

Gift 2

Gift 2 contains two 2" cubes (one of them with holes), one 2" cylinder and one 2" sphere and a hanging apparatus



Froebel called this Gift "the children's delight." It is the most striking of the Froebel Gifts and the basis for all the other Gifts. In addition, this gift became the kindergarten stringing beads. Gift 2 is suitable for children 3 years old and older.

PRESENTATION

Shake the box and ask the child, "What is inside?" Open the lid and reveal the pieces. Have the child touch, feel, smell, hold and examine the sphere, then the cylinder, and the cube, in turn. The key points of the presentation are the handling, observing and comparing of the pieces. The child can tap them and listen to the sounds.

All of the three different solids have holes drilled in them (the extra cube is for comparison to Gifts 3 and 4). The solids can be spun on the provided

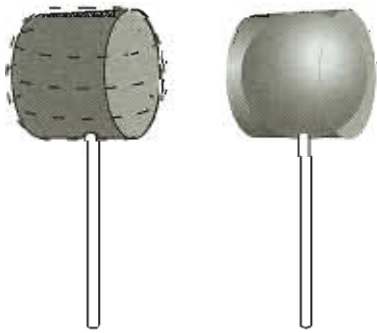
sticks or suspended with string from the hanging apparatus. The metal pins snugly fit the holes and can remove with gentle twisting and tugging. The metal loop on the pins helps to grip them.

Forms of Life: The children use these pieces to represent things from the child's life (e.g., the sphere as an orange, the cylinder as a marshmallow or a wheel, the cube as a house). Stack the pieces in different ways (e.g. the cylinder on the cube and the sphere on top creates a person). Build with the pieces and include the box parts, as well. Roll the sphere and cylinder. Encourage the children's descriptions through imaginative play.





Spinning the cube forms a cylinder.



Spinning the cylinder forms a sphere.



The spinning can be done with two hands and a longer string.

Forms of Knowledge: Ask the child to differentiate the pieces by describing the properties of the geometric shapes. Sort them. Count the number of pieces or the number of surfaces, edges, corners, etc. Introduce the concepts of on/under, front/back, up/down, in front of/behind, etc.

Simple physics concepts can be discovered. Some of the solids will roll (sphere, cylinder) and some will stand (cube, cylinder). The idea of resonance in sound also can be learned by tapping the solids together or onto the table. By exploring these properties, children will be naturally curious and their discoveries will create a foundation of basic science.

Forms of Beauty: Usually Forms of Beauty involves design and discovering patterns and designs. This Gift allows new forms to emerge by spinning the solids. Children will delight in spinning the solids on the sticks, or with the hanging apparatus.

By spinning one solid, the child will see another shape within the first (e.g. spinning a cylinder on its side produces a sphere, spinning a cube produces a cylinder). The basic interconnectedness of these forms and objects can be shown even to young children.

The sticks allow more direct participation and more than one person to take part in the play. This activity can also be performed by spinning solids suspended on a string, with two children each holding one string (see illustration).

Gift 3

In Gift 3, the two-inch cube has been divided into eight 1" cubes.



PRESENTATION

The presentation of the blocks is done in an orderly fashion to maintain the initial “wholeness” of the cube. The box is turned upside down, lid on the bottom. Sliding the lid, the box is carefully lifted off, revealing a two-inch cube as in Gift 2, now made from eight one-inch cubes. The process is the same for opening Gifts 3 through 6. Gently insist on this ritual — no dumping of the blocks. The child will develop a respect for this ritual if you show them that you also respect it.

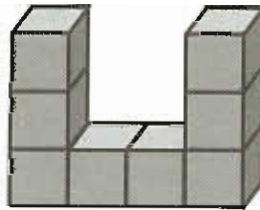
It is also important to use all of the pieces when working with the Gift since the wholeness is a key point. The child will begin to see the pieces as part of the whole cube and their relationship

to the whole. In this way, nothing is wasted or left out. This is a subtle but powerful message of inclusion and conservation.

Putting the Gift away is the reverse of the presentation. Have the child reassemble the whole cube on the lid, cover with the base, and then flip the box upright. Actually, this process is really just a continuation of the presentation and

of the whole cycle of playing with each Gift. The underlying concept is of a unity of parts moving through various forms and returning to the whole (before the whole cycle repeats again).

This idea is planted in a child’s mind like a seed and will germinate until the child begins to see this cycle in broader life, as



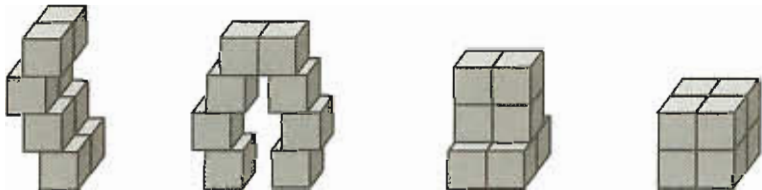
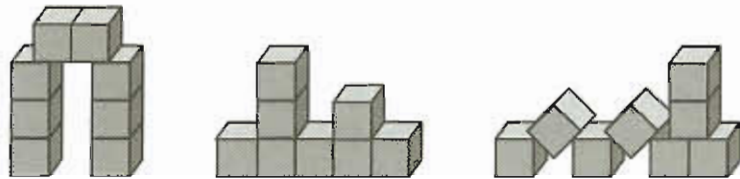
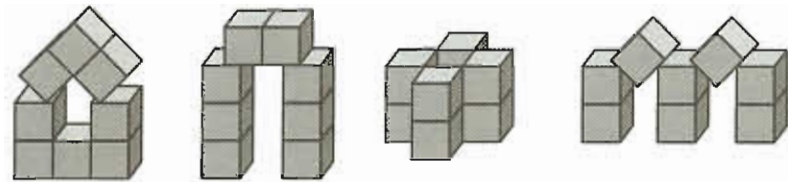
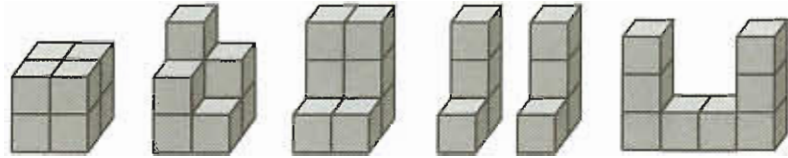
well. Froebel strongly believed in the value of symbolic play.

“What shape is this?”
Have the child count the number of cubes. Count the six faces of each cube, the twelve edges and the eight corners. Emphasize this idea by returning to this observation with individual children at different times during play.

Forms of Life

Ask the child to represent things from his/her life with the blocks. The child may begin with simple forms (trains, towers, etc.) and make associations and create stories. Encourage these associations and stories by asking questions.

Children tend to do this naturally during block play. Far from simple use of imagination, these associations between their inner and outer worlds are the foundation of true learning.



Forms of Knowledge

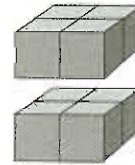
Sorting, differentiation, counting, arithmetic (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), fractions (parts of whole), and concepts/vocabulary (line, cube, square, plus, equal, half, etc.) can be reasoned with this Gift.

Let each child build his/her own construction, then talk about the number of cubes that have been used in different ways. The child will begin to make associations with concrete 3-dimensional work, as opposed to abstract mathematical thinking.

Return to counting the number of cubes, sides, edges and corners. Begin by counting the cubes and placing them next to each other in a line and stating "one and one is two," "two and one is three," etc. The child will discover proportions and see operations of addition/subtraction through "half of eight is four" or "two from three is one," etc.

The blocks can be stacked or combined into layers to illustrate multiplication, division and fractions ("four times two equals eight"). Have the child use the blocks to concretely reason out a math problem.

"Half of 8 is 4"



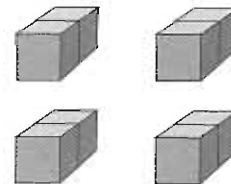
"Six take away four leaves two"



$$1 + 2 = 3$$



$$4 \times 2 = 8$$



Forms of Beauty

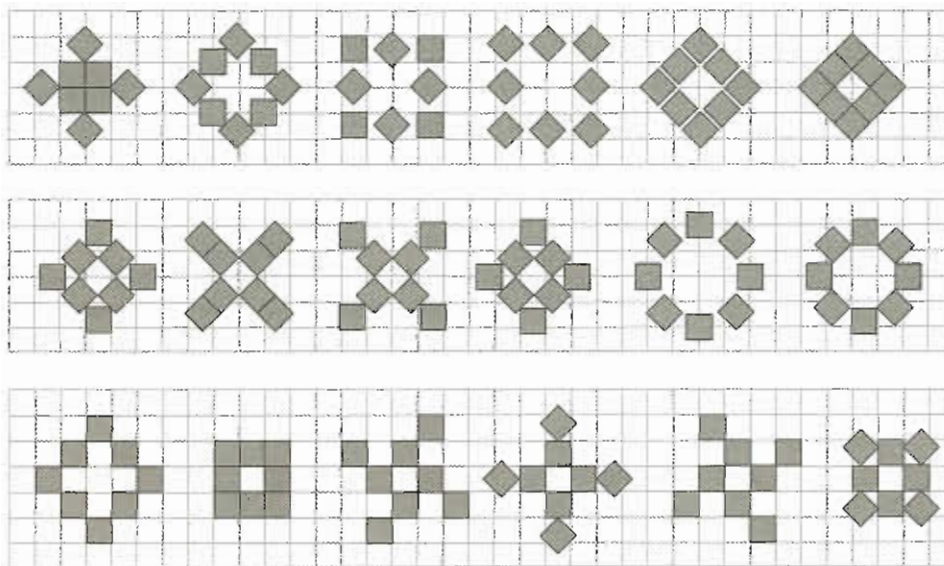
Forms of Beauty start with a simple form and progress by modifying the design in stages, changing and evolving a series of designs, and then returning to the cube once again.

Forms of Beauty can be created on the gridded board or free-form on a table.

Encourage the child to continually modify a construction of the cubes rather than tearing down and rebuilding. One thing should lead to the next. Froebel believed that this would leave ideas in a child's mind. This process promotes the logical and orderly development of ideas.

Be sure to follow the child's invention and not instruct the child in what to do with the cubes. One of the reasons for the demise of the Froebelian kindergarten was that some teachers dictated the patterns to the children — negating any educational benefit from the play. Listen to the child's stories. Use the blocks to awaken a sense of beauty by forming symmetrical designs.

These designs embody the principles of symmetry, proportion, balance, strength of center, rhythm and simplicity.



A design is never destroyed, but constantly modified.

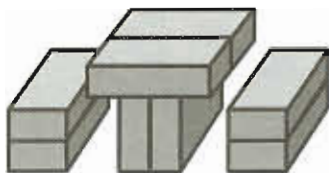
Gift 4

In Gift 4, the two-inch cube is now divided into eight oblong blocks which are 2" x 1" x 1/2".



Gift 4 is only a slight variation on Gift 3, but now the rectangular pieces open up many more possibilities. Children may view them as bricks or tiles, and they will seem a familiar shape.

The two inch cube is again divided into eight pieces, but the pieces have a proportion of 1 to 2 to 4 (1/2" by 1" by 2"). This feature will aid in creating modular constructions and designs, and proportion can be discussed as part of the Forms of Knowledge.



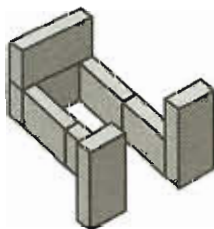
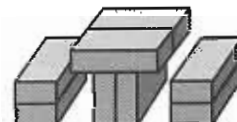
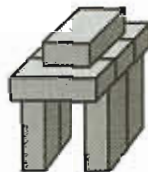
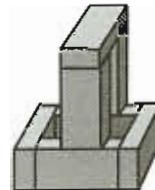
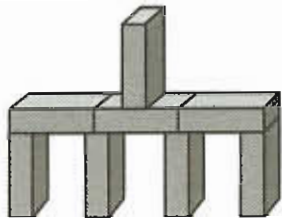
PRESENTATION

The presentation is exactly the same as with Gift 3. This reinforces the process/ritual from before. Ask the child how this new Gift differs from the last. Comment on the similarities and differences.

The easiest way to return the blocks to the box is to stand the pieces upright, "like soldiers standing tall" (or some other association so the children will remember).

Forms of Life: New possibilities in building provide new associations. Introduce words like brick, tile, steps. The child will make walls, sidewalks, fences, tables, chairs, etc.

Forms of Life



$$2 \times 1 = 2$$



Forms of Knowledge

The concept of fractions (and the vocabulary words half, quarter, fourth, etc.) can be discovered, as well as proportion.

Introduce new words like rectangle, oblong, direction, vertical, horizontal, height, width, length, etc.

$$2 \times 2 = 4$$



$$2 \times 3 = 6$$



$$2 \times 4 = 8$$



$$2 + 2 = 4$$



Two is one quarter of eight

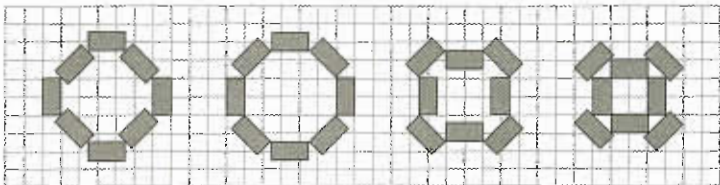
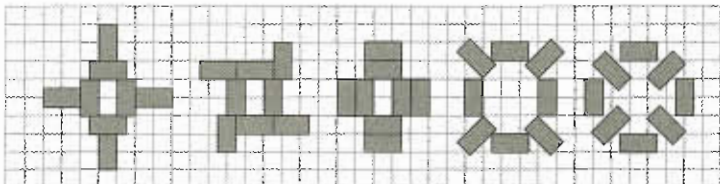
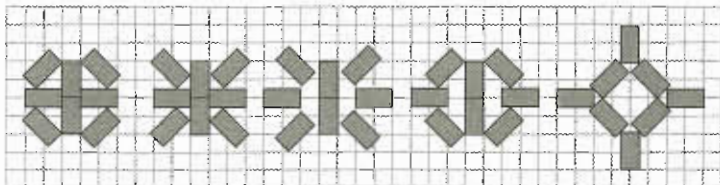
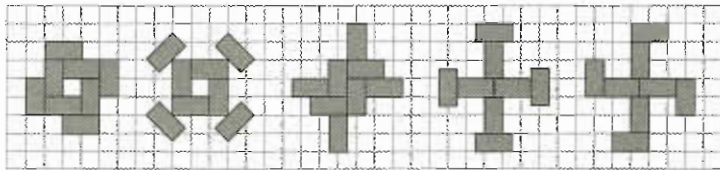
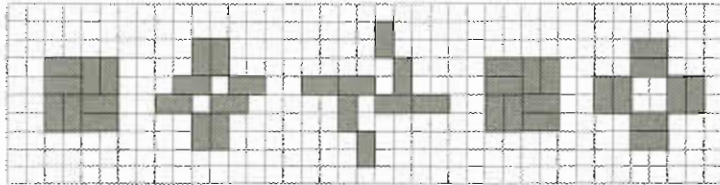
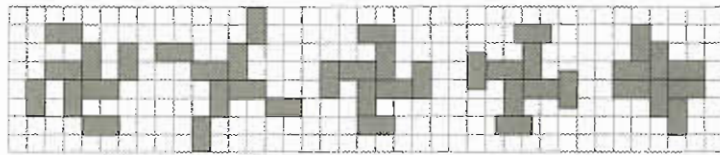


$$4 = 4 = 4 = 4 = 4$$



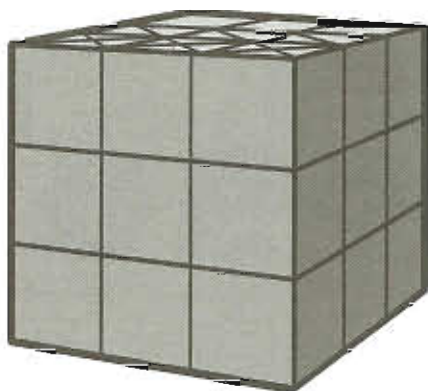
Forms of Beauty

Continue with symmetrical designs. Remember that each new design is created by modifying the last. When the child is ready and has explored the possibilities of symmetrical patterns, you may introduce asymmetrical designs.



Gift 5

Gift 5 consists of a three-inch cube divided into 21 one-inch cubes, plus 6 triangular half-cubes, and 12 triangular quarter-cubes.



Gift 5 now represents a larger, three-inch cube and incorporates more pieces and a variety of new shapes. The half-cubes and quarter-cubes introduce a triangular prism shape. This Gift is best used with children 5 years old and older.

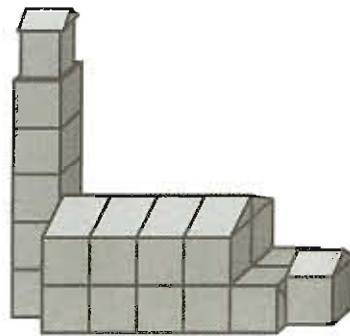
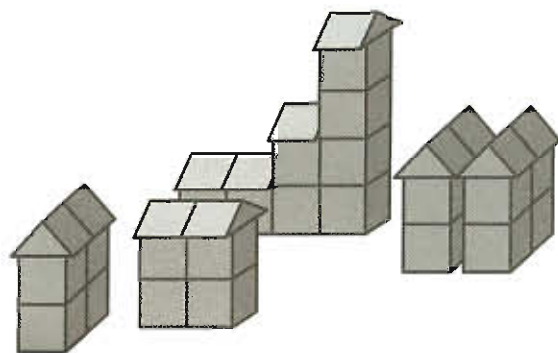
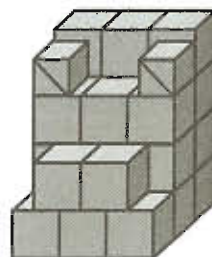
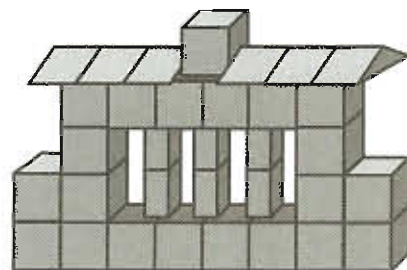
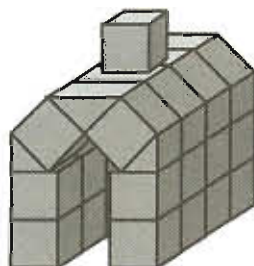
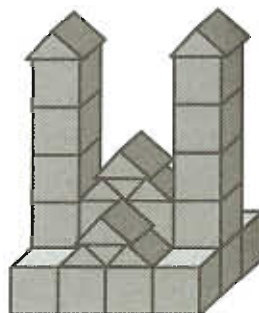
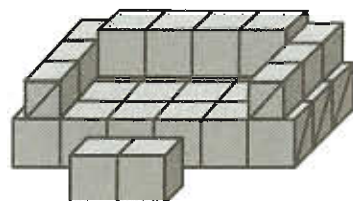
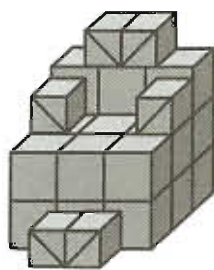
PRESENTATION

The presentation is exactly the same as with Gift 3 and Gift 4. The child will comment on the similarities and differences to previous Gifts.

Forms of Life: Again, have the child use the blocks to represent objects from the child's life. The triangular prisms will introduce many more possibilities for the child to explore. The prisms also allow for more realistic buildings and other objects with angles.

Remember that the stories are as important as the construction, as they will give you a window into the child's thoughts about the world.

Forms of Life



Forms of Knowledge

New terms like angle, triangle, diagonal, and rectangular prism can be introduced.

Fractions and other mathematical concepts can be discovered and reasoned. Concepts of geometric shapes, size/shape differentiation, parts-of-the-whole relationships, and others can be further explored.

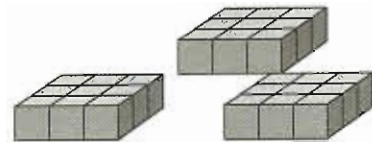
Children can see this Gift as three cubed (3^3), the larger 3" cube composed of 27 one-inch cubes (some further divided into triangles).

For older children, the Gift may also be positioned to represent more abstract mathematical concepts such as the Pythagorean Theorem ($A^2 + B^2 = C^2$).

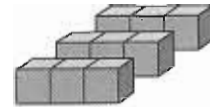
$$3^3 = 27$$



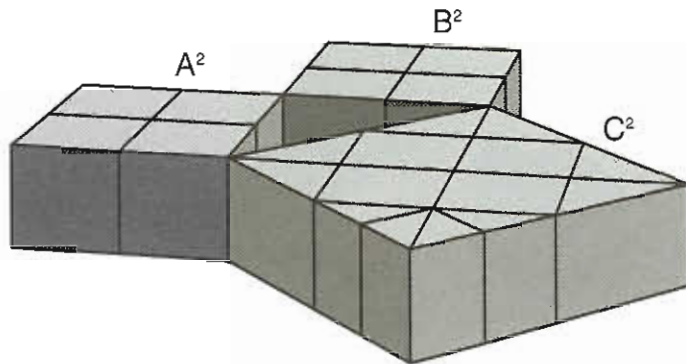
$$3 \times 9 = 27$$



$$3 \times 3 = 9$$



$$3 \times 1 = 3$$



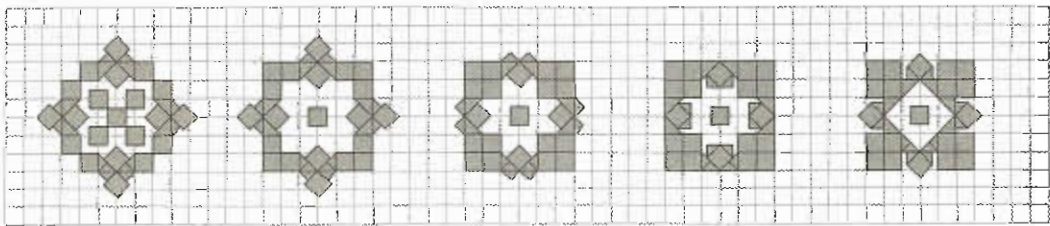
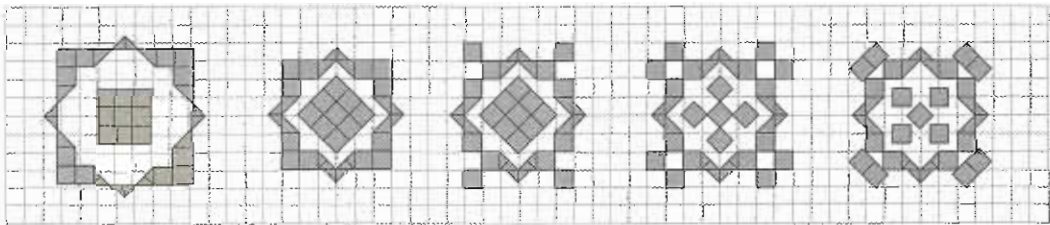
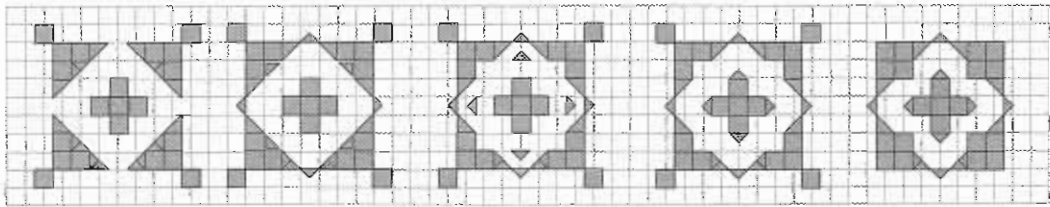
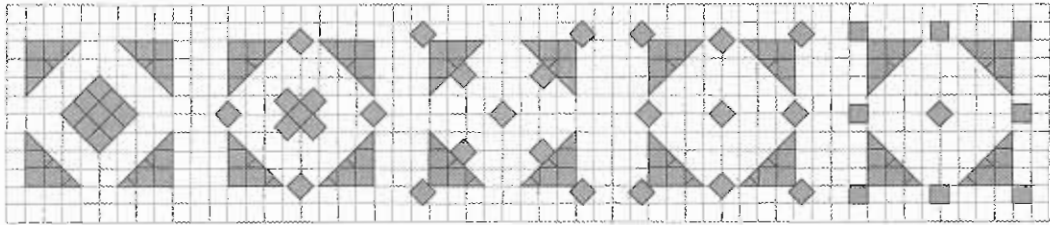
PYTHAGOREAN THEOREM

$$A^2 + B^2 = C^2$$

Forms of Beauty

Forming patterns and designs with Gift 5 produces exciting and complex symmetries. Play with this Gift will be further expanded when color is added with the parquetry tiles of Gift 7.

Remember to modify a construction, rather than destroy it and build another.



Gift

6

In Gift 6, the three-inch cube is now divided into 18 oblong blocks, 12 square caps, and 6 narrow columns.



Gift 6 continues the three inch cube form introduced in Gift 5. As Gift 4 introduced new proportions to the two-inch cube, so does Gift 6 introduce new proportions to the three-inch cube. This is a return to concepts of size and rectangular modularity introduced in Gift 4.

The arrival of the classic construction components (the cap and the column) brings a real architectural feel to this Gift. In fact, Frank Lloyd Wright's Larkin Building can be represented by using the contents of Gift 6, as shown in bottom right corner of page 24.

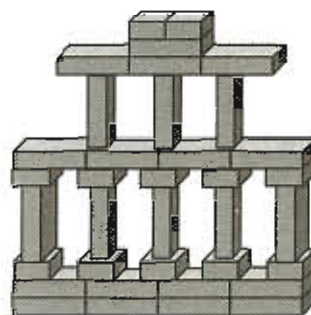
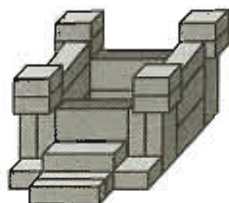
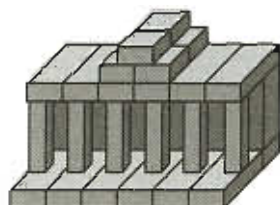
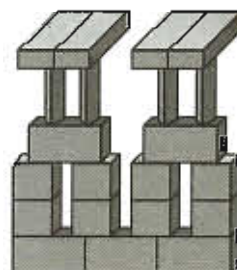
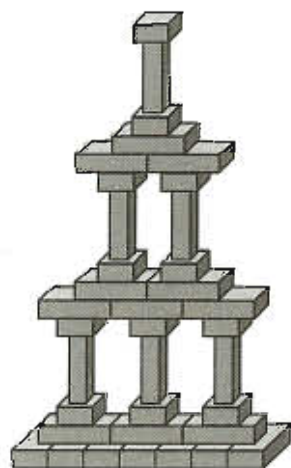
This Gift is best used with children ages 5 and older.

PRESENTATION

The presentation is the same as with previous Gifts.

Forms of Life: Again using the blocks to represent things from his/her life, the new sizes and shapes will be eagerly put to use by the child.

Forms of Life

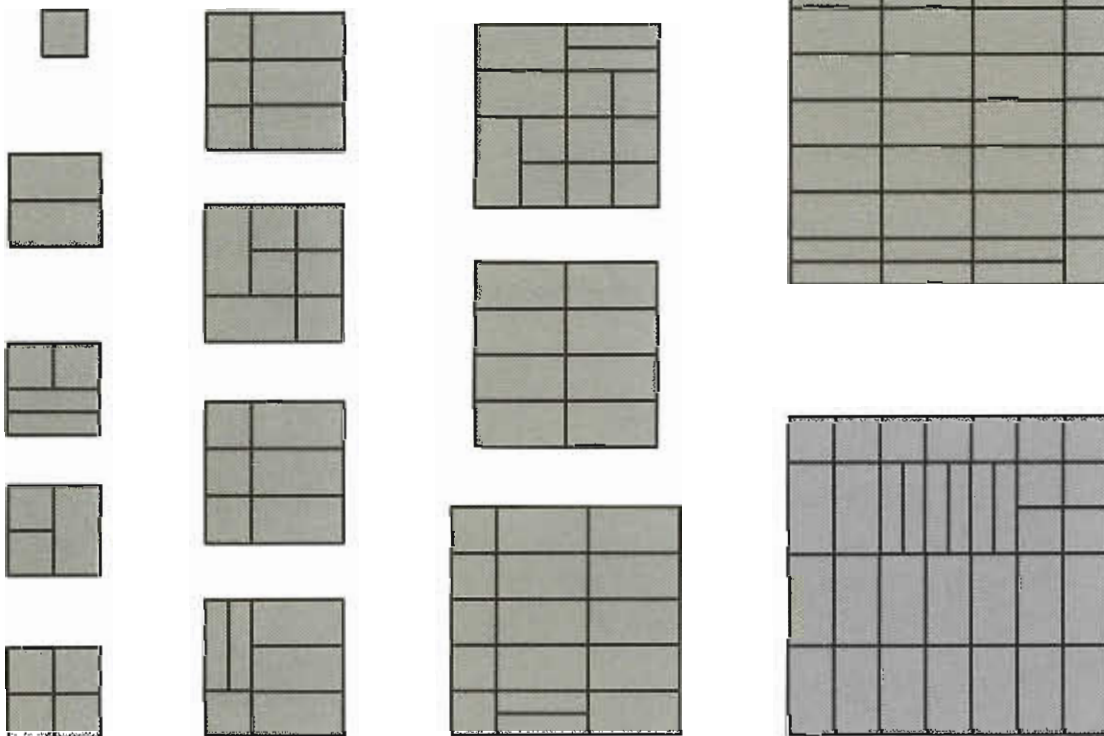


Forms of Knowledge

Continue discussion of arithmetic and fractions.

Area and volume can also be reasoned by outlining various geometric shapes.

Scale, proportion and modularity can be discovered by having the child make as many different squares or rectangles as possible.



Forms of Beauty

Use the blocks to awaken a sense of beauty by forming designs which embody the principles of symmetry, proportion, balance, strength of center, rhythm and simplicity.

