

Laundry Routine

Here is a routine to assist you during the day.

History: Families in the 1800s washed all laundry by hand. This represented a major chore for women, which they commonly chose to perform on Mondays, perhaps to clean up Sunday clothes and dinner linens. Wash day activities often involved the whole family. The man or older sons of the house carried water pumped from the well and built a fire for heating it. The mother and older girls soaked and boiled the clothes then scrubbed them on washboards. After thoroughly rinsing, bluing, starching and wringing out the clothes, they hung them on a line to dry. When the clothes had dried, the women prepared them for ironing by sprinkling them with water and rolling them up.

Ironing was a long, hot process of heating heavy flat irons on top of the stove and then pressing the rolled and dampened clothes. When the iron began to cool after several passes over the damp garments, it was exchanged for another hot iron. They repeated this process for hours at a time. The laundry process often included making soap with potash (water filtered through wood ashes) and rendered animal fat. Rendered animal fat is fat separated from bone and protein. It's purified and can be used in candles, soap, cooking grease, or lard.

Arrival of students

Welcome students. Exchange introductions.

Explain that each day of the week was set aside for a specific purpose. Monday was laundry, Tuesday was ironing, Wednesday was mending and sewing, Thursday was market day, Friday was cleaning, Saturday was baking, and Sunday was for resting, visiting, and church.

Ask students why a whole day was needed for each chore. Everything took longer before modern inventions made tasks more efficient. The first washing machine powered by an electric motor was patented in 1910.

Explain that each child would probably have one everyday outfit and one school outfit. When children came home from school they changed into their everyday outfit for chores. They might also have one outfit for special occasions which was washed only four or five times a year.

Show students the different items that are used for washing. Demonstrate how one's knuckles would get red and scraped from the washboard. This was a good sign because it showed that you took good care of your family. Bluing was added to the next tub with the dasher to make the clothes very white.

Explain to the students how cuffs and collars could be removed and changed often to keep them clean. Aprons helped keep dresses clean.

Explain that on school days mothers would do the laundry while children were at school. During the summer, children were expected to help with the laundry.

Doing laundry

1. Collect the two buckets of warm water from the stove in the summer kitchen.
2. Split one bucket of warm water between the washboard and dasher tubs. Have students fill up the two remaining buckets at the pump, and split one bucket of cold water each between the washboard and dasher tubs. Make sure to replace the water from the stove for the next group.
3. Make sure students kneel behind the washboard and scrub hard to do a good job.
4. The dasher should be used to get the soap out of the clothes.
5. Clothes are put through the wringer. **The wringer must be supervised by an adult.**
6. Show students how to hang clothes properly on the line.
7. Clothes that are already dry can be taken down and ironed. **This station must be supervised carefully. Only parents are allowed to remove the iron from the stove.**
8. At the five minute warning students can pour the dirty water out in the drain by the fig tree.

Students continue to rotate through the laundry station and work hard until just a few minutes before the bell rings. This is an all day chore!

When the bell rings line up your students and take them to the woodworking station.

Students are not allowed to go to the next station unless an adult walks them over.

End of the day clean up

- Please dry out the tubs and stack them, and the rest of the equipment, next to the door of the summer kitchen.
- Leave wet clothes on the line to dry. Check the ground for clothespins.
- We appreciate your help in keeping our facilities clean!