

What do I teach?

Theme: Four trees through the four seasons.

Grade 2 children learn about local trees throughout the four seasons. Every season they go for the same walk to a forest near the school. There they experience the influence of the seasons on the trees. During the walk, they will perform several short tasks that combine the study of the environment with language, IT, mathematics and arts education.

Driving question:

What are the features of different seasons?
How do the trees look different in each season?

Learning goals

We want our children to be able to:

- name different features of the trees through all four the seasons;
- recognize, describe and name external parts of the tree (such as leaf, twig, branch, fruit, blossom, crown, trunk and root);
- see and describe how trees are adapted to live and survive in their natural environment;
- treat nature with care and work towards a livable planet;
- use their senses with focused and intense perception.

Context of the children

Prior knowledge

The children see trees every day in our school forest.

The children know what a tree looks like and most children can name the basic parts of a tree: leaves, branches, trunk, fruit. They see trees every day, they play in our treehouse and climb the trees in our school forest.

Context of the school

At our school, outdoor education is very important to acquire learning skills. Being outdoors is part of our learning routine and offers great opportunities to discover nature. We have a small but nice school forest that we use for educational purposes

but also for playing. Our village is quite rural, so our children are very often in contact with nature.

21st. C. Skills

Creativity , communication , ICT literacy, collaboration

How do I teach?

Cross-curricular: These lessons combine the study of the environment with language, IT, mathematics and arts education.

A walk to the forest.

Little questions:

How do you know that it is summer / autumn / winter / spring?

What do the trees look like?

What would you capture in a picture to show that it is summer / autumn / winter / spring?

What is special about plants or animals in the summer / autumn / winter / spring?

Activities:

Every season the children walk to a forest nearby the school where there are four different types of trees. During these four walks, they always learn about the four different trees in the same way. The fourfold interactions with the trees will improve retention of new knowledge and of skills such as observing, comparing and describing.

On the way to the forest, we raise awareness of our children to road safety.

On some locations we let the children do exercises like tap 10 trees as fast as you can, jump with steps of 2, 4, 5... hang from a branch like a sloth, jump up and down like a rabbit, listen to the sounds of the trees...

During the walk, we will stop at four different places to observe and describe the trees and its parts (leaves, branches, trunk, fruits...) and to take pictures:

- Maple: at the rectory
- Linden: in the lane at the end of the presbytery wall
- Oak: in the forest by the church
- Beech: by the bike course

In the forest, the children must perform certain tasks (The tasks listed below are divided over the four walks, some are performed during each walk).

The children are asked to...

- look for leaves and fruits of the different trees;
- make bark prints of the different trees;
- play a card game about the leaves' edges;
- look for something that is alive;
- blow a leaf into the air and try to keep it up in the air as long as possible;
- make a rhyme or song about the forest;
- take a picture of a place in the forest they like;
- dress up as a tree;
- create a forest painting;
- move like a little helicopter falling down;
- make a rainbow of leaves;
- make the table of two with materials from the forest;
- dance like a falling leaf;
- make a nest with materials from the forest;
- build a camp with branches and leaves;
- find something that could be a gnome house;
- camouflage yourself so no one can see you;
- build a tower with materials from the forest;
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They perform these tasks in duos or threesomes and they take a picture of each task they completed using their iPad. For each task there is an assignment card with a worked example to visually clarify what is expected of the children. (see assignment cards in attachment)

Before the children begin their tasks in the forest, the appropriate rules of behavior (do no harm to plants and animals, stay on the path, don't throw away any garbage...) and safety measures are discussed. Establishing rules and procedures at the beginning of the project and repeating them before every walk, will create a positive atmosphere that fosters learning.

Back in school, the children review what they have learned. To help them recall everything that they observed and learned, the teachers asks questions. Every season the children are given the same test.