



National Park Service Rock Creek Park Planetarium Education

THE SKY ABOVE US

Watch the sun set and reveal a star covered sky. Use your imagination and play connect the dots to create star pictures. Listen to stories about bears, dragons, lions, or a beautiful queen. See the night sky as though you stayed up all night long. All of these experiences, and more, are included in "The Sky Above Us."

TOPIC: Basic Astronomy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Unfortunately, many inter-city children do not have the opportunity to see the full night sky. Marred by light pollution, coming from building and street lights, only a few stars can be seen. The Rock Creek Park Planetarium enables us to display the night sky on a dome-shaped ceiling either with light pollution or free of it. The projector also controls time, so it can display stars throughout the night, slowing time down or speeding it up.

Where: Rock Creek Park Nature Center Planetarium

Length: 30 minutes

Who: Pre- K classes

Students per group: maximum of 70

Chaperones per group: 5 recommended

CURRICULUM MATCH:

Based on the District of Columbia Science Standard 6; Space Sciences;

- **Grade K:** Observe and describe patterns and cycles (day/ night, seasons)
- **Grades K- 1:** Identify day and night and distinguish between the two by naming objects seen.

Based on the Benchmark Science Standards

- **Grades K- 2:** Knows that the stars are innumerable, unevenly dispersed, and of unequal brightness
- **Grades K- 2:** Knows basic patterns of the Sun and Moon

OBJECTIVES: By the end of the program, students will be able to;

1. Contrast day and night.
2. Identify at least three objects visible at night.
3. Name at least one constellation.



THE SKY ABOVE US PRE AND POST- TRIP ACTIVITIES

Pre- trip activities: Prior to your visit to Rock Creek Park, please take a moment to read this pre- site. The pre- trip activity will help ease fears young children occasionally display in the planetarium. The post- trip activity is designed to reinforce the program by reviewing some of the constellations while also enabling the students to use their imagination to create more.

Pre- site: In the classroom, preferably just before coming to Rock Creek Park, ask the children what they know about the night sky. Explain that they are taking a field trip to a neat room that will allow them to see the night sky during the day! They can think of it as an adventure for their imaginations.

Post- site: Pass out copies of star charts and allow the children to connect the dots and recall some of the constellations presented in the program, or to create their own. Some children also enjoy creating make believe stories to go along with their constellations.