



Carriage Road Explorers Pre-/Post-Visit Activity

Tree Identification

Objective:

Students will be able to identify different trees based on their leaves. Students should also be able to explain the differences between a deciduous and coniferous tree.

Maine Learning Result:

E. Living Environment

E1. Biodiversity

Materials:

- Leaves from any of the following trees (up to teacher's discretion as to how many he/she wants to do): spruce, fir, striped maple, red maple, white birch, yellow birch, white cedar, red oak, ash, white pine
- Paper
- Writing utensil

Part I:

Preparation: Collect the leaves from the trees before students arrive (refer to materials list for suggestions).

1. Show the class the different leaves that you have collected. Have the kids feel the leaves so they can begin to make some observations.
 2. Explain the difference between deciduous and coniferous. Explain to students that deciduous trees are ones that have leaves that change color in the fall and then fall to the ground. Coniferous trees mostly have needle-shaped leaves, and they do not lose their leaves all at once. Examples of a deciduous would be a maple or oak; coniferous, white pine or hemlock.
 3. Give each student one leaf. Try to distribute an equal number of deciduous and coniferous. Have students answer the following questions on a piece of paper about their leaf.
 - What color is the leaf?
 - Approximately how big is it?
 - What is the texture? (Another possible activity would be to have the students rub or trace each leaf.)
 - Are there any marks on the leaf? (What made this mark?)
 - Anything else interesting about it?
 4. Once the students have finished answering the questions, re-group and have each student share one interesting observation about his/her leaf with the class.
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5. Designate two different tables for this part of the assignment. One table is for the deciduous trees and the other for the coniferous. At each table have a worksheet that includes the picture of the leaf, a picture of the whole tree, and the name of the tree.

- Deciduous trees: Maple, Birch, Oak, Ash
- Coniferous trees: Spruce, Hemlock, Fir, Pine

6. Students should do three things. First, they should go to the appropriate table that matches the type of leaf they were given. Second, at the table students should work together to match each leaf with the worksheet in order to learn the name of the tree. Third, students should write the name of the tree on the paper they used to answer their questions during step 3 of this activity.

7. When finished, do a brief re-cap. As the teacher holds up each leaf, students respond with the name.

Enrichment Activity

The following two enrichment activities are optional and are used to compliment the previous activity.

Tree Scavenger Hunt

Based on the trees that were identified inside, create a scavenger hunt. On a sheet of paper write down the name of each tree they should find. These trees should all be found on school property or another nature area you have easy access to. Once a student finds the tree, he/she must take a leaf from that tree. Allow for appropriate time, then gather students (stay outside if possible) to review all the leaves that the students gathered. (*Remind students that taking leaves from a national park is not allowed.)

Talking Tree Tour

Take students on a tree tour based on the leaves they identified earlier in the classroom. Have students lead the tour. At each tree, the student that previously identified that tree in the classroom introduces it to the teachers and other students. Students should pretend they are the tree and speak in first person. For example "Hi, I am a birch tree. I have white bark and am deciduous." Continue this until all the trees have been identified and all students have had a chance to speak and share their observations.

Suggested Resources Available through Acadia's Educator Resource Library

Discovering Acadia by Margaret Scheid

Ranger Rick's Nature Scope: Trees are Terrific

Backyard Explorer, Leaf & Tree Guide by Rona Beame

Sharing the Joy of Nature by Joseph Cornell

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