

LONGWOOD GARDENS

We Planted a Tree

Toolkit Activities

This toolkit is designed for use by teachers / librarians / after-school advisors / parents to enhance learning moments with children ages 3-8.

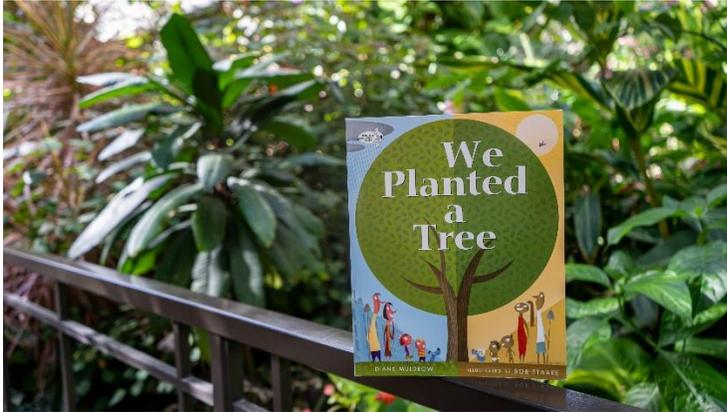
The Longwood Gardens Community Read is a program designed to encourage reading for pleasure and start a conversation. Focusing on literature about gardens, plants, and the natural world, we feature an exceptional book annually (paired with similarly-themed younger readers' book) through a variety of programs, discussions, and lectures across all community partner organizations. For more information about the Community Read, go to www.longwoodgardens.org/community-read.



Community Read
Read. Think. Engage.

LONGWOOD GARDENS

We Planted a Tree by Diane Muldrow
Illustrated by Bob Staake



Overview / Synopsis

In this poem illustrated by award-winning artist Bob Staake, two young families in two very different parts of the world plant a tree. As the trees flourish, so do the families ... while trees all over the world help clean the air, enrich the soil, and give fruit and shade.

Activities

What a Tree Can Grow to Be
What Will Your Tree Grow?
Seasonal Celebration

Extend the Story

Arbor Day Celebration
Project Learning Tree
Every Kid Outdoors

This toolkit was developed by the Longwood Gardens School and Youth team.



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Activities meet the following Next Generation Science Standards:

K-LS1-1 Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems

Use observations to describe patterns of what plants and animals (including humans) need to survive.

2-LS4-1 Biological Evolution

Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

Activities meet the following Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2

With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3

With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.10

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2

Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3

Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.K.2

Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.



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What a Tree Can Grow to Be

Materials Needed

Tree life cycle wheel:

- Tree life cycle wheel activity page
- Round head paper fasteners
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Scissors

Soil erosion demonstration:

- Two plastic water bottles
- Scissors
- Two bowls
- Soil
 - Loose soil
 - Soil with rooted plants or grass – one way to do this is to dig up a piece of grass and soil from a lawn or area with turf, this way the roots of the grass are already fully developed and are tightly holding the soil together
- Cup of water
- Seeds from different type of fruits like apples, oranges, lemons, or grapefruit

Directions

Tree life cycle wheel:

- Students can learn about the life cycle of a tree by creating a wheel showing each stage of life!
- Hand out the tree life cycle wheel sheet to each student.
- Have students draw and color each stage in a tree's life cycle in the corresponding section on the wheel. They can think about different fruits that grow on trees and choose what type of tree they would like to draw. For example, apples grow on trees, so students could draw an apple tree all the way from seed to tree to fruit.
- Next, have students cut out their completed wheel and the arrow. Using the paper fastener, students can attach the arrow to the center of the wheel.
- These wheels can be used in many ways to learn about and think about the trees around us.



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- Read the book *We Planted a Tree* aloud with the students. Examine the pictures on each page and have students decide which life stage the trees in the pictures are in. Have students share their answers by moving the arrow on their wheel.
- Go for a walk with the students outside and take notice of the trees that are around. Are there trees in different life stages? What time of year is it – are any trees flowering or fruiting? Have students participate by moving the arrow on their wheel to help describe what they see.

Soil erosion demonstration:

- Now that students understand how trees grow, they can learn about some of the amazing things that trees do for the planet, like help prevent soil erosion.
- Take the two water bottles and cut each in half the long way, leaving the neck of the bottle fully intact. Remove the bottle caps.



- Fill one water bottle with loose soil and the other bottle with the soil with rooted plants or grass.



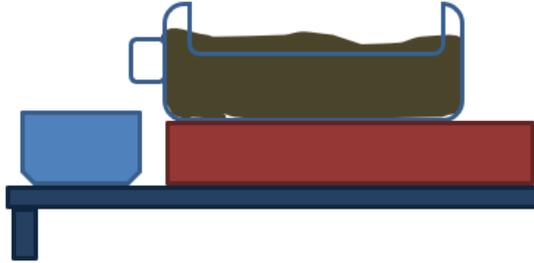
- Place the water bottles on an elevated surface on a table so that the main part of the bottle is resting on the elevated surface and neck of the bottle is just hanging off the edge of the surface.



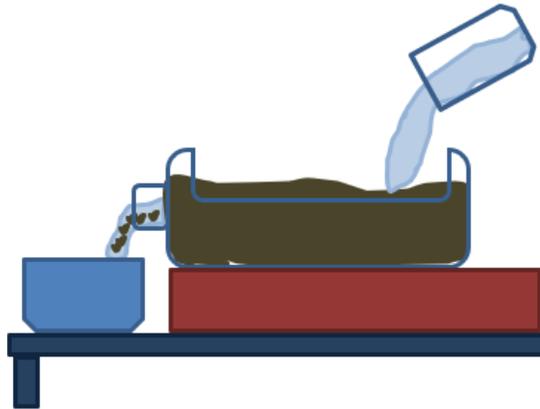
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- Place a bowl on the table just below the neck of each water bottle.



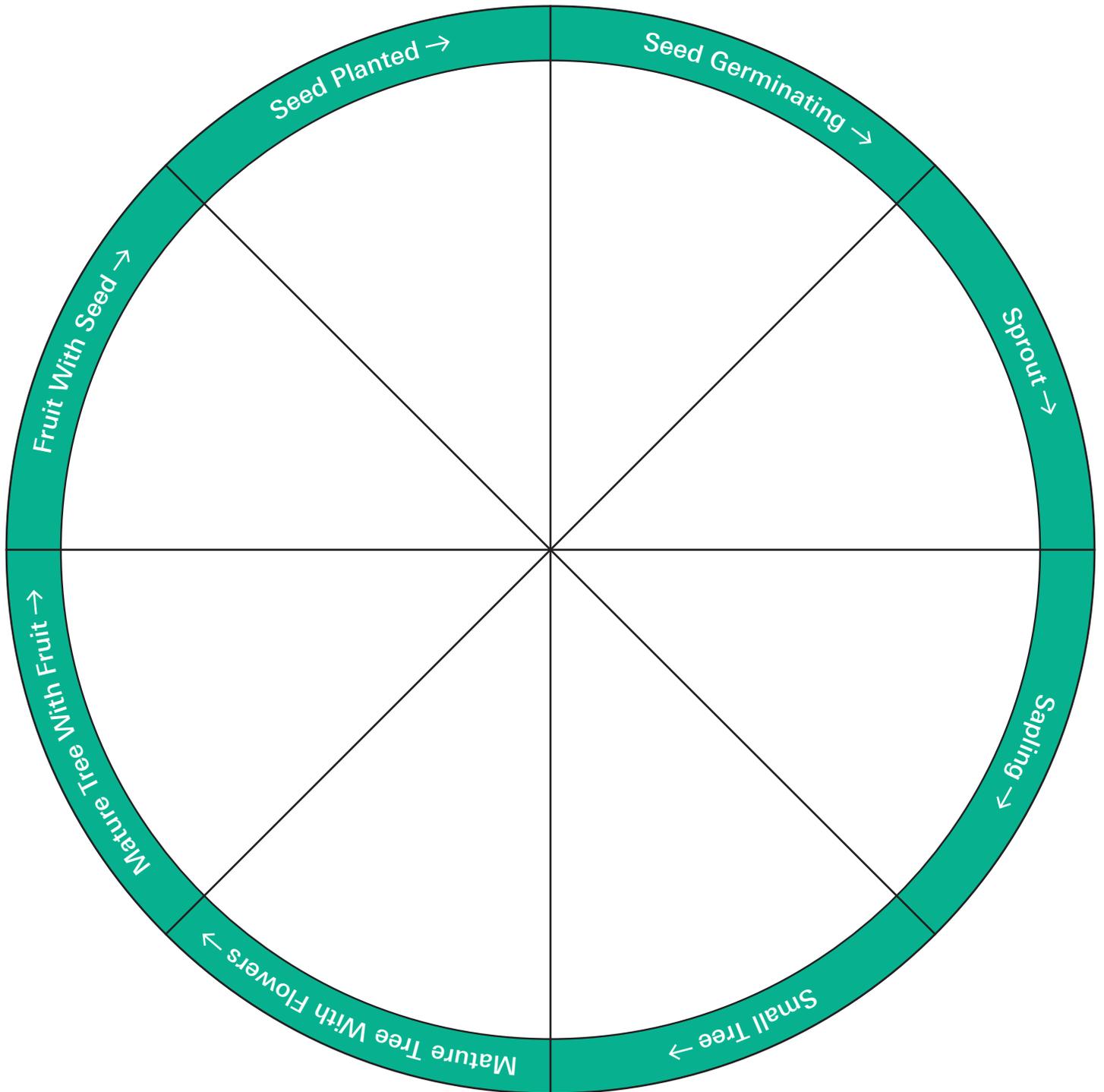
- Pour the same amount of water in the soil in each bottle at the end furthest from the neck of the bottle. The bowls will catch the water that comes out the neck of the bottles.



- Examine the water in each of the bowls. Do the students notice a difference? The water from the bottle filled with loose soil should have more soil in it than the water from the bottle filled with soil and plants. The roots of the plants help hold the soil in the ground and prevent as much of it from washing away, just like the roots of a tree!
- Hand out seeds to students. Talk about the types of fruit the seeds came from. Tell the students how the fruit they eat, like apples and oranges, have seeds and that these seeds can grow into new trees.
- Encourage the students to take their seeds home and plant them.
- As the students watch their trees grow, they can keep track of their tree's progress with the life cycle wheel they made.



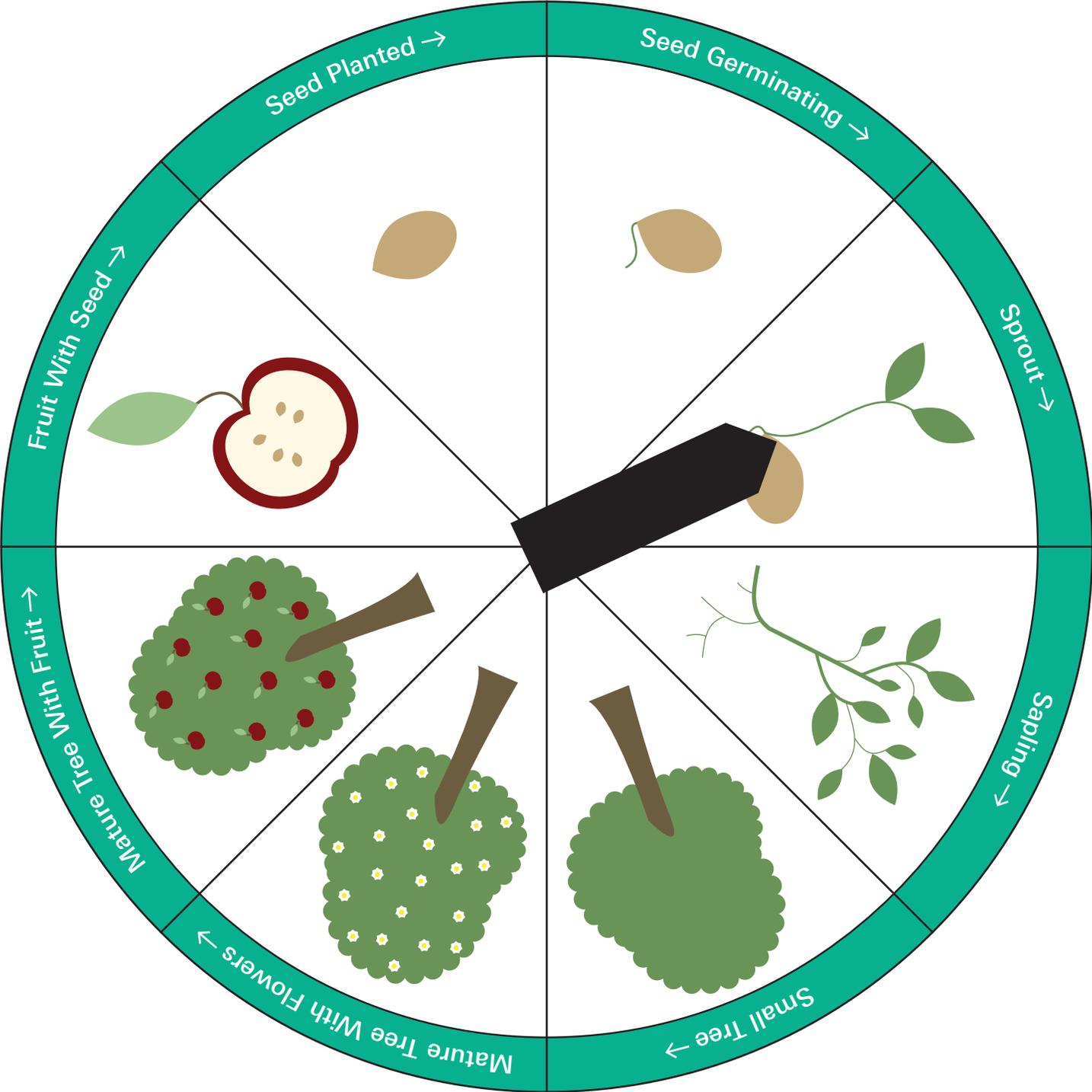
Tree Life Cycle Wheel



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Tree Life Cycle Wheel

Example



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What Will Your Tree Grow?

Materials Needed

What will your tree grow?

- Brown construction paper
- Green construction paper
- White board or large piece of blank paper
- White board markers or markers
- Craft materials (construction paper, beads, feathers, pipe cleaners, buttons, fabric pieces, craft sticks, yarn)
- Glue
- Scissors
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Double-sided tape

Writing extension:

- Copies of poem template
- Copies of tree template
- Lined paper
- Pencils

Directions

What will your tree grow?:

- Using the construction paper, create and display a large tree prior to the activity.
- Review *We Planted A Tree* and ask students what things they noticed were growing on the trees in the story. You or the students can write or draw their answers on a white board or large piece of paper. Examples of answers include: green and shiny leaves, fat little buds, pink blossoms, apples, oranges, lemons, acorns
- Now ask the students to close their eyes and listen to these directions. “Hold your hand out in front of you. Pretend that I have placed a tree seed in the palm of your hand.” *Walk around and tap each palm.* “After I place the pretend seed in your palm, close your fingers around that seed. When you plant your seed, it will grow into a tree. What will grow on your tree? Now open your eyes.”
- If your tree could grow anything, what would it grow? Give a personal example like “My seed will grow into a tree that grows pizza because I love pizza! It would be a pizza tree.”



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- Allow each student some time to think of something that will grow on their tree.
- Next, have students gather the craft materials they will need to make their item that will grow on the tree.
- Once all students have completed their item, hang the items on the tree with the double-sided tape. Ask students why they chose that specific item.

Writing extension:

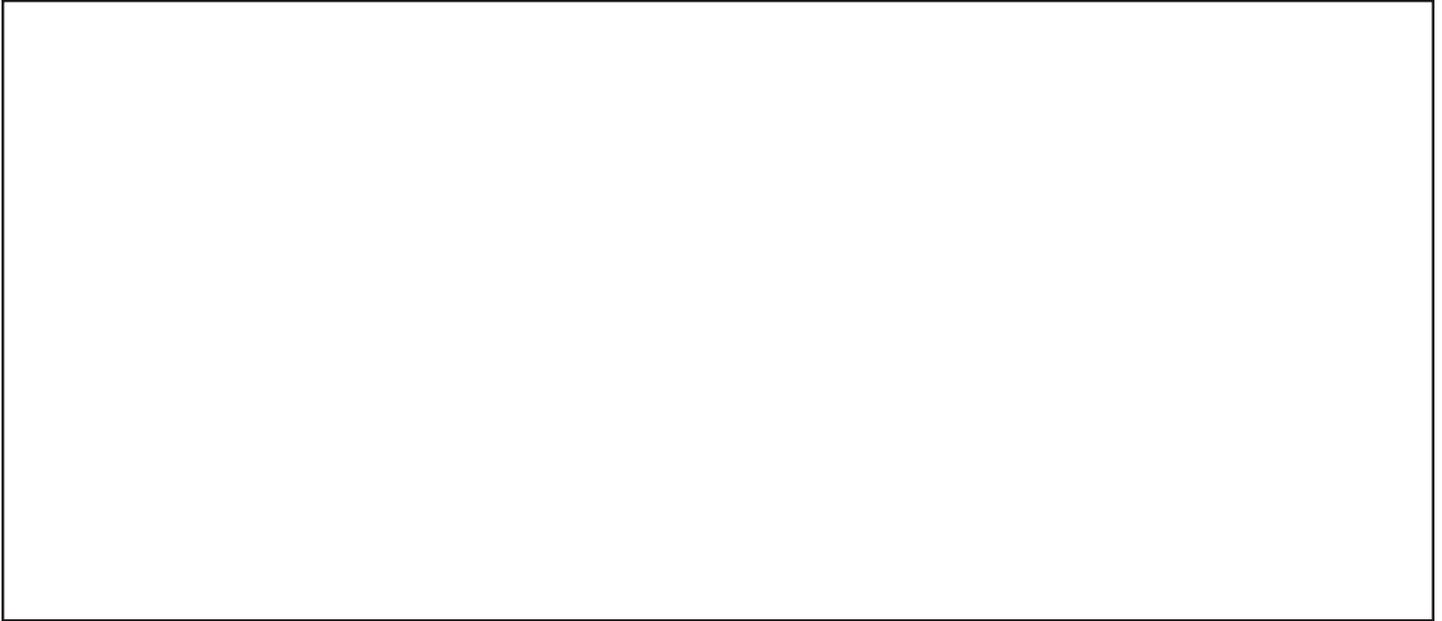
- Pre-School Students: Provide students with a copy of the tree template and crayons. Allow time for them to color a picture of what they imagine their new tree would look like. Encourage students to share their ideas.
- Students (Grades K-1): Provide younger students with a copy of the poem template, crayons, and a pencil. Students can write or draw in the blank space to complete the poem. Encourage students to share their poems.
- Older Students: Provide older students with lined paper and pencils. Allow students to write a creative story about their imaginary tree. Encourage students to share their stories.



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My _____ Tree

I planted a tree. The tree was just for me.



It grew

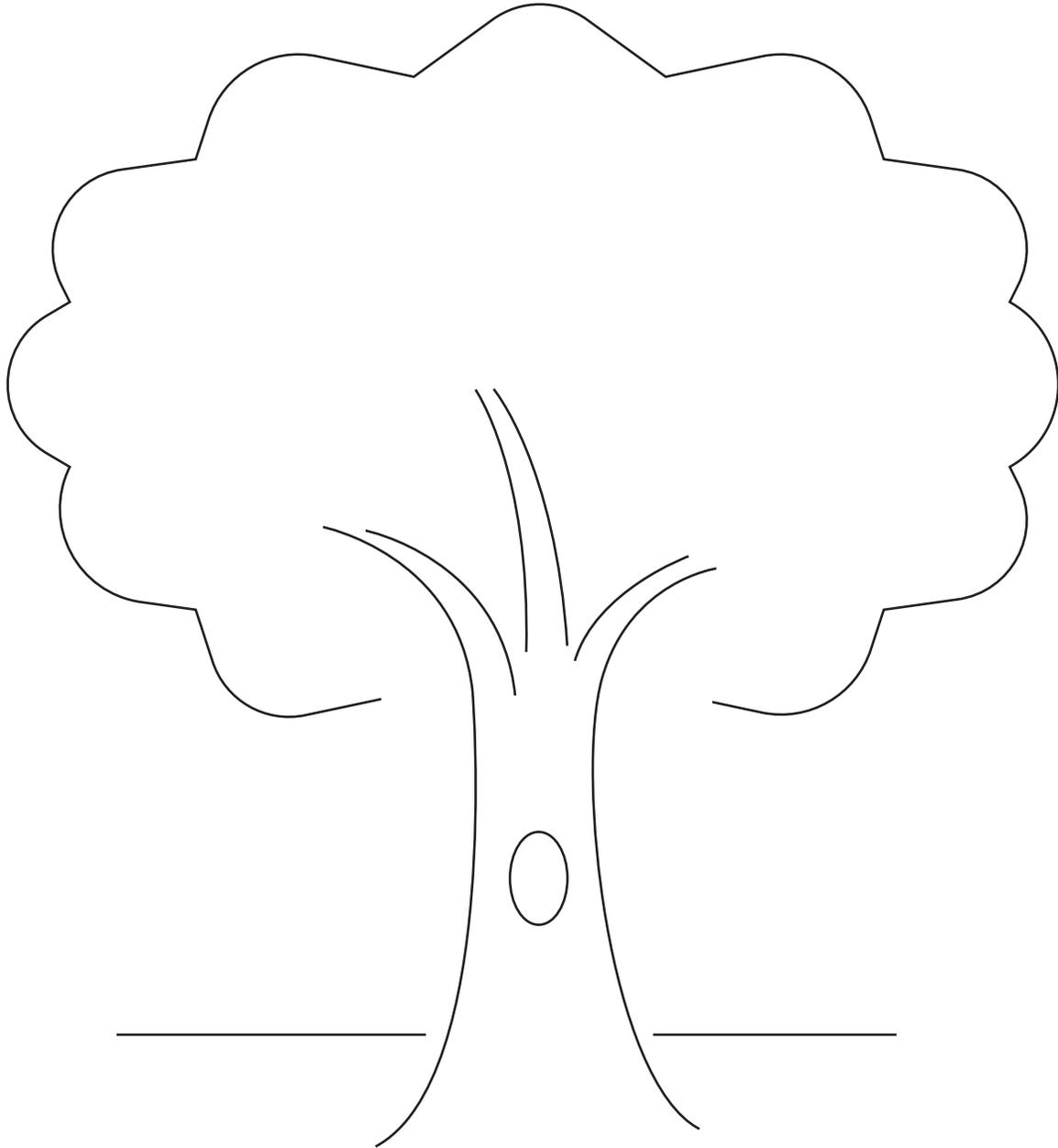


every day.

I'm so excited!



My _____ Tree



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Seasonal Celebration

Materials Needed

Seasonal illustration:

- Construction paper
- Brown paint
- Paint brush
- Glue
- Popsicle stick or Q-tip
- Natural or craft items to represent seasons
 - Spring colors: dried split peas, leaves, grass, buttons
 - Summer colors: dried flowers, fruit seeds, beads
 - Fall colors: birdseed, corn, dried beans, stickers
 - Winter colors: white sand, cotton balls, glitter

Puffy sidewalk paint:

- Shaving cream
- Flour
- Liquid food coloring
- Large bowl
- Smaller bowls
- Mixing spoon
- Pastry bags with icing tips or Ziploc bags with corner cut off
- Clothes pins
- Measuring cup
- Newspaper

Directions

Seasonal illustration:

- Fold the construction paper in half (hot dog style) and again (hamburger style) to make 4 squares.
- Help students to label each square as Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter.
- Tell students to draw a tree (trunk and branches) in each square using the brown paint.



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- While paint is drying, review the four seasons using *We Planted A Tree* and talk about how trees look different during each of the four seasons. Ask students what they notice about the trees and how they change during each season.
- Have students use the popsicle stick or Q-tip to spread glue around the top of one of their trees.
- Students can select the natural or craft items they would like to represent their first season.
- Students can repeat the steps above until they've completed their four seasons. Allow time for paper to dry flat.

Sidewalk puffy paint:

- Cover the working surface with newspaper.
- In a large bowl, squirt 10 oz of shaving cream. Add one cup of flour and stir.
- If the students desire to make multiple colors, separate the mixture into smaller bowls. Add a few drops of food coloring into the mixture and stir. Add more food coloring until you reach the desired color.
- Cut off the tip of the pastry bag and insert the icing tip before filling the bag with the puffy sidewalk paint. Close the bag on top by twisting it and clipping it using a clothes pin. If using Ziploc bag, fill the bag with the puffy sidewalk paint and seal before cutting off a small piece of one of the corners.
- Have students take the bags outside and in the parking lot or on a sidewalk, have them illustrate their favorite season.
- Once students have completed their masterpieces, ask them to share what they illustrated and why it is their favorite season.
- Paint will wash off of surfaces with water.



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Extend the Story

Arbor Day Celebration

- National Arbor Day is celebrated on the last Friday in April. However, some states observe Arbor Day on different dates throughout the year. Check out this calendar to see when your state celebrates:
<https://www.arborday.org/celebrate/dates.cfm>
- The National Arbor Day Foundation also offers a wide variety of educational resources which can be found by visiting:
<https://www.arborday.org/celebrate/educational-resources.cfm>

Project Learning Tree

- Learning is in our nature. Project Learning Tree (PLT) offers activities and resources to engage children in learning about the environment through the lens of trees and forests. Around the topic of planting a tree, they offer the following resources for the PreK-8th grade audience:
<https://www.plt.org/activity-resources/prek-8-activity-31-plant-a-tree/>
- Additionally PLT offers a wide variety of activity ideas for families which can be found by visiting:
<https://www.plt.org/activities-for-families/>

Every Kid Outdoors

- Opportunities for 4th and 5th graders to visit federal lands and waters for free! This website also contains activity guides for educators and parents. For more information visit:
<https://everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm>



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