



*Plus likes to pick things
up as he goes*

*Minus loses things out
of holes in his clothes*

*Times gathers things at
the speed of light*

*Division splits things up
so they are just right*

The Four Processes

The Four Processes are the very same math processes that children learn everywhere:

- Addition (Plus)
- Subtraction (Minus)
- Multiplication (Times)
- Division (Divided By)

In Waldorf teaching, there is a strong backbone of playfulness and imagination. This doesn't end with the start of formal schooling. Rather, stories, fingerplays, songs, and the like are the vehicles used to teach the theories and practice of things like math and science. The four processes is commonly taught using a story that personifies the processes into loveable characters who also represent the temperaments.

Addition (Plus) is the Phlegmatic one, who is relaxed, quiet and kind. Also consistent and rational, he will count things carefully, one by one.

Subtraction (Minus) is a Melancholic gnome. He is sad; having holes in his pockets, he tends to lose things.

Multiplication (Times) is a lively and warm-hearted Sanguine gnome who is the life of the party. She counts quickly, skipping over numbers to arrive at her total.

Division (Divided By) takes on a leadership role. Her Choleric nature shows as she divides things up fairly.

There is a lot to read about the four processes from a Waldorf perspective, and so here we will focus on creating your own Four Processes Math Set that you can use in your home or homeschool.

TINY PEASANT

4 PROCESSES SET

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Making Your Four Processes Math Set

MATERIALS

- Wooden pegs or people (4-6)
- Wooden counters in any shape (many Waldorf stories focus on gems or jewels) (min. 48)
- Small wooden bowls or pots (4)
- Natural plant-based dyes or watercolour paints
- Paint brushes
- Beeswax polish (see recipe)



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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide all wooden materials into four groups, each with one peg person, one bowl, and 12 counters.
2. Each group of materials can be painted one colour - red, blue, yellow, or green. Set on a tray to dry.
3. Once the materials have dried, consider if you'd like to apply a second coat for depth of colour.
4. Using a sharpie or wood-burning tool, write the symbols for the four processes on the wooden people.
 - Blue +
 - Green -
 - Yellow ×
 - Red ÷
5. Apply the beeswax polish to each wooden item. Rub it on and then wipe excess with a dry cloth.



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6. Store your set in a basket or box to keep it all in one place.



RECIPE beeswax polish FOR _____

FROM THE KITCHEN OF tiny peasant

PREP TIME 15 min BAKE no MAKES 1 batch

INGREDIENTS

1 part beeswax (block)

4 parts oil

note: you can use coconut

oil, olive oil, or jojoba oil



INSTRUCTIONS

*Adult teamwork required!

Shred your beeswax with a cheese grater.

Stovetop: Heat oil and beeswax in a double boiler on high heat.

Stir and stir until the beeswax is all melted into the oil.

Microwave: Heat oil and beeswax in a microwave safe container,
stopping to stir and check if the beeswax is melted.

Remove from heat, pour into containers + stir.

Dip a cloth into the polish, rub it into your
wood and let it dry!

