

The Seasons of Life within a Wetland

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Grade Levels: K-5

Subject Areas: Science, Language Arts, and Visual Arts

Science Topic: Wetlands/Nature

Summary: Students will take 2 trips to St. Anne's wetland. They will all be at the beginning of each season; fall, and spring. The students will observe the wetland and learn about how it changes throughout the seasons.

Core Content: Science: NS.K-4.1: Science as Inquiry
NS.K-4.3: Life Science

Objectives:

1. Students will learn about wetland ecosystems.
2. Students will learn about the changing of the seasons.
3. Students will be able to better identify the start of the change of seasons.

Materials:

- Copy of worksheet of questions
- All the students nature journals
- Pencils to write their answers

Procedures:

1. Students will have learned background information about the process of season changes.
2. Students will have had information on wetlands.
3. Compile a worksheet of questions for the students to answer while doing their observations at the wetland.
4. Go to St. Anne's Wetland once fall begins.
5. Once you have arrived at the wetland, have the students observe station one with the paw paw trees and its surrounding species. Point out all the species around it and have the students write down observations about everything they see in station one. Tell them to be very descriptive by using details such as colors, textures, and anything else that catches their eyes.
6. Then go to station two. Point out the sycamore and cottonwood trees. Also have the students look around to see if they find any frogs. Just as in station one, have them write down observations about everything they see in station two in their nature journals.
7. Once the students have finished observing station two, move on to station three with the pin oak trees and have them record all their observations about the area in their nature journals.
8. Next, go to station four. Station four holds many things. It tulip poplar, honeysuckle taking over, Japanese roses, poisonous may apples, and turtles may

even be spotted. Also point out to the students signs of sewer easement and succession. Inform them that the honeysuckle and Japanese rose are types of invasive species and that they are not native. Then have them record all their observations from station four in their nature journals.

9. After they are finished with station four, move on station five, the last station in the wetland. It has beech grove trees and garlic leaves. As with all the other stations, have the students record observations from station five in their nature journals.
10. Once you have gone through all the stations, give the students a worksheet with questions for fall observations to answer. Go over it before you leave the wetland so if the students need to go back and look at anything else.
11. Go back to the wetland in the winter and have the students do the same thing so that they can compare the wetland in both seasons and understand that all seasons are different.

List of Possible Questions to Ask Students: (This can be used and incorporated for all the seasons. Have the students save these questions each time, so that every time they visit, they can compare all the seasons in the wetland.)

1. What types of trees did you see? What did they look like?
2. What colors were all the leaves of the trees that you saw?
3. Which trees had the brightest colors? Which ones had the darkest colors?
4. In the fall, did any trees have leaves that stayed green?
5. Did any trees lose their leaves? (Use for fall and winter)
6. What types of animals and insects did you observe in the wetland?
7. Describe what the weather was like. How was it different from the previous season?
8. Describe the soil. How was it different from the previous season?
9. Describe the water. How was it different from the previous season?

Assessment Techniques: Students will earn participation points for the field trip. They will also get credit for their observations in their nature journals. They will also be graded on the worksheet of questions that they need to answer for every field trip. If the teaching budget is tight, this lesson can be adapted by having one field trip in the fall and then going onto the wetland website in the winter and researching information.

Resources: Activity Adapted from Project Learning Tree

American Forest Foundation, Project Learning Tree, Environmental Education Pre K-8 Activity Guide, "Signs of Fall", copyright 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004.

