

## Dear Educator,

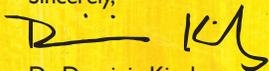
Mark your calendars! March 20<sup>th</sup> is **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day**, when readers around the world celebrate Eric Carle's beloved picture book, **The Very Hungry Caterpillar™**.

After more than 50 years, **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** continues to inspire curiosity, creativity, and imagination, delighting children and parents alike as they play, learn, and explore the world around them.

This free educational program, **Growing and Celebrating – Very Hungry Caterpillar Day!**, is designed in that same spirit, offering an exciting collection of activities that will nurture a child's love of literature and learning, as well as encourage imaginative play and exploration. Developed by Penguin Young Readers and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI), the program even includes ideas and hands-on materials for hosting your own classroom party for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**.

We hope that you will share these materials with other teachers in your school. Although the materials are copyrighted, you may make as many copies as needed for educational purposes. We'd love to hear from you! Please use the enclosed reply card or comment online at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-vhc](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-vhc)

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired

For questions, contact us toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at [feedback@ymiclassroom.com](mailto:feedback@ymiclassroom.com).



# Growing and Celebrating Very Hungry Caterpillar Day!



## How to Use the Poster

Display the poster prominently. Use it to reinforce literacy skills, including vocabulary development, counting, letter recognition, days of the week, colors, etc. Fill in the date and time of **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** class party. You might also feature a party countdown beside the poster, using numbers on colorful sticky notes to count down the days left until the party. Let children take turns posting the new number each day during circle time. After the party, use the poster as a display area and to prompt letter and number recognition, counting, etc.

## Growing with The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Choose from among the many activity ideas on this page to build excitement for your class birthday celebration.

### Greeting Card Activity

Use the cut-outs on this reproducible activity sheet to help your children create their own greeting cards for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**. Display their cards near the classroom poster to build excitement for your class celebration on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

### Activity 1

#### "One Nice Green Leaf..."

**Materials Needed:** Tree branch with leaves removed; sand or uncooked rice; plastic container or bucket; 1 sheet of construction paper; glue; yellow and green yarn, string or ribbon, cut into lengths of 18"-24" and knotted on one end (2 per child), plus extra smaller lengths; 4-5 hand-held hole punchers; markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Secure the branch in a bucket or plastic container filled with sand or rice. Cover the container with construction paper on which you have written "The caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf, and after that he felt much better."

Distribute the activity sheets. Have students color their leaves using shades of the colors green and yellow. Help children cut out the leaves and punch holes in them to represent how the caterpillar eats the leaf in the story. Next, give students lengths of yarn, ribbon, or string to thread through the holes of their leaves. Then help them attach their leaves to the tree branch with small pieces of yarn looped through a hole punched in the leaf stem. Be sure to use your "One Nice Green Leaf" mobile as a festive party decoration.

## Target Audience

Preschool children ages 2-4 and their parents

## Program Objectives

- To celebrate the beloved children's classic, Eric Carle's **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**
- To promote learning and growth in key curricular areas, including social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development
- To engage parents in learning activities with their children

## Program Components

- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible student activity sheets
- A page of additional activity ideas
- A colorful classroom wall poster
- Reproducible cut-outs children can use to create greeting cards for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**
- A reply card for your comments, or comment online at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-vhc](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-vhc)

## How to Use This Program

1. Photocopy this teacher's guide, the activity ideas sheet, and the reproducible activity sheets before displaying the poster.
2. Use the activity ideas during the first two weeks of March to build anticipation for your class celebration.
3. Use the enclosed activity sheet to create greeting cards for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** with your students.
4. The reproducible activity sheets are designed to generate student and family involvement in preparation for your celebration. Before photocopying Activity 3, write in the date for your celebration and the deadline for parents to RSVP.

## Activity 2

### The Very Hungry Caterpillar Celebration Crown

**Materials Needed:** Colored construction paper cut into 3"-4" x 17" bands, one for each student; mixed media art materials such as pom-poms, pipe cleaners, sequins, small pieces of different colored construction paper; glue; stapler or tape; markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Show the poster to students before distributing the sheets. Ask children to identify the many shades of color found in Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

Next, distribute the sheets, and explain to children that they will use the featured images together with an assortment of other art materials to make their own special crown to wear at *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* celebration. Encourage children to mix colors and shades of color as they use markers and crayons to color the images.

Next, give each child a construction paper headband and help them write their name on it. Then help them cut out their colored images and glue them onto their band. Suggest that they use the other assorted materials for extra decoration. When bands are dry, join the ends together with staples or tape to form a crown. If bands are not long enough, punch holes at the ends, tie string to each end, then tie together and secure on children's heads.

## Activity 3

### Foods to Grow and Celebrate

**Materials Needed:** Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Have students share ideas for snacks for the class celebration of **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day**. Use *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* book, along with the program poster, to help students recall the foods the caterpillar eats. Remind them that treats like candy and ice cream are "sometimes" foods and should only be eaten occasionally. Explain that eating healthy foods is the way to grow healthy bodies — just like the caterpillar, who felt much better and became a beautiful butterfly after he ate the green leaf.

Distribute the activity sheets. Have children draw foods they would like to have at the class party in the appropriate categories presented on the sheet. Help children determine the class's favorite *Foods for Growing* and *"Sometimes" Foods* and include them at the party.

Send the activity sheet home for children to share with parents. Use parent responses to form a parent group that will help you finalize the menu and help with food preparation and the party itself. Use children's listed items as a starting point for foods to serve at the party.

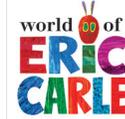


## Resources

- **The Official Eric Carle Web Site**  
[www.Eric-Carle.com](http://www.Eric-Carle.com)
- **Eric Carle at Penguin Young Readers**  
[www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/45198/eric-carle](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/45198/eric-carle)
- **The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show**  
[www.hungrycaterpillarshow.com](http://www.hungrycaterpillarshow.com)
- **The Very Hungry Caterpillar Party Supplies**  
[www.orientaltrading.com/the-very-hungry-caterpillar-party-supplies-a2-13747344.fltr](http://www.orientaltrading.com/the-very-hungry-caterpillar-party-supplies-a2-13747344.fltr)
- **The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art**  
[www.carlemuseum.org/](http://www.carlemuseum.org/)
- **Young Minds Inspired**  
[ymiclassroom.com](http://ymiclassroom.com)

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Join the worldwide celebration of **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day** on March 20<sup>th</sup> by having your students make personalized greeting cards. See the enclosed greeting card activity sheet for details and suggestions.



## ABC Literacy and Creative Play

Ask children if they can guess which of their favorite books is having a special day. Give clues, such as “the book is about an insect,” or “the main character in this book eats many foods and gets a tummy ache.” Then read ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** with students, and tell them they will be having a party to celebrate **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day** on March 20<sup>th</sup>.



## Art/Creativity

Help children create stick puppets to stage their own re-telling of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***. Use the book and the program poster to help students identify characters and objects they will need to create the puppet show. Children may draw, paint, or even use Eric Carle’s collage method of different colored tissue papers layered and glued on top of one another to create the story characters or objects. Tape their characters or objects to craft sticks or straws. Have students use their puppets to re-tell the story of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** as part of reading or circle time. To extend the activity, help children develop a new story for the caterpillar, creating new puppets to represent its new adventures.

## 123 Math

Use ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** to practice pattern and size concepts. Prepare washable ink or develop custom colors from tempera in swirls to mimic Eric Carle-inspired art. Collect a variety of different-sized circular materials such as shaped pasta, circular disks, pom-poms, sponges cut into small circles, etc. Then distribute sheets of paper with a circle drawn on the right to be used for the caterpillar’s face. Next, have children dab the circular objects into the ink and/or paint and press the object onto the paper to create a color and/or design pattern of caterpillar segments. Encourage children to play with size by making increasingly larger or smaller numbers of segments in their designs.

Use “butterfly” pasta (farfalle pasta) for counting inspiration! First, have students decorate uncooked butterfly pasta using markers or paint. Then use the pasta butterflies in your math center for practicing one-to-one correspondence and simple addition and subtraction problems. To extend the activity, have students place the uncooked pastas in bins for sensory play; provide cups and spoons to measure, pour, and stir.



## Science/Nature

Ask children if they think a real caterpillar eats the same food as a real butterfly. Show children butterfly field guides and other nature books to help them determine that butterflies and caterpillars do not eat the same foods due to their different mouth structures. In addition, remind children that both caterpillars and butterflies are very particular about their food sources. Then plant a butterfly garden in pots or in the ground. Decide whether you want to attract the caterpillar or the butterfly and plant accordingly. Consult local gardening guides for additional information on plant selection. Children may engage in many types of observation activities as the plants grow.

Take children on a nature hike in search of caterpillars, butterflies, and other insects which feature so prominently in Eric Carle’s books. You can take photos of what you see, and let children view them back in the classroom. For each insect spotted, carefully collect a natural item that was found nearby, such as a leaf, a blade of grass, a rock, etc., and make a classroom nature diorama. Help children identify their finds by having a variety of field guides for children to look through as they try to match your photos to those in the guides.



## Construction/ Manipulatives Play

Challenge children to see who can build the longest Hungry Caterpillar. Provide them with round, buildable materials such as large bottle tops, cylinder blocks, clay that they can shape into circles, etc. Then have children use rulers to measure and compare lengths. Have them name and draw pictures of their constructed caterpillars and create stories about what their caterpillars like to eat, their friends, adventures, etc. Post students’ stories and drawings in the classroom, along with photos of their constructions to share with parents at the party.



## Health and Nutrition

Ask children to share what lessons they think ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** can teach about healthy eating. Help children determine that the caterpillar shows us that eating colorful fruits and leafy greens are healthy habits. In addition, the caterpillar shows us that we should limit foods like cake and ice cream as “sometimes” foods, and that we shouldn’t overeat.



## Critical Thinking Skills/Visual Thinking Strategies

As you read ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** to students, stop at the part of the story where “the sun came up and – pop! – out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar.” Ask children to step inside the caterpillar’s antennae and answer questions such as, “What is the caterpillar thinking? How is it feeling? What other things might it do before it goes searching for food?” Pause again to ask the same questions at the parts where the caterpillar becomes big and fat, where he is inside his cocoon, and, finally, when the caterpillar becomes a butterfly. Post student responses on chart paper for parents to read during the birthday party celebration.



## Parental Involvement

Send a note home to parents asking them to have their children wear clothing of one or two specific colors on a specific day. Help children practice categorization skills for clothing according to colors or type.

Suggest that parents take photos at the **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day** party and display them in the classroom around the poster or at home.



**Hungry Caterpillar Play School** is a fun, playful app designed to help young children master key early learning goals, defined in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. It features a curriculum tailored for 2-6 year olds, using the latest classroom-proven techniques.

On Monday explore the alphabet. On Tuesday learn to count. Discover shapes and colors on Wednesday. Sing a song on Thursday. Read a book and create your very own works of art on Friday!

**Would you like a free copy of the app for your classroom?**

To find out more, visit [www.caterpillarplay.com/schools](http://www.caterpillarplay.com/schools)

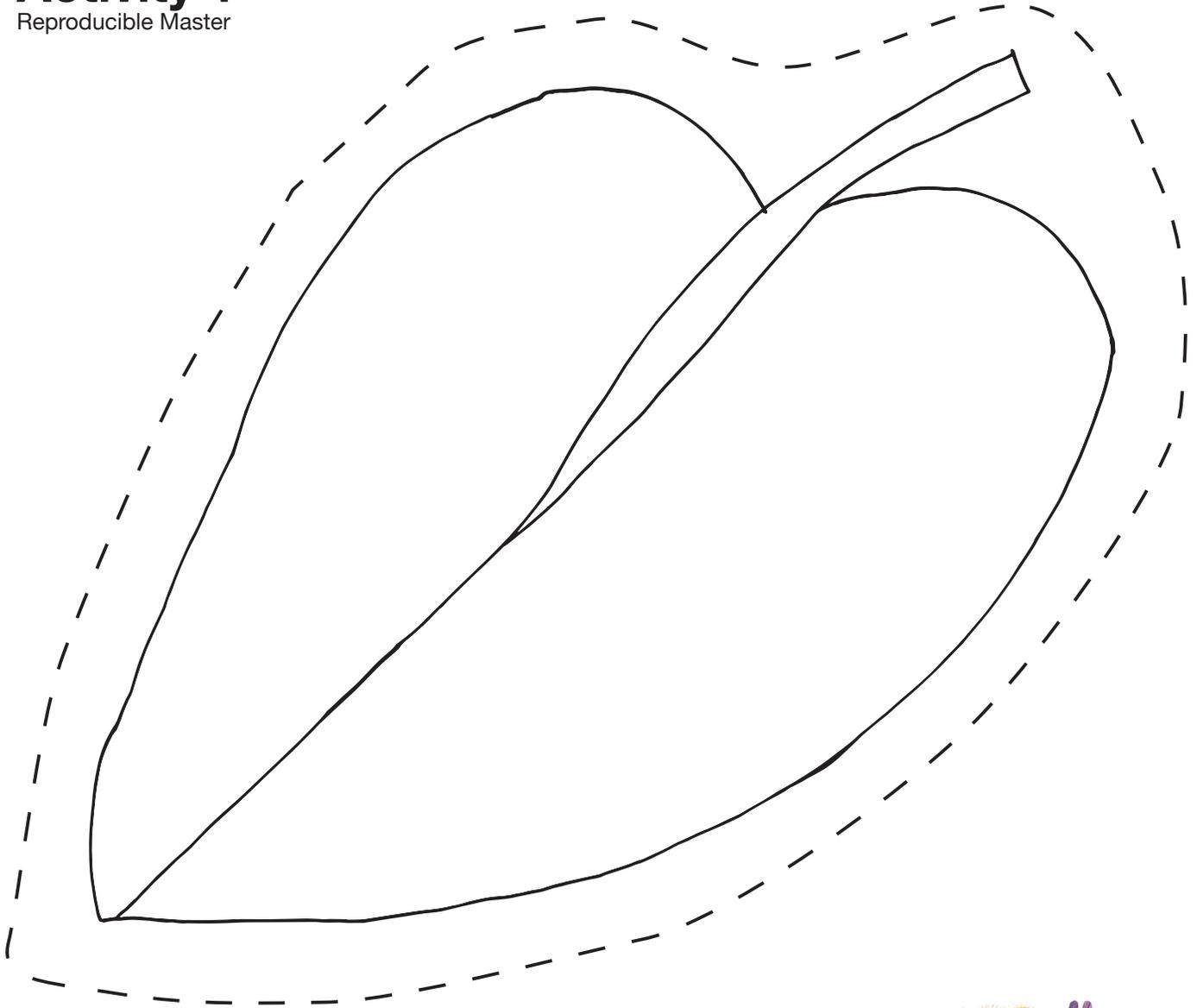


# “One Nice Green Leaf...”

“The caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf, and after that he felt much better.”

## Activity 1

Reproducible Master



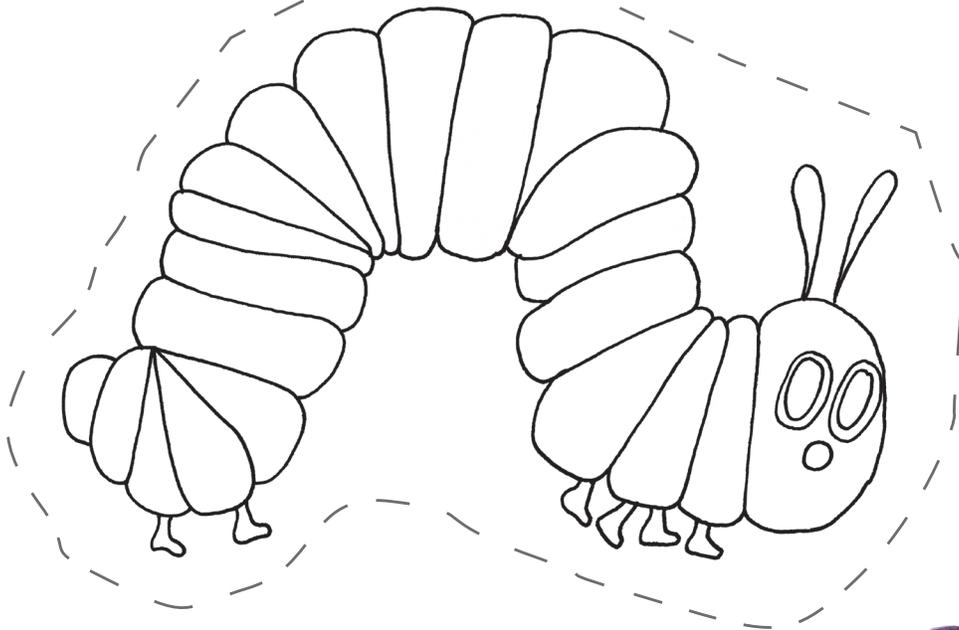
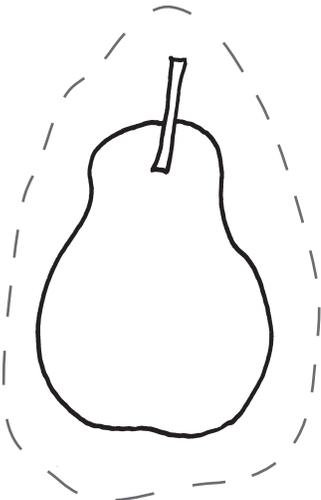
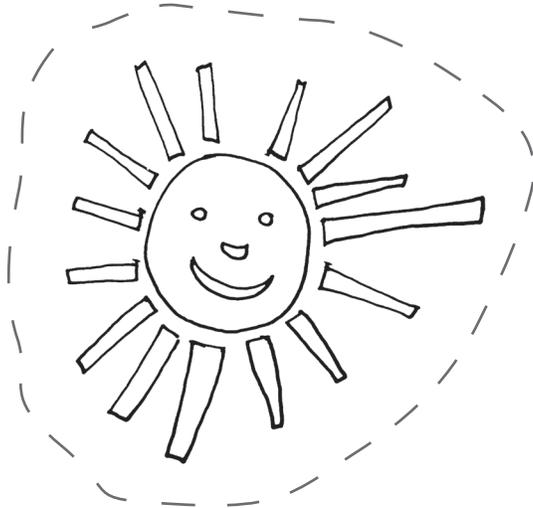
Find more great ways to celebrate  
Very Hungry Caterpillar™ Day  
at [www.Eric-Carle.com](http://www.Eric-Carle.com)



# The Very Hungry Caterpillar Celebration Crown

**Activity 2**  
Reproducible Master

Let's celebrate **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day** on March 20<sup>th</sup>!



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# Activity 3

Reproducible Master

# Foods to Grow and Celebrate

## Foods for Growing

## “Sometimes” Foods



**Parents!** March 20<sup>th</sup> is **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day**. We have been participating in a special educational program to celebrate this very special day. Use this activity sheet to talk with your child about the foods she or he would like to have at our party. We hope you can come!

You're Invited to our **Very Hungry Caterpillar Day** Party!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this portion to school by: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I can help with the following!

- Food
- Decorations
- Party Activities



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