

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

"YOUNG FOREST STEWARDS"

LESSON PLAN

Topic: Knee High in the Forest

Level #: 3

Ages: 3-5 Years

Learning Goals

Learning Goal:

How do things living just above the forest floor support a healthy forest?

Investigative Question:

Get down on your hands and knees. What do you see? What can you find in the bushes in front of you? What do you find that is growing on or living inside a fallen tree? How do these organisms play a role in a healthy forest? How do the things that aren't living anymore become part of the soil? What role does new life play in the forest's survival? What types of low brush plants produce food for animals in the forest?

Teaching Points

Knee level in the forest is full of life. Nurse logs/stumps help the forest continue to grow by providing a seedbed, nutrients and moisture while they decay. Moss, mushrooms, new seedlings, ferns, slugs are things you might find growing on a fallen log. Streams with salmon, frogs, licorice ferns, bracken ferns, sword ferns, deer ferns, coastal strawberries, huckleberries, salal, and skunk cabbage are things that you might see at the brush/knee level. These are all important for contributing to the over wellbeing and nutrients of the forest.

Berries and plants of the forest feed the animals. When animals die their bodies decompose and provide nutrients to the soil which then feeds the forest.

Materials

For Students:

| | | | | | |
|-----|--------|-----|-------------|-----|-----------------|
| a.) | Leaves | b.) | Paper | c.) | Clear Container |
| d.) | Moss | e.) | Fern Pieces | f.) | |
| g.) | | h.) | | i.) | |

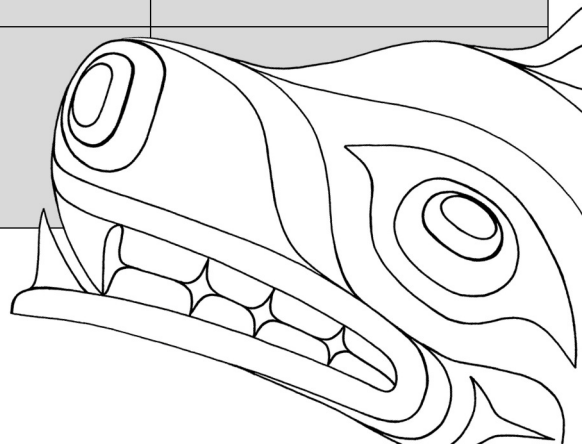
For Teachers:

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|-----|--------------------|-----|---------------|-----|-------|
| a.) | Book 3 – Knee High | b.) | Soil | c.) | Rocks |
| d.) | Spray Bottle | e.) | Tempera Paint | f.) | |
| g.) | | h.) | | i.) | |



Learning Experience

| Experience (e.g., field trip, story, song) | Activity (e.g., game, art, scavenger hunt) | Location |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Book | Point to and discuss the photos as is appropriate to age. | Classroom, outside, in the forest. |
| Art - Fern Stamping | Collect fern fronds and pour paint into a paint tray. Lay the fern frond on top of the paint, remove and lay on the paper to make a leaf print on paper. | Classroom or outdoor activity. |
| Art - Moss Terrarium | You will need a small clear container, rocks, soil, spray bottle. Harvest the moss, put rocks, soil and then moss in the clear container. Spray with water and put lid on loosely to allow air flow. Put a well lit, but not direct sun area and keep watered. Watch the moss the grow. | |
| Field trip or bring the forest to the classroom | Go to a local forest and get down on your hands and knees. What do you see? Can you find a fallen tree? Discover what new life it provides the forest. What does the moss feel like? What types of bugs live in the fallen tree? Are there any new plants growing on the fallen tree? What does the decaying tree feel like? Smell like? What other plants are around? Can you find skunk cabbage? What does it smell like!? | Locate closest natural forest and plan accordingly. |
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Risk Management

| Identified Risk (e.g., falling, animal encounters, bee stings, vehicle use, lost child) | Management Measures (e.g., buddy system, driver's/criminal record checks, first aid kits) | Planning/Responsibility (e.g., staff responsible for each part of the Risk Management Plan) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Forest time | Use the buddy system, ensure children know their exploration boundaries, have an extra adult to support needs such as bathroom breaks, carry a first aid kit, do not enter the forest if it is windy or if there is a concern of overhead objects falling. | Teacher |
| Animal encounters | Remain together, make a lot of noise and raise arms to make yourself large. Maintain eye contact with the animal and slowly, as a group, back away from the animal. | Teacher |
| Sharp objects in the moss | Sift through moss brought to the classroom to ensure there are no sharp objects. | Teacher |
| Forest time - footing, falling, eye hazards and prickles | Choose a relatively flat and level area for easy walking and not too many obstacles. Choose a darker area where there will be less underbrush which can snap back and hit walkers in the face or eyes. Avoid brushy areas with lots of prickles (salmonberry, trailing raspberry, devils club) | Teacher |
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| | | |

Example Fern Stamping & Moss Terrarium

