

Nature Extensions and Outdoor Connections for Individual Lessons in Unit 1

Week 1

Building Homes

- Using natural items to construct a building
- Building fairy houses
- Building homes for animals

Painting with Objects

- Painting with natural objects – evergreen branches, pine needles, pine cones, feathers, flowers (flower presses), grasses, sticks, acorns (like marble painting), leaves

Caring for Babies

- Caring for insects or animals
- Bringing logs with things on it to observe (sow bugs, millipedes, spiders, slugs)
- Pet worms
- Ants – how they bring food to their families

Writing My Name and Family Names

- Tracing names with sticks in sand
- Using natural items to glue to letters of names
- Could link to nature family portrait activity (using natural objects)

Building Block Towers

- Building rock towers (inside or outside) out of a variety of rocks (different sizes) that the children collect outside

Paper Collages

- Nature collages using natural materials that the children have collected and attach to a flat surface
- Using contact paper, children collect items and attach to the sticky part of the contact paper. These can be displayed as a suncatcher in the window and then can play the I Spy Game.

Books About Caring for Babies (nature books)

- Animal Babies
- Owl Babies

Small Group – Draw and Label Family Picture

- Nature Family Portrait activity using natural objects

Small Group – Exploring Manipulatives

- Adding natural materials to count and sort such as stones, acorns, sea glass, shells, pine cones, laminated leaves, sticks of varying sizes

Week 2

Paint Mixing

- Painting with mud
- Finding colors of plants and objects outside, then mixing the paint colors to match the natural object. Each new color can be in a baby food jar with the name on it for the children to use. Make a palette book with each of the new colors named from the natural object.

Paint Chip Matching

- Take the paint chips outside and match them with natural items outside. Then connect back to paint mixing

Small Groups – Who Lives with Me?

- Who lives outside? Explore different habitats and which animals live there.
- Listen for birds
- Look for animal signs (eaten acorns, scat, footprints)
- Think about what the animals eat to know where they might live
- Focus on insects in the meadow and under logs
- Focus on ducks and geese and living in the wetland areas
- Focus on squirrels and chipmunks in the woodlands

SWPL

- Replace Old MacDonald had a farm with other habitats and animals such as “Old MacDonald had a forest, meadow, pond” In the forest there lived some squirrels (chipmunks, snakes, birds, etc.). Children can make up what they say or how they move instead. In the meadow there lived some crickets (grasshoppers, butterflies, etc). In the pond there lived some ducks (geese, frogs, etc.).
- Head Thorax Abdomen Song to the tune of Head Shoulders Knees and Toes – Head, Thorax, Abdomen, Abdomen (repeat). Two eyes, six legs, two antennae, and sometimes wings. Head, Thorax Abdomen, Abdomen.

Week 3

Watercolor Paintings and Small Group - Pen and Watercolor Outdoor Illustrations

- Plein air painting – where artists take their easels outside and paint the scenery, trees, flowers, habitats – maybe find a video of them to watch
- Set up flowers in vases inside to paint
- Use natural objects for colors such as berries
- Start a nature journal

Reading Aloud to Dolls and Stuffed Animals

- Do this outside

Small Group – Exploring Fasteners

- Go outside and find burdock (inspiration for the invention of Velcro).

Let's Find Out About It: Masks

- Make animal masks – are there animals that might fit the different emotions?

Week 4

Collaborative Collage

- Using nature items to create a collage

Building Home/Buildings with Windows

- Add natural materials to the block area

Small Groups – Rhyming Word Cards and SWPL

- Song – Oh A Gathering We Will Go to the tune of Oh A Hunting We Will Go – “Oh a gathering we will go (repeat), we’ll catch a frog and put him in a log, and then we will let him go”. The children decide what they want to catch and then come up with a rhyming word for where to put it (e.g. snake/cake, bee/tree, fish/dish or kiss, etc.). Great song to sing when outside catching insects with nets.

Let's Find Out About It: How People Get Around

- Migration – how animals move when the weather changes. Ducks and geese migrate when it gets cold because the open water where they find food freezes.
- Other animals migrate because they can't find food, such as some birds and Monarch butterflies

Unit 1 – Nature Connections to Some of the Books

Sometimes I'm Bombaloo and Crybaby

- Sit Spots – Children choose a place to sit outside (next to a tree or other naturally appealing object). They can spend 5 minutes or so in their spot (by themselves) and observe what is going on around them. They can also draw or write in a journal. They should be able to visit this spot often throughout the year and notice the differences in the seasons.
- Sound Mapping – This is a journal activity that the children can do during their sit spots. They have a sheet of paper and mark an X in the middle where they are sitting. Then they draw the sounds that they hear around them using symbols to represent the sounds.

Hello, Goodbye Window

- Drawing a map of where the children live

- Music outside
- Collect acorns and sticks, then sort