

FALL EXPLORATIONS

Kindergarten – Rahr Memorial School Forest

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

By using our senses, we can better understand and appreciate the environment. Trees have traits that help us to identify their species and they are important to humans.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be able to demonstrate their understanding by filling out the senses scavenger hunt page, listing what trees need to survive, and identifying items made from trees.

CLASS OUTLINE

- I. Set-up
 - II. Sample Schedule
 - III. Introduction
 - IV. Using Your Senses
 - A. looking
 - B. listening
 - C. touching
 - V. Trees Everywhere
 - A. What is a tree?
 - B. Do they all look the same?
 - C. Identification
 - D. What do trees need?
 - E. Why do we need trees? How should we care for them?
 - VI. Hike and Find
 - A. scavenger hunt
 - B. rock collection
 - VII. Conclusion
 - VIII. Clean-up
- Safety
Additional Information
Resources
School Forest map
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MATERIALS

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| • paper | • scavenger hunt sheets | • collecting bags |
| • tree i.d. books | • crayons | • markers |
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CLASS PROCEDURES

I. Set-up

After setting up a date with the School Forest secretary, teachers are also responsible for filling out and turning in a field trip request form. Teachers can schedule a time when the School Forest Coordinator can meet with them at school to discuss the visit. Teachers will be asked to teach or co-teach one of the activities while the student groups rotate through the activities during the day. Or the teacher can rotate with a student group and teach each of the stations. The School Forest Coordinator may also be available to teach at one of the stations during the day. Preparation time will be needed to review the activity.

All of the class materials will be set-up at the School Forest. Teachers will need to bring a few things from school: the School Forest keys, first aid kits, emergency contact information, extra clothing, and any additional activities they feel necessary for the class. Students will need to bring a bag lunch (with a drink and nothing that needs a microwave) and adequate clothing for the day.

II. Sample Schedule:

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|---------------|---|
| 9:30 | Depart from School |
| 10:00 | Arrive at School Forest |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | Welcome and Introduction |
| 10:15 - 10:50 | rotation 1 |
| 10:50 - 11:25 | rotation 2 |
| 11:25 - 12:00 | Lunch |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | Story time |
| 12:30 - 1:05 | rotation 3 |
| 1:05 - 1:40 | Large group activity or with classroom groups |
| 1:45 | Gather and clean up |
| 2:00 | Depart from School Forest |
| 2:30 | Arrive at school |

III. Introduction

Welcome the students to the School Forest. Review the Forest rules and expectations. Throughout these activities students will use their senses to learn about nature. We will also spend time learning about trees. Each student will learn the difference between pine, birch, maple, and oak trees.

IV. Using your senses (Turkey Trail)

Take the students over towards the fire ring (southeast of the Lodge, past the flagpole). Go up the trail south of the fire ring and over the hill. At the bottom of the hill, have the group sit in a circle in the open area. Discuss with the students that forests have different parts: some parts are living and some are nonliving. Ask your students to tell you how these parts are different. Now, the class will use their senses to explore different parts of the forest and determine which parts are living and which parts are non-living.

1. Looking

What color are forests? Most people will first think of green, but there are many other colors if you look closely. There may be a lot of green in the forest but there is also many other colors. Send the students out to search for different colors, maybe they can find colors in the forest that match a color in their clothing. Be sure to set boundaries for the class and tell them how you will signal them to come back to you. Discuss what they find.

2. Listening

Form a circle with the class and sit down facing the inside of the circle. Give each student a piece of paper and a crayon. Now, you will show the class how to draw a sound map. Listen for 30 to 60 seconds and then show the students how to draw what they heard. Ask them what they heard and what it sounded like. Show the student how they might make marks on their paper. (For example, dots may represent a tapping noise, straight lines might represent the sound of the wind, and a wavy line may represent a bird's song.)

The students can turn around and face the outside of the circle. Now, everyone should listen carefully to the forest and make marks on their page. After several minutes, bring the group back together and share what they heard and how the sound maps look. What living things did you hear? What non-living things did you hear?

3. Smell

Now, make your way back to the building but along the way stop to explore the forest with your nose. Crush leaves for the students to smell. Ask the group to bend down to the ground and smell the soil. Ask the students if they have ever smelled a scented candle. Then, have the students explore the area and find something that they think has a smell that would make a good candle scent. Are the best smelling things living or non-living?

V. Trees everywhere (Lodge area and hemlock forest)

1. What is a tree?

Talk about what makes a tree. Point out examples of roots, trunks, branches, bark, and leaves. Compare the parts of the tree to humans.

2. Do they all look the same?

Ask the students to give ideas about what makes trees different and the same.

3. Identification

- Oak

Oak trees are very common at the School Forest. Look carefully at the leaves of an oak tree, notice all of the points. Ask each student to find an oak leaf on the ground. Now, try to find the seed of the oak tree. If there are not many acorns, discuss who or what may have taken them. Also, talk about what happens to oak trees in the fall. Are oaks the only trees that change colors and lose their leaves? Do all trees lose their leaves in the fall?

- Pine

This is a tree that does not lose all of its leaves in the fall. Pine trees (also called evergreens) keep their needles on all year. They are continually losing and replacing needles. Try to find some pine needles on the ground.

- White birch

White birch trees have incredible bark. It is smooth and peels off naturally. You should never peel off the bark of a tree. The bark is like the skin of the tree, it protects it from things that may hurt or kill the tree. Also, because the bark is so soft and smooth you may be able to find nail/claw marks from an animal. Discuss what types of animals may climb up a white birch tree.

- Maple

Maple trees are very special because we can make maple syrup from their sap. Look carefully at a maple leaf. Depending on what kind of maple it is, you will see three or five large points on the leaf. Ask the students to find a maple leaf on the ground.

4. What do trees need?

Trees need a few key things to survive (water, sunlight, nutrients, and soil). Discuss with the students what trees need and how the trees get what they need here at the School Forest.

5. Why do we need trees? How should we care for them?

We need trees and other plants to survive. Why? Trees make oxygen for us to breathe. What other things do we get from trees? Have the students discuss what they get from trees. Then, discuss how we should care for trees. At the School Forest, we don't pick leaves or twigs off of the trees because that could hurt it. We only collect things from the ground.

VI. Hike and find (Red Oak Trail to beach)

A. Look and Find scavenger hunt

Hike on Red Oak Trail towards the beach (west). For this activity, students will work together to find the items listed on the scavenger hunt sheet. If you have adult chaperones, you can have them take a small group to do the scavenger hunt or you can go through the list as a large class. Take time to discuss the different items that are found. Encourage students to use their senses.

B. Rock collection

Continue along the trail to the beach. Once at the beach, you may want to spend some time focusing on the senses. Each student can take a rock home or back to school. If you want, you may include it in a project at school. Gather the students together and compare the collected rocks (use texture, weight, size, smell, and color to aid in the discussion).

VII. Conclusion

Ask the class to review what they learned and discoveries that were made. Discuss the differences of living and non-living things. Review what trees need to survive. Talk about using our senses in the forest.

VIII. Clean-up

- Return supplies to building
- Take garbage out to dumpster
- Close windows, shut off all lights, make sure all water is turned off
- Lock doors, shut driveway gate
- Give the School Forest Coordinator feedback on how to make this trip better in the future.

Safety

While at the School Forest, teachers should carry first aid kits. You can bring these from your school or use the ones at the School Forest. The first aid stations can be found in the Ehlert Lodge office, ELC classroom, and the upstairs of the Krejcarek Building. Please report any safety issues to the School Forest Coordinator. Students should be supervised at all times. If you decide to go off trail, go in a clear area where branches cannot swing back and hit someone. Be aware of the plants you are traveling around so as not to pass by thorn-covered plants.

Optional / Rainy Day Activities

“Look What I Did with a Leaf” – ask the School Forest Coordinator for a classroom set of these books.

Resources

Cornell, Joseph. Sharing Nature with Children. Ananda Publications. 1979

Herman, Marina, Joseph Passineau, Ann Schimpf, and Paul Treuer. Teaching Kids to Love the Earth. Pfeiffer-Hamilton, Duluth, MN. 1991.

Learning, Experiences, and Activities in Forestry. K-1 unit Wisconsin K-12 Forestry Lesson Guide. WDNR, 2004.

Lingelbach, Jenepher and Lisa Purcell. Hands-On Nature. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Woodstock, Vermont. 2000

Look and Find

- the largest tree you can. How many children does it take to reach around it?
- two or more different tree seeds
- the oldest leaf
- a dead tree with a mushroom on it
- smooth bark
- listen for the sound made by the trees
- two or more different tree smells (crush or scratch leaves or twigs)
- the tallest tree you can see
- a tree smaller than you
- your favorite tree

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