

# Rainbows

## Activities

- ❖ *Game - Rivers*
- ❖ *Learn about Matrioshka Dolls and listen to the story on our dolls (available in resource box)*
- ❖ *Make a Matrioshka jam jar cover or Doll cone*
- ❖ *Dress one of the girls in National Costume (available in resource box)*
- ❖ *Taste a fruit compote drink (this will need to be prepared before the meeting)*

## Rivers

This is a game played by Belarusian children and requires a lot of energy.

### Consider

This game works best with an odd number of people.

Quite a lot of space is needed but this can be played inside or outside.

Girls in the tunnel must move down towards the front of the playing area as the tunnel increases in length.

### How to Play

- ◆ Girls stand in pairs facing each other and holding hands, each making an arch with their arms and forming a long tunnel.
- ◆ A single girl starts at the front and runs through the tunnel of arms, catching hold of the arm of one of the girls in the line. She must pull the girl she has caught behind her to the end of the tunnel where they join on the end and make an arch.
- ◆ Meanwhile the girl who lost her partner also runs behind them, through the tunnel, out of the end and along the outside to the front of the tunnel. She then becomes the single girl and runs through in the same way to catch the arm of a new partner.

The game continues in this way until everyone is exhausted

# Matrioshka Dolls

Russian dolls (Matrioshka) were first made in the late 1800s in Moscow. The idea was adapted from a Japanese figurine of a bald headed old man with several other smaller figures inside.

The name 'Matrioshka' comes from 'Matryona', which was a very popular female name among peasants in old Russia. It is related to the Latin word 'mater' meaning Mother. As it is closely connected with motherhood, the doll has come to symbolise fertility - a mother doll with several offspring.

In old Russia these family dolls were passed down through the generations and each subsequent generation made the next doll bigger so the others could fit inside. The Matrioshka dolls also symbolise good luck and peace in the family.

Lime and birch are most commonly used for making Matrioshka. The wood is cut into small pieces and is turned (rotated on a lathe) up to 15 times before it is ready to be made into a doll.

The smallest, solid, figures are usually made first. The next size doll is cut to the necessary height and then the top half is removed. The ridge on which the top part of the doll will be fitted is made and then the lower half is completed.

The doll's head is crafted next and enough wood is removed from inside the head for it to slip onto the upper ridge of the lower half of the doll.

When the doll blank is finished it is cleaned, primed and dried, ready to be painted.

Some dolls have patterns painted on to them; others show sets of pictures which tell a story.



The dolls below show the story of The Golden Egg.



### The Golden Egg

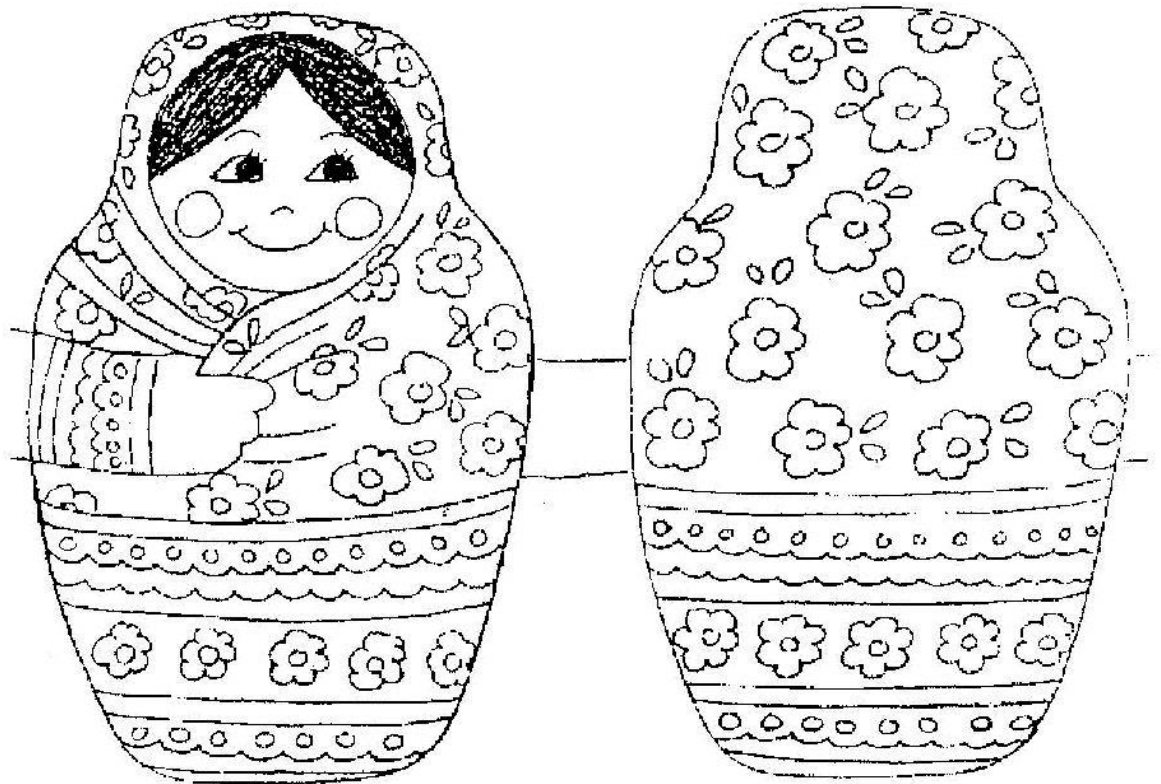
There was once an old woman and an old man who lived in a small village. They were very happy together but lived alone with no children. One day their chicken laid an egg. It was not an ordinary egg but one that was made of pure gold. The old man tried to crack the egg open so he could eat it for his tea. He tried and tried and tried but could not crack the shell. So he gave the egg to his wife. She tried and tried and tried but, like her husband, could not crack open the shell. They both looked at each other and wondered what to do. Then they noticed a mouse. It scurried towards them and with a careless flick of its tail, knocked the egg onto the floor. It cracked open and was ruined. The old man cried. The old woman cried. They cried together. Then their chicken said, "Don't cry! I will lay you another egg and this time it will be a normal egg and not one made of gold".

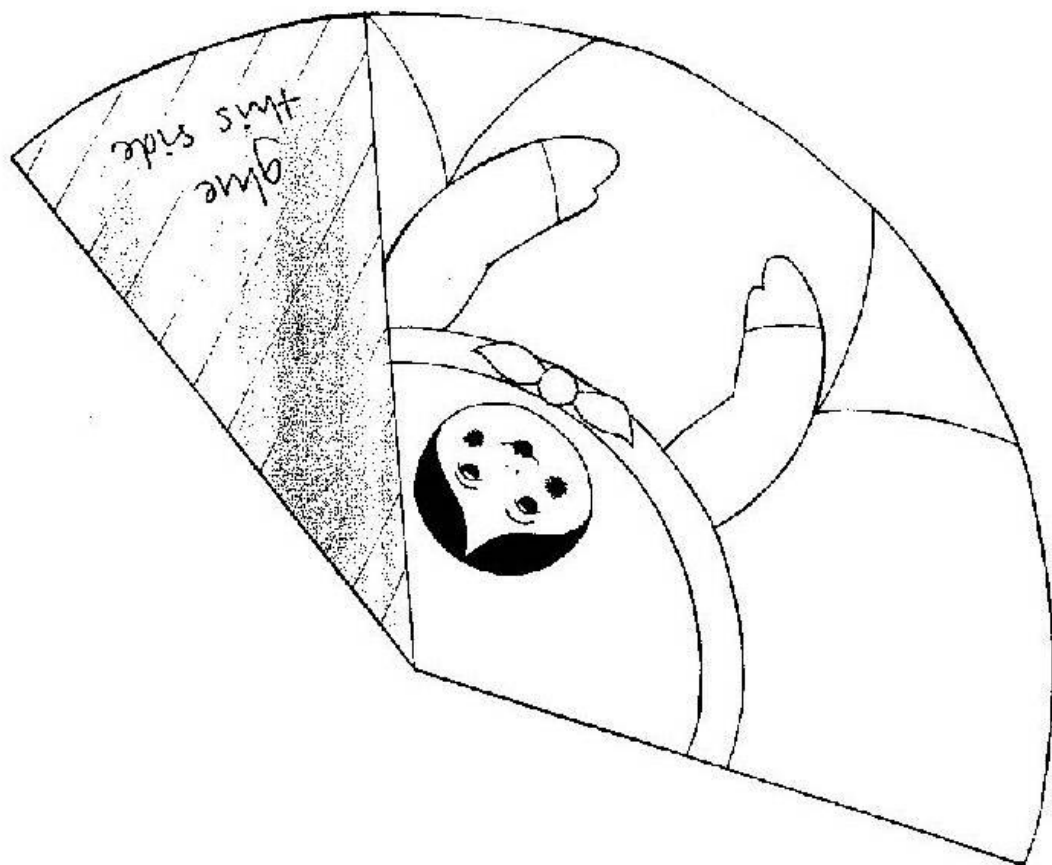
#### Try it...

- Act out the story of the Golden Egg.
- Use the templates on the next pages:
  - Make a fridge magnet or badge from brightly coloured funky foam.
  - Make a money pot by colouring in and cutting out the doll template. Secure it around a jam jar. (Ideal for fundraising)
  - Make a set of stacking dolls from cones of cardboard and hide away your sweets underneath.
- Bring a matrioshka doll that you might have at home to the meeting.

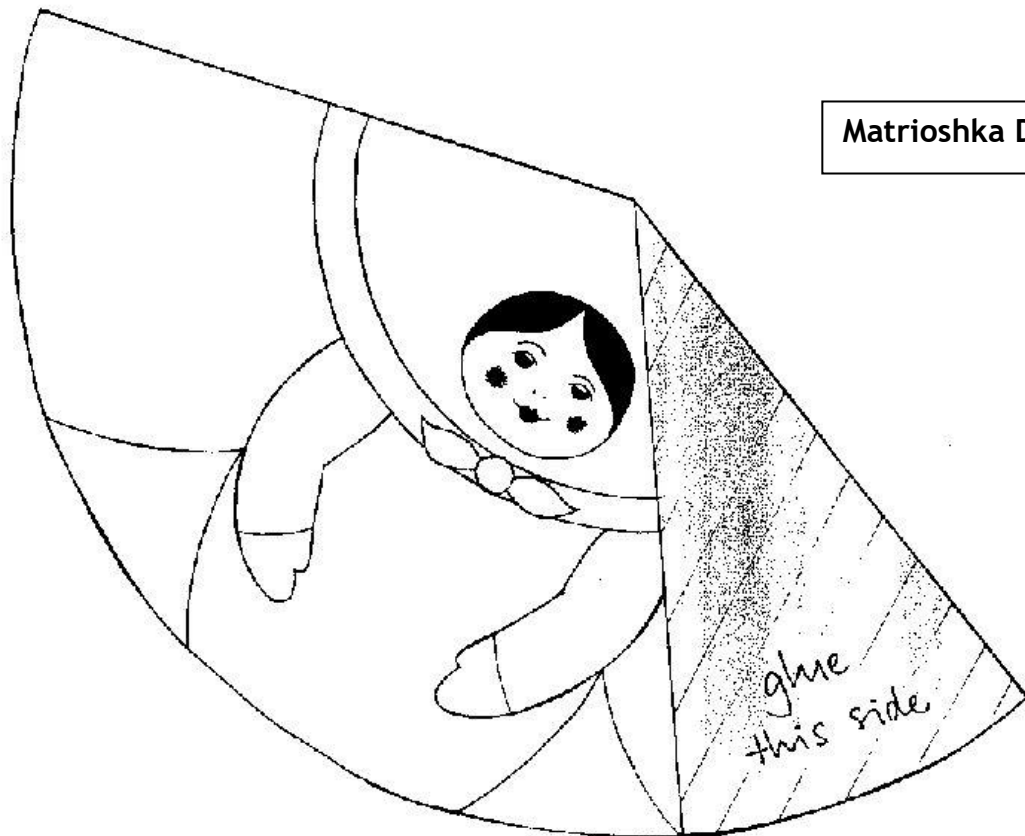


Jam Jar Covers





Matrioshka Doll Cones



# Food

Traditional cuisine includes: soups such as Borscht, made with beetroot and served hot with soured cream; stews; sausages and pies.

Belarus is well known for numerous recipes for potatoes, especially, Draniki, a potato pancake and Dracheny, a tasty potato dish with mushrooms. Mushrooms and berries are favourite side dishes. Regional cooking is often based on potatoes.

When joining a Belarusian family for a meal, which often lasts over a long evening, several toasts take place including those for good health (nazdarovia), love and the coming together of friends.

Belarusians are very proud of their hospitality but often have a very limited income, therefore the variety of food may not be as diverse as in this country, but good manners are essential and hosts would be offended if you refuse or leave any food or drink.

## **Fruit Compote** (A drink, delicious served chilled)

### *Ingredients*

1 packet mixed dried fruit (containing prunes, apricots etc)  
(600ml) boiling water  
sugar to taste

### *Method*

1. Chop up the dried fruit into small pieces and place in a bowl.
2. Pour on the boiling water and leave to stand covered, at room temperature, as long as possible and preferably overnight.
3. Chill in the fridge.
4. Pour into glasses, ensuring there is some fruit in the bottom of each glass.
5. Serve. 'Nazdarovia!'