

A Conversation with Nature

Title: A Conversation with Nature

Subject: Science (Environmental Appreciation, Ecological Literacy, Biodiversity, Systems)

Grade Level: Grades P-2

Outcome:

The purpose of the following activity is to:

1. Allow students the opportunity to sharpen their observation skills and to develop a sense of wonder about the world around them.
2. Allow students to imagine the world from a different perspective.
2. Allow students to see the interconnectedness of nature.
3. Allow students to recognize ways to be nature friendly.
4. Correspond with the “Curriculum Focus” as outlined in the Atlantic Canada Science Curriculum Foundation:

“encourage students at all grade levels to develop a critical sense of wonder and curiosity about scientific and technological endeavours” (p 1)

and the need to learn about systems, as stated in the section called “Creating Linkages Among Science Disciplines”.

Also, in the “Skills” section,

“By the end of grade 3, students will be expected to work with others and share and communicate ideas about their explorations.”(p21)

Description: (Teacher to student)

Today we will be making new friends. We will be going to the Outdoor Learning Centre and getting to know the trees, the stream, the soil, the grass, and more. Each student will have a buddy (like your Reading Buddies!), but instead of other students, your new buddy will be a tree or a stone or a blade of grass. We will be getting to know as friends.

Procedure:

1. While inside, explain that in Outdoor Learning Centre, students will have to listen carefully to you, and they will have to respect their environment.
2. Explain that you will be assigning buddies to the students.
“Once students you are assigned to a “buddy”, you should introduce yourself. Tell them your name and grade and where you live and what you like to do. Then, get up close to your buddy and ask what it is like to be them. (If you were to ask a person this, they would speak and tell you their answers, but with a plant or a rock, you will have to listen extra carefully and use your imagination to try to figure out what it feels like to be them). You should touch your buddy (what does the bark feel like or the blade of grass or the stone?). Be careful – if your buddy is alive, you can touch it, but don’t pick it. And, if your buddy is not alive, you can pick it up, but it is important to put it back where you found it. Ask “what do you like?” (when birds visit me, when it rains, etc.) and “How do you feel? (friendly, cold, thirsty, happy) and “Who are you friends with?”. And anything else you want to ask your buddy. You can ask these questions out loud or whisper them to your buddy. Remember, this is an individual activity, so stay by yourself with your buddy. Your friends will be meeting their own buddies.
3. Go outside and walk the students through the site. Assign buddies as you walk through, and ask students to stay with their buddy as you assign them. Some possible “buddies”: tree, shrub, soil, stream, blade of grass, cattail, rock. It is okay for students to have similar buddies (two students with two separate rocks), but make sure each individual is paired up with something natural.
4. Allow students to meet their buddies for about 5 minutes (until students get restless). Ask students to gather at amphitheatre. Each student should say one thing about how their buddy felt (ask for clarification if necessary – “*Why* is the tree thirsty?”).
5. If there is enough time, suggest that we act out our new buddies. Start with the stream – ask the student who is friends with the stream to come to the front and act like a stream (flowing arms to represent the water?). Then, add another student, and ask them to position themselves in proportion to the stream (if they are a tree, they can stand with arms over

- the stream). Then, one by one, add the students. Once everyone has been added, remind them that they are acting out the Outdoor Learning Centre.
6. Before going in, ask students to go say good-bye to their new friends, and suggest that they always come and say hello to their friends when visiting the Outdoor Learning Centre.