

Summer Salmon Institute 2014
Unit plan

Building Respectful Intimacy with Nature – by Kyra Rice

For 1st - 3rd grades (small groups of no more than 14 students) Intended for beginning of the year garden program.

Main objectives: **Building skills and awareness to interact with nature and all life with respect, including each other!**

lesson 1: **Agreement Paper**

materials: butcher paper, colored markers

Objective: Building trust and respect

- a. begin with a quick round of hands asking students how they like to be treated and how others should also be treated.
- b. Define the word respect. Ask about how other living things should be treated.
- c. Ask students if they are living things (usually gets a laugh.) Are we a part of nature? Have each student point to another living thing they can see from where they are sitting in the garden. Notice if they left anything out and ask if it is a living thing.
- b. Each student will be asked to write on the paper a suggestion for the agreement paper. For the younger grades teacher can assist with writing. This is a way for them to begin the process of creating a culture of respect for all life in the garden and where they know they too will be respected.

Lesson 2: **Walk Like a Deer Raspberry Pickin'**

Materials: raspberry, blackberry bushes, grapes, even rosehips can work)

Objective: Using senses to observe and gather food

Describe how carefully and quietly deer walk through tall grasses and brush and why they do this (predators).

(Sadly our garden is on a very busy street corner in Oakland and 'deer ears' just would not work. Otherwise I would suggest deer ears here too!)

Have 1/2 the group of students walk like a deer through the garden to pick raspberries as carefully as a deer might:

-use eyes

-be gentle (remind students they are not very careful the raspberries will let them know as they have thorns that can poke them!)

-watch out for predators

The other half observes and reports to first group who they would have eaten if they were a mountain lion.

Why? Prompt with following questions: Did the deer get poked? Did they push other deer to get more raspberries? Were they making any sounds? What did getting poked show you about that deer? Students switch rolls.

Lesson 3: **Leaf in a Bag** and **Know Your Rock**

Materials: brown paper bag, paper, markers, leaf sprig

Objective: Using the senses to build an intimacy with nature

a. Know Your Rock

Have enough rocks for each student. One at a time students will close their eyes and pick a rock. They must not open their eyes. Prompt them to smell it, touch it to their cheek if they like, feel its texture, shape, surfaces, angles, flatness, size. collect the rocks. Eyes stay closed!! Send the rocks down the line of students and let them try to identify their rock. If it is not your rock pass it down the line.

b. Leaf In a Bag

Put a leaf or two with some stem attached in a brown bag. Give each student the opportunity to feel, smell, and examine what is in the bag without looking at it. Again ask about texture, size, smell, scale (compared to a finger or thumb). After each student has had a chance to examine the leaf without looking they will draw it. When students have completed their drawings pull out the leaf and let them compare to their drawings and amend their drawings if they like. Ask students where the leaf came from. How do they know?

Lesson 4: **“AWAY” - Garbage Count**

Materials: large brown paper grocery bags, garden gloves, clip boards, pencils, hand out, white board and markers

Objectives: developing awareness and ownership of what we throw “away” and where it ends up; data collection; learning what are recyclable, compostable and non- compostable items.

a. Walking in and around the gardens at the school we will use our eyes and pointing fingers to point out what does not belong in the gardens. For the younger grades you can model by picking up a piece of trash and asking “does this belong in the garden?” Each student will get a brown paper bag to collect garbage in teams of two for 5 – 8 minutes. Students return to the group with what they have collected and tally how many of each item they found on the hand out. (The trash at our school is pretty consistently plastic sippy straws and their plastic wrappers, plastic candy wrappers, milk cartons, plastic juice pouches, plastic micro toys and the hand out can be prepared accordingly.) Look at results and then ask which items are compostable? Which are non- compostable? Which ones can be recycled? Students will take all compostables to the green bins, all non-compostables to the waste bins and any thing that can be recycled to the recycle bin. Ask students where they think all this garbage would go if we had not picked it up. (As a primer for watershed Unit)

Suggestions for follow-up: Follow this unit with a watershed unit as the last question asked in the garbage count lesson prepped them for it. Suggested lesson to begin with would be the crumpled paper using wet erase markers to draw in the low folds in the paper where the water would flow if it was a natural landscape. Spray the paper after ‘streams and creeks’ are drawn in to see where the water flows.