

Tree Time

Introduction



In the book *Jo MacDonald Hiked in the Woods*, author Mary Quattlebaum introduces children to the trees, plants, and creatures of a forest and models safe, courteous behavior in the wild. In this activity, children learn about different types of trees, draw a tree, and collect and display leaves and fruit (acorns, seed balls, etc.).

Materials Needed

- ◆ Construction paper (green, brown, gray, red, yellow)
- ◆ Strong white paper
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Crayons or markers
- ◆ Collected leaves and fruit (acorn, pine cone)

Key Concepts

- ◆ Plants are the base of an ecosystem.
- ◆ All animals depend on plants.
- ◆ All organisms have different needs.

Procedure

1. Bring in leaves and fruit from one deciduous tree (oak, acorn) and one evergreen tree (pine, cone) in the book. Have children observe carefully (color, shape), smell, and touch them.
2. Point out parts of tree (roots, trunk, branches, twigs, crown, leaves) on diagram of tree (example, <http://www.kidzone.ws/plants/trees.html>). The bark is the tree's harder, protective outer covering. The fruit (acorn, pine cone) often surrounds the seed.
As a class, look at several trees outdoors and identify parts. Guide children to gently touch bark, leaves, and visible roots. Collect a leaf and fruit (if available).
3. Ask children to collect leaf or needle and fruit from one of book's four trees (oak, maple, sycamore, pine). Or ask them to collect leaf/fruit from any tree in their neighborhood or nearby woods and identify (at home or school) with tree guide or Internet.
4. Have children cut out construction paper trunk, branches, and twigs (brown or gray) and leaves (green or appropriate autumnal color). Glue those to the page along with the collected leaf and fruit; label with tree name.
5. Ask children to draw some of the creatures from Jo's woods on paper with tree. Is creature finding food, nesting, or seeking shelter or protection in tree?
6. Tape trees onto classroom walls to create an indoor forest.

Nature Connections

◆ Read aloud the descriptions of the four types of trees. Trees provide food, shelter, and nesting places for many creatures. Ask children to look at each picture to discover whether an animal is using it in one of those three ways.

◆ Bring in maple syrup or maple candy and let children taste. This short video shows how maple trees are tapped. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwbgwBnRnG8>

Additional Resources

- ◆ **In a Nutshell** by Joseph Anthony, illus. by Cris Arbo
- ◆ **A Tree for All Seasons** by Robin Bernard
- ◆ **A Tree Is a Plant** by Clyde Robert Bulla, illus. by Stacey Schuett
- ◆ **Tell Me, Tree: All About Trees for Kids** by Gail Gibbons
- ◆ **The Tree in the Ancient Forest** by Carol Reed-Jones, illus. by Christopher Canyon
- ◆ **National Arbor Day Explore:**
<http://www.arboday.org/explore/>