

Nature Journaling @ the Sensory Garden

Class Length:

1 hour 15 minutes

Class size:

Up to 20 participants

Class Location:

- Sensory garden or farm

Class Age:

- 4th grade and up

Materials:

- Yoga mats
- Nature Journals (1 per student)
- Writing utensils- bring an assortment of pencils, pens, and colored pencils/markers
- Clipboards (1 per student)
- Enchanted forest items

Standards:

Social Studies:

- K- G2.0.1 Identify and describe places in the immediate environment

Science:

- Make purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses S.IP.03.11, S.IP.04.11
- Share ideas about science through purposeful conversation within collaborative groups S.IA.03.12, S.IA.04.12

Class Set-up:

- Gather yoga mats
- Copy student nature journals
- Make sure you have enough clipboards and writing utensils for students

Safety Precautions:

- Watch for widow makers in the forests
- Ensure all yoga mats are clean and ready

Overview:

This class is designed to help students develop observation skills in nature. Students are encouraged to observe nature using all their senses (enchanted forest) and to learn how to record their observations in a usable and logical format. Creativity and personal choice are encouraged- there is no “right way” to nature journal.

We can learn a lot about keeping a Nature Journal from John Muir, the inspiration for, and the first president of the Sierra Club. Muir studied and cared about wilderness. He sought to preserve wild places and is considered one of the founders of the modern environmental movement. Muir wrote in his journals about the beauty he saw in nature. He also drew sketches detailing information about plants, animals, mountains, and landscapes. He used his journals to compose letters to friends, articles, and books to share his love of nature and to enlist people's support to preserve wilderness. Muir's journals gave him a wealth of recorded experience from which ten books and over two hundred articles were published.

Introduction: (5 min)

Welcome students to the class and introduce yourself. Discuss the importance of observation in science. Ask students if they can think of any famous observers (pick two of your interest and share about them) ex: John Muir and Jane Goodall.

Make sure to inform students that a Nature Journal is a place to grow their thoughts, feelings, ideas, activities, observations, and relationship with the natural world. Journaling is an opportunity to interpret inner thoughts about the natural world and to record observations to help with later study or discussion. Let them know that there is no "one right way" to journal. Also, students may say that they "can't draw well" and help them to feel comfortable with the idea that any drawing that they create is wonderful!

Journaling: (1-hour 10 min)

Do the Enchanted Forest activity going through all the senses.

Move through the nature journal with the students. Ask students to complete each part at roughly the same time so that you can ask questions and help guide their responses. For reference, each section should take the students roughly 5-10 minutes. Do not forget that the last section- the partner challenge- will take a bit longer- so budget your time to include at least 15 minutes at the end of the class for the partner drawing challenge on the back page of the nature journal.

Clean Up:

Make sure to collect any nature journals that the students do not want to keep and recycle. If using any bowls or bags with items, make sure all are returned to you. Also collect the writing utensils and pack up the yoga mats.