

SIGNS OF SPRING

Spring Has Sprung!

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Teacher's Guide

Spring Program: Signs of Spring

Grade Level: Preschool and Kindergarten

Field Trip Length: 1.25 hours

INTRODUCTION

The very best tools any naturalist can use to learn more about natural surroundings are the five senses. To learn more about spring seasonal changes, emphasizing sensory exploration is the best way to experience and to gain more knowledge about the natural world. Long before the trees open their buds, the forest floor is teeming with signs of spring. With the warmer breezes of March, tiny wildflowers poke their green shoots through the leaf litter and grow rapidly, taking full advantage of the unobstructed sunlight. Won't the students be amazed to learn that the spring beauty wildflower has pink "landing stripe" to guide insects to the center of the flower for pollination purposes?

OBJECTIVES:

1. To observe spring changes at Lincoln Memorial Garden, focusing on using our five senses to heighten the experience of springtime in the natural world.
2. To discover how plants and animals adapt during the spring season, bringing life back to the natural world with blooms and babies.
3. To strengthen sensorial education in the outdoors and to gain an appreciation of the beauty of nature in the spring season.

THIS PROGRAM HAS THE POTENTIAL TO MEET THE FOLLOWING ILLINOIS LEARNING STANDARDS:

Learning Area	Goal	Standard	Benchmark
Language Arts	4	A	1a, 1b, 1c
		B	1b
Science	11	A	1a, 1b, 1e, 1f
	12	A	1
		B	1a
		E	1a, 1b, 1c

Physical Development	19	A	1, 2
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SUGGESTIONS FOR PRETRIP ACTIVITIES

1. Make “Memory Pictures” with the students to begin practicing visual memory retention. Arrange 10 objects or pictures of nature in springtime on a tray. Ask the children to observe these objects or pictures and tell a little story about each one. Then, cover the tray with a cloth. Ask the students to draw or write the name of the ten things they just saw. When the children have completed their drawings or lists, remove the cloth and ask the children to compare their drawings or list to the objects or pictures on the tray. Did anyone remember them all? Discuss what was most easily remembered and what was most commonly forgotten.
2. Organize a Spring Color Hunt. Gather paint chips of spring colors from a home improvement store. Cut the chips apart and have the children construct color wheels by gluing the paint chips on to construction paper. Once they have constructed their spring color wheels, take a walk around the schoolyard or the block to find nature that matches the colors on their color wheels. Discuss gradation of colors and typical spring shades.
3. Spring is time of many scents. Make a “scentsational” activity by filling 10 duplicate containers with different scents. Example: 2 containers of green onions, 2 of mint, 2 of rose petals, 2 of soil, etc.
4. Choose a book to read about spring or our five senses from the Resource List at the end of this teacher’s guide.

DESCRIPTION OF LINCOLN MEMORIAL GARDEN FIELD TRIP

Spring is a time of continual growth for plants and animals. With changes every day, spring is such an exciting time to explore nature! **Signs of Spring** is a field trip to Lincoln Memorial Garden that heightens students’ awareness of the seasonal changes in our environment as the Earth warms and deepens appreciation for the natural world.

We'll listen to the songs of migrating birds as they begin to build nests and announce courtships, smell the fragrance of newly bloomed wildflowers, feel soft moss and hard bark, look for buds of leaves, baby animals, and blooming wildflowers, and perhaps even taste a few spring wild edibles. Using our senses in order to be the best possible naturalists will guide our explorations down the trails of the Garden.

The field trip will begin with a brief introduction to Lincoln Memorial Garden in one of the Garden's council rings. A naturalist will lead a discussion about the history of the Garden, how to use our senses to learn more about nature, the sure signs of spring, and the expectations for visitors who walk the trails of the Garden.

The school group will be divided into small groups of 10 – 12 children. During your naturalist-led walk, the group will explore woodland, prairie, and wetland ecosystems of the Garden. We will conclude the hike in the Discovery Room of the Nature Center. Students will be able to explore exhibits and hands-on activities to learn more about the natural world of central Illinois. **Remember to dress for the weather!**

SUGGESTIONS FOR POST TRIP ACTIVITIES

1. Create a class mural of spring at Lincoln Memorial Garden upon returning to school. Have each child include her/his favorite memory of the field trip in a collective class artwork.
2. Young children learn so much by touching objects in their environment. Create a lesson emphasizing the tactile sense so children will be encouraged to touch and learn. Make some spring colors of play dough and give some to each child to make "texture impressions". The texture impressions activity can take place indoors or outdoors. Gather a group of materials with different textures including some natural objects. As the students experiment with making various impressions, ask them to choose a favorite one. When they make their favorite texture impression, arrange the play dough texture prints to dry and exhibit the artwork in a collective texture impression gallery. When the children view the gallery, ask them to guess what the objects were that the play dough impressions reveal. Relate the discussion to the natural objects that they felt while on their field trip.

3. There are many delicious wild edibles in the spring that can make a great nutrition lesson. Gather fresh lamb's quarter leaves, dandelion greens, and violet leaves. Make a salad for the children to try with their lunch by mixing these greens with baby greens lettuce. A delicious and nutritious lesson that focuses on the sense of taste will make lunchtime special for the class. Remind them of all the plants that are awakening in the springtime and have a discussion to see what plants they remember from the recent visit to Lincoln Memorial Garden. Did they taste any plants while on the trails that their naturalist shared with them?
4. Find a recording of common bird songs and calls at the library. Play the songs for the children and show them the picture of the bird as the song is played. Help the children to develop their auditory discrimination and reinforce the spring calls heard at the Garden.

RESOURCE LIST FOR SIGNS OF SPRING: SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Alaron, Francisco. *Laughing Tomatoes and Other Spring Poems*. Children's Book Press. 1997

Albert, Tony. *A Kid's Spring Ecojournal with Nature Activities*. Trickle Creek Books. 1997

Brandenburg, Aiki. *My Five Senses*. HarperCollins Publishers. 1962, 1995

Brenner, Barbara. *One Small Place in a Tree*. HarperCollins Publishers. 2004

Cornell, Joseph Bharat. *Sharing Nature with Children*. Dawn Publishers. 1979

Falkner, Keith. *The Five Senses*. Scholastic Books. 2002

Gladner, Lisa Jayne. *How Do You Know? A Book About the Five Senses*. Tate Publishers. 2007

Glaser, Linda. *It's Spring!* Lerner Publishers Group. 2002

Heiligman, Deborah. *From Caterpillar to Butterfly*. HarperCollins Publishers. 1996

Lindbergh, Reeve. *North Country Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Books. 1997

Morrison, Gordon. *Nature in the Neighborhood*. Houghton Mifflin Books. 2004

Pfeffer, Wendy. *From Tadpole to Frog*. HarperCollins Publishers. 1994

Piclak, Alain and Michaud, Frederic. *Seasons: Change in the Natural World*. playBac Publishers. 2009

Rockwell, Anne. *Bugs Are Insects*. HarperCollins Publishers. 2001

Sams II, Carl R. & Stoick, Jean. *Lost in the Woods*. SamsII, Inc. 2004

Showers, Paul. *The Listening Walk*. HarperCollins Publishers. 1961, 1991

Van Laan, Nancy. *Busy, Busy Moose*. Houghton Mifflin Books. 2003

Wood, A. J. *Hiding in the Woods*. Silver Dolphin Books. 2004

Ziefert, Harriet and Haley, Amanda. *You Can't Taste a Pickle With Your Ears*. Blue Apple Books. 2002