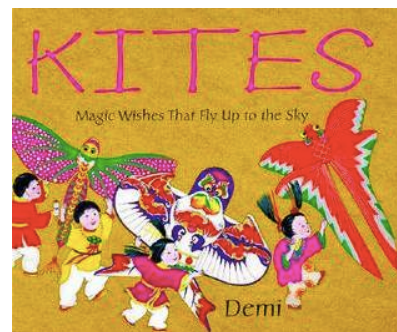
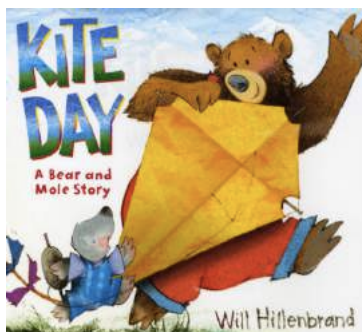
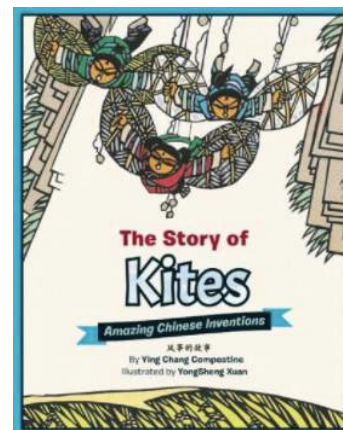
***Kite Flying*** by Grace Lin

***Kite Day*** by Will Hillenbrand

***Kites: Magic Wishes That Fly Up to the Sky*** by Demi

***In the Wind*** by Elizabeth Spurr

***Farmer Falgu Goes Kite Flying*** by Chitra Soundar



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See you next week with issue 29 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

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