



National Park Service Rock Creek Park Environmental Education

MEET A TREE

Imagining life as a tree, discovering the importance of trees, identifying a tree blindfolded, and searching for fallen leaves with different shapes are some of the experiences students will have as they each meet a tree.

TOPICS: Trees, Senses, and Importance of Trees, Anatomy of Trees

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

People have always had a special relationship with trees. In fact, most of our life is related to trees. We breathe the oxygen trees produce with their leaves. We use the trunk and limbs of trees for numerous things including houses, furniture, paper, and baseball bats. The sap of pine trees has been used as glue or tar, while maple sap can be boiled to make syrup or sugar. Many nuts and fruits we eat also come from trees. Certain trees, like the sassafras, also hold medicinal value. Even dead and decomposing trees are useful to us because they break down into highly nutritional soil.

Anatomically, trees can easily be compared to people. Both have trunks to hold them upright. The bark of the tree serves as skin, protecting it from disease and injury. Sap, like blood, carries nutrients throughout. Roots hold the tree in place, just as feet keep us from falling over. Branches and leaves also look a lot like the tree's arms, hands and fingers waving in the wind.

Where: Rock Creek Park Nature Center

Length: 1 hour

Who: 1st-3rd graders

Students per group: maximum of 30

Chaperones per group: 5-7

CURRICULUM BASE: Based on D.C. Science Standards

GRADES 1-3- The student will identify the body organ associated with each of the five senses and use the senses to observe and describe common objects.

GRADE 2- Share information and collected data by a variety of means (talking, drawing, and writing)

GRADE 3- Discuss observations through dialogue and sharing sessions.

GRADES 1-3- Observe and describe similarities and differences among living things.

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

1. Describe a tree using their senses.
2. Identify three similarities/ differences between trees and people.
3. Name one way people use trees.

SAFETY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MESSAGES:

1. Learn to identify and avoid Poison Ivy.
2. Do not pick live plants.



MEET A TREE

Pre- And Post- Trip Activities

Pre- trip activities: Prior to your visit to Rock Creek Park, please take a moment to read this presite. The pre- trip activity will encourage the students' natural curiosity of trees. The post- trip activities are designed to reinforce the program by first reconnecting the students individually to the tree they studied and then by working together as a group to discuss the importance of trees.

Pre- Trip Activity: Imaginary Journey

Ask the students to write or talk about how they believe it would feel to live as a tree. Encourage them to use their imagination. How would it feel when it rained or thundered? How would the sun feel? Or the wind? What would they see on their branches? Down below? What would they hear?

Post- Trip Activities

1. **I Remember**

Ask the students to draw a picture of the tree they adopted while at the park.

2. **Tree List**

As a group, create a list of different things made from trees. Include anything that is made of wood. Using a roll of toilet paper or adding machine tape, your class can create a long list that can be posted in the classroom.