

# SPRING STUDY

## Second Grade – Rahr Memorial School Forest

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

ASSESSMENT

WISCONSIN STATE MODEL ACADEMIC STANDARDS

CLASS OUTLINE

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- II. Sample Schedule
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Safety

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Additional Information

MATERIALS-

Wildlife Trail

Lesson plan  
Animal tracks field  
guide  
Compasses

Nature Journals

Lesson plan  
Paper  
Pencils  
Clipboards  
Crayons  
Scissors  
Glue

Sensory Trail

Lesson plan  
Blindfolds  
Rope  
Map of where to go

Plant Study

Lesson plan  
Tree I.D. books  
Map of tree I.D. signs  
Paper  
Pencils

Birding

Lesson plan  
Bird field guides  
Map of where to go  
Clipboards  
Investigations sheets  
Pencils  
Cassette tape player  
Bird calls tape

### Class Details

#### I. Set-up

As the classroom teacher, you are responsible for reserving a date on the School Forest calendar, sending in a field trip request form, and preparing your students for the visit. The School Forest coordinator will provide all of the materials listed in the “Materials” sections. If additional materials are needed contact the coordinator ahead of time with what you need. Please bring first aid kits, student emergency information, and any additional clothing that may be needed.

You will be responsible for teaching one class, multiple times during your class’s visit to the School Forest. Please organize with the School Forest coordinator what you will be teaching. You may wish to meet with other teachers and the coordinator before

your visit. If you have any questions about the classes, content, schedules, or anything else, contact the School Forest coordinator.

Thank you for taking an interest in teaching your students in the unique setting of the School Forest.

## II. Introduction

During this day at the School Forest, students will learn about many different topics and will get to experience nature first-hand. Students will rotate between the stations. At the stations, we will be learning about wildlife, plants, and birds while hiking, writing, and exploring using our senses. One goal for the day is for everyone to experience something new. Maybe you will see, hear, or do something new to you. When you try something new, remember what it was that you learned so that at the end of the day, we can share our new experiences.

## III. Wildlife Trail

The “Second and Third Grade Wildlife Trail” gives students an opportunity to explore the school forest while learning about wildlife and other aspects of the environment.

Use the detailed lesson plan written by Kathie Nelson, Mary Fogltanz, and Lisa Harvatine in June of 1998. This lesson plan has writings and discussions for a numbered of labeled stops on your hike. On the hike, you will travel through the forest near the lodge, sand dunes, swamp, and hemlock forest. Note that some of the stops may have naturally altered since 1998 but most will still apply.

## IV. Nature Journals

For this class you will start in the classroom in the upstairs of the Krejcarek building. Use the provided supplies to create nature journals. Let students spend about 15 minutes on creating their journals and decorating the covers. Take the class on a hike away from the buildings. Stop along the trail at various points to work in your journals. At each stop you may want to provide a structured writing activity or you may encourage free writing. Some ideas for journal activities include sketching a natural object, writing a letter to your favorite forest animal, poetry, and leaf rubbings. Encourage students to sit alone, quietly while they are working in their journals. Discuss what people worked on and things that you saw.

## V. Sensory Trail

Look over a map and decide on a trail to take away from the buildings. During this hike, discuss how we can use all of our senses to explore nature. Start by stopping at a pine (long needled) tree and tasting a few green needles. Talk about what it tastes like. Discuss eating natural plants. Children should never eat anything in nature unless an adult tells them that it is safe to eat. And the adult should actually look it up or ask an expert first. You must be very careful.

Now, experience the forest without using your eyes. Line the class up, extend the rope and have each student grab a ring on the rope. Then pass out the blindfolds and ask each student to put one on. Students will need to walk slowly and hold onto the rope. The teachers will lead the class using the rope. Walk slowly. Quietly listen for different sounds of the forest. Feel the ground under your feet. Is the ground soft or hard? Is it bumpy or smooth?

At some point on your hike, stop and do a “silent sit.” Space the students out along the trail and have each of them sit, facing the forest, and look and listen to the forest. Do

this for about 5 minutes. Once you are back together as a group, discuss what people saw and experienced. Did anyone see or hear something they have never seen or heard before? What sounds could you hear? Could you hear the waves on Lake Michigan?

Another activity that you can do during this hike is using touch to examine nature. Find different textured objects to feel and compare. Use descriptive words to describe the objects. Does all bark feel the same? Are all leaves the same shape? Does the soil on the trail feel different than the soil in the forest?

## VI. Plant Study

While learning about plants, students will examine different types of trees and learn ways to identify trees. Start in the Greene cabin with an activity about how a plant grows. Have students act out the life of a plant (below) or do the Tree Imagery activity (back of packet).

- Curled up in a ball – “As a seed, you have found a nice place to start your life. You are waiting for the soil to become warm from the sun and for the spring rains to help you grow”
- Extend one leg out – “You now have started to grow your roots. Your roots are reaching out for food and water in the soil. These will help you grow into a tall, strong plant.”
- Extend your other leg out and wiggle your toes – “You are starting to drink up the water and food in the soil.”
- Put one arm up into the air – “You have started to grow up, out of the soil.”
- Make your raised hand flat – “Your first leaves are starting to reach for the sun. The sunlight will help you grow into a big, strong plant.”
- Stand up – “As the sun, water, and food in the soil help you grow, you grow into a tall plant.”
- Extend your other arm out to the side – “You have done very well. Many of your other brother and sister seeds were eaten by animals or did not have a good home in the soil, like you, and they did not grow up. You are now a tall one year old plant and as the temperatures start to get colder again for the fall, you will continue to change.”

After this activity, discuss how the students are like plants. What do plants need to grow that we also need?

Now go outside of the cabin, toward the lodge and stop at the red pine trees. There is a “Lift and Learn” sign there. Discuss the red pines: how tall they are, how old they could be, how did they grow here, and any other information. On the other side of the lodge there are two more trees with “Lift and Learn” signs that you may want to use. Follow the provided map to find other “Lift and Learn” signs to learn about how to tell different trees apart and interesting information about the trees.

## VII. Birding

Start this class by listening to the bird calls tape. Then talk with students about bird characteristics. Ask the students what birds they know about. Take the students outside to learn more about the birds that live at the School Forest. Stop at the bird feeders and try to identify some of the birds that you see. The teacher may want to carry a bird identification book and possibly give copies to the chaperones to help with identification.

You may wish to use the “Bird Investigation” study sheets to help students focus on what they are seeing. Pass out clipboards, a study sheet, and a pencil to each student or have them work in groups. The study sheet is a tool to learn about where birds are located. Are they always flying? Do certain types of birds stay on the ground?

If you are having a hard time finding birds in the forest, spend more time at the birdfeeders. Having the class sit quietly will help the birds adjust to humans and they will continue to use the feeders while you watch. Another thing to look for in the woods is bird nests. Search high and low in the trees and bushes. There is a bird nest on the north side of the Ehlert Lodge that can also be studied.

Finally, discuss the importance of birds in our environment. What do we get from birds? How can we help to protect them?

## VIII. Conclusion

After learning about so many different things and experiencing nature, discuss the day with the students. What did they learn? What was something new to them? What was their favorite part of the day? After doing this, discuss future actions. Students can continue their research from the day back at school and teach other people about what they learned. During this day at the school forest, students learned about so many things that human have an effect on. Discuss what humans do to hurt or help wildlife, plants, and the forest. Encourage students to take good care of our earth. Give examples of how they can do this.

## IX. Clean-up

### Safety

### (Rainy Day) Optional Activities

If the weather is not good, make sure students are prepared with proper clothing. It is encouraged to still go outside for a hike and enjoy the rain if it is a safe thing to do. These activities can be used to add on to or replace the outdoor activities and can also be set-up in stations indoors:

- Rain measurements – place measuring cups out in different locations to gather rain, compare the amount of rain collected in the different areas
- Water cycle game or art activity – learn about the water cycle, make your own water cycle
- Leaf sorting and graphing - collect leaves from outside, sort, and then graph the different types of leaves
- Writing and drawing – sit near a window and watch the rain, write about or draw the rainy scenery
- Touch and feel – explore the textures of antlers, feathers, bones, insect trails in wood, fur, and bark
- Aquatic organisms – examine the collected aquatic organisms (the coordinator will gather ahead of time) and notice how they move, where they live, their body parts
- Skull study – explore different types of skulls, learn about meat verses plant eaters
- Food web activity – use string to show the dependence of different natural things on each other

### Additional Information

- Bird Investigation data sheet, next page
- Tree Imagery activity, on following pages

## References

- Basile, Carole G., Jennifer Gillespie-Malone, and Fred Collins. Nature at you Doorstep: Real World Investigations for Primary Students. Teacher Ideas Press, Englewood, Colorado. 1997.
- Cornell, Joseph Bharat. Sharing Nature with Children. Ananda Publications, Nevada City, CA. 1979.
- Leslie, Clare Walker and Charles E. Roth. Keeping a Nature Journal. Storey Books, Pownal, Vermont. 2000.
- Rockwell, Robert E., Elizabeth A. Sherwood, and Robert A. Williams. Hug a Tree and Other Things to do Outdoors with Young Children. Gryphon House, Inc. Beltsville, Maryland. 1996.

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Lesson Plan written by Patty Brodeen, April 2003

# Bird Investigation

Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Weather \_\_\_\_\_

Question: Where are birds found?

Hypothesis: I think that I will find most birds \_\_\_\_\_

Data: Fill in one box for each bird found in the pictured location

<p>In the air:</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>High in the trees:</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>Low in the bushes:</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>On the ground:</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p> <p>□□□□□□□□□□</p>
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Conclusion: I found \_\_\_\_\_

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