



Nature is All Around

Grade: *Preschool* | Time: *45 minutes*

Standards: *CD-SC1.4a*

Supplies:

Puppet show:

Characters:

- Tonya
- Eartha
- Madame Squirrel
- Old Man Spruce
- Oli the Earthworm

Props:

- A hat for Tonya
- A few acorns or pinecones
- Two leaves (real or laminated)
- Ruler
- Word Signs: sight, touch, hearing, taste and touch

Garden Activity:

- Clean vegetables (ideally from garden)
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Serving cups or napkins

Garden Connection:

Students visit the garden to use their senses to observe their environment

Overview

Students use their senses to learn about and discover nature through participating in a puppet show

Essential Questions

What are my senses?

How can I use my senses to explore nature?

Engage

Perform "Nature is All Around!" Puppet Show

Explore

Leaf or pine cone observation game

Explain

Students practice using their senses to become increasingly aware of their natural surroundings

Environmental Stewardship

Students use their senses to observe the school garden and notice what needs care (watering, harvesting, weeding, etc).

Evaluate

Are students engaged and on task? Are they answering questions and showing enthusiasm for this learning experience? Are they using vocabulary words and understanding the five senses?

Targeted Concepts and Vocabulary

Targeted Concepts

- Nature is all around me!
- Using my senses helps me learn about and discover nature.
- I like learning in nature's classroom.

Vocabulary

- hearing
- sight
- smell
- taste
- touch

Opening

- Organize children around the puppet stage.
- Briefly explain that ‘nature is all around’ on the school site.
- Also explain that using the five senses are important tools of a scientist. Briefly review the standard, “I use my sense to learn about things” and explain the five senses. State, ‘the puppets will tell us more about nature and using our senses. Are you ready to explore gifts from nature? Great! Let’s start by watching the puppet show!’
- Introduce a couple of puppet show rules:
 - o *What should you do if the puppets ask a question or ask you to do something? (answer them!)*
 - o *When the puppets are talking should you talk? ‘No!’*
 - o *Is it okay to stand up during the puppet show? ‘No! Stay seated with your hands in your lap.’*
 - o Let’s use our eyes and ears to watch our puppet show!!!

Mini-Lesson

ACTIVITY: PUPPET SHOW – NATURE IS ALL AROUND!

Procedure:

1. Two instructors are needed to lead this activity. One instructor performs with the puppets behind the stage. The other instructor is in front of the stage and acts as an excited student who is exploring her school grounds. The instructor in front of the stage will interact both with the puppets and the young learners, asking for their help in acting out different motions and finding certain things related to the puppet show. The instructor in front of the stage can read from a script on a clipboard and the other instructor’s script will be hung behind the puppet stage.
2. Perform the Puppet Show. See attached script.
3. Discussion / Assessment: Follow-up questions:
 - o Who did Tonya meet on her school yard?
 - o What senses did she learn about?
 - o Was there any nature on her school site?
 - o What senses did Old Man Spruce tree talk about to observe leaves? Madame Squirrel? EarthwormVocabulary: Use ‘Word’ signs to review key and the context in which they were used.

Tips for Puppet Show Success:

1. Puppetry is an art form of movement. Keep your puppets moving and expressive! Make sure the puppets are up at the edge of the stage closest to the children so that they are visible.
2. Speak LOUD - louder than you think is necessary, especially when performing outside.
3. To the instructor / actor in front of the stage—move amongst the children, interacting with them. The more excited you are, the more in tune the children will be.
4. Change your voice to different styles / accents with each different character—choose these ahead of time and practice them. They can be as simple as talking in a deep voice or an exaggerated southern accent.

Work Session

ACTIVITY 1: GIFTS FROM NATURE OBSERVATION ACTIVITY: LEAF OR PINECONE OBSERVATION GAME

Preparations for activity: Gather leaves (or pine cones) and scatter in the area of school site where children can safely search for and collect them.

Procedure:

1. Gather your group in a circle. Tell them that to be good nature explorers it is important to be very good observers. In this activity they will use their sense of sight to look closely at and observe some nature objects.
2. In the middle of the circle, place a leaf (or pinecone) under a cloth. Tell children that when you lift the cloth you want them to look closely at the object. As you remove the cloth, ask the children what they see. Hold it up and discuss what makes it special. Refer to its color, size, stem, shape and anything else that you observe about it.

3. Tell the young learners that they will have the opportunity to find a leaf or pinecone and bring it back to the circle. Set parameters for how far they can roam to locate the object. Tell them to collect just one leaf or pinecone and come back to the circle.
4. Children will observe its color, its shape, size and more. Prompt them with ideas such as: 'Does it have sharp points? What color is it? Is it bigger than or smaller than your hand?' Do you see how important it is to be good observers, using your senses to explore nature on our school site? We will have a lot of fun learning in nature and in our garden!"

EXTENTION: Children can place their pinecone or leaf in a bin. Pass the bin around and let each child select a different leaf. Provide time for the children to explore their new leaf with their senses and talk about what senses they are using to explore their new leaf as well as what is different about their new object.

ACTIVITY 2: USING YOUR SENSES TO EXPLORE A RADISH (or other available vegetable)

1. Gather your children around the garden bed with radishes (or other veggie) that you will harvest for this activity. Alternately, provide store bought veggies.
2. Harvest the vegetables. What part of the plant is a radish (other veggie)?
3. Harvest enough radishes so each pair of children can investigate one. Explain that we will use our senses to explore the radishes. In this activity we will use **sight, touch and smell**. (Hold up the word signs that correspond with each sense.)
4. Distribute radishes (one per pair of children). They can place them on the ledge around the garden bed. Tell children we will start by using our sense of touch to investigate the radish. How does it feel? List the words that the children use in the Class Journal.
5. Distribute hand lenses (one per child or one per 2 children). Tell children we will start by using our sense of sight to investigate the radish. Allow each child to look closely at the radish with a hand lens. Pose questions such as: What do you see? What color is it? What shape is it? List the words that the children use in the Class Journal.
6. Next ask the children to smell their radish. How does a radish smell? List the words that the children use in the Class Journal.
7. Review the senses again. What senses did we not use to investigate the radish? (**sight, touch and smell**).

Closing

Review the standard and what they learned today about using their senses. "Our standard today is 'I use my senses to learn about things. How did we use our senses to learn about nature? What did you learn about your senses?"

SONG: Sun, Soil, Water, Air from [Singing in Our Garden](#) by [Banana Slug String Band](#) helps with reflection and reinforces key concepts from the lesson.

Adaptations/Modifications:

For students who have delays or are younger, simplify the vocabulary used. Use fewer words, summarize things multiple times, and use proximity to help keep them engaged.

Assessment:

Observe children participating in observation activity; are they engaged and on task? Are they answering your questions and showing enthusiasm for this outdoor learning experience?

Note the children's use of the vocabulary words presented in the puppet show and their understanding of the five senses.

Classroom or Garden follow-up:

Children can do a leaf rubbing or picture of their leaf. When they finish the drawings, the group can try to match the drawings to the other's children's leaves. Nature is All Around! PUPPET SHOW

PUPPET SHOW

"NATURE IS ALL AROUND!"

Characters:

- Tonya - preschool age girl, who has to go outside and use her senses on her schoolyard
- Eartha - A 'mother nature' character who demonstrates how nature is all around us
- Madame Squirrel - she collects acorns and pinecones and talks about sense of taste
- Old Man Spruce - he introduces sense of sight and touch
- Oli - a worm who lives in the soil; he introduces senses of hearing and smell

Props:

- A hat for Little Tonya
- A few acorns and pinecones to spread in front of the stage
- Two leaves (real leaves or laminated leaves)
- Ruler (for Tonya to measure leaves)
- Word Signs: sight, touch, hearing, taste and touch

Note: Consider holding up a few 'word' signs when the selected vocabulary words are mentioned during the puppet show.

PUPPET SHOW SCRIPT

Tonya: (*walks onto the puppet stage looking around the schoolyard trying to "find nature"*) My teacher brought us outside today for a special Nature lesson! And I'm so excited! I've only ever been outside during recess. And now, I'm going to learn about something called nature and will observe it with my senses!! But, I'm kinda confused, because I don't know where I can find nature. (*wanders around a little bit, looking confused*).

Eartha: Yoo-hoo, Tonya! Over here!

Tonya: (*looking around, a little excited*) Who said my name?!

Eartha: It's me Eartha — and I'm here to tell you that nature is all around you, even in the schoolyard. If you look around, I'm sure you will find some trees, squirrels and maybe even a worm in the soil! They live outside right here in your schoolyard. I bet if you meet some of them, you could learn how to use your senses to observe them for your assignment!

Tonya: Really?! Oh Wow!

Eartha: Have fun and go explore!!

Tonya: I never realized that there was so much to learn about out here, I wonder when I'll see a tree, squirrel or a worm? I don't really know where to look. (*Wanders around, weave in and out of the children sitting in the audience, looking for a sign of nature*).

Old Man Spruce: Hey Tonya! It's me! Old Man Spruce! You don't have to look very far, I'm the tree that you pass everyday when you're running for the playground.

Tonya: (*walks toward the puppet stage*). Oh hi Mr. Spruce!! Are you part of nature?

Old Man Spruce: Yes, I surely am! And I will show you how I work. Children can you stand up and help out Little Tonya? (*Have all the students stand up to act out being a tree*)

Tonya: (*Help the students stand up, and then lead the actions that Old Man Spruce talks about*)

Old Man Spruce: Very good! Now, I want you to spread your legs out wide; these are your roots sinking down into the ground to drink some water like big straws. Oh you look so wonderful! Now, I want you to raise your arms and hands into the sky. These are your leaves, (*wiggle fingers*) and they are reaching up tall toward the sun to get some sugar. We get our food from the sun!! Very good, you make some beautiful trees! You may sit down.

Tonya: (*Help the students back to their seats.*) So, trees are part of nature! Can I use my senses to learn about a tree? My teacher said that I need to do that.

Old Man Spruce: Well now, you can use your senses to learn about leaves! Here take these (*hands Tonya two leaves*). What do they **feel** like, Are they soft, rough, smooth? Can you **see** what color they are?

Tonya: Hmm . . . (*spends a moment feeling and looking at the leaves*). They feel rough and look brown (*or other color*)

Old Man Spruce: Very good! You are already learning so much about nature. I just remembered, you should go talk to my friend Madame Squirrel! She makes her nest in my branches and eats my pine cones! She knows a lot about senses and nature. Go look around the schoolyard, and I am sure that you will find her. Good luck Little Tonya! (*exits the stage*)

Tonya: Oh boy, oh boy! A squirrel in the schoolyard! I wonder where I will find her? Wanders around the stage area, looking out for *Madame Squirrel*.

Madame Squirrel: *Talks fast and excitedly, hyper little squirrel.* Over here Tonya, Old Man Spruce told me you were coming to use your senses to see me and learn about me. Is it because of my beautiful bushy tail? Or because I am an expert at finding and eating acorns and pine cones? You make me feel so special!

Tonya: Well, ummm.... It's because my teacher told me that I need to use my senses to learn about nature.

Madame Squirrel: Oh phooey! One day someone will notice me for my beauty!! Well, would you like to help me look for acorns and pinecones and put them in my basket? It would be most helpful!

Tonya: Oh sure, I would love to! Would you like to help me look for acorns? (*Ask students, and then have them help find some acorns to put in Mme Squirrel's basket. Four or five acorns and pinecones can be close to the stage and one or two children can come up and find them.*)

Madame Squirrel: Oh thank you! This will be most helpful so that I can have a full belly through the cold winter! But now, there are delicious radishes (*refer to a veggie that is available*) growing on my garden. I am going to **eat** some of these and serve them to all the other animals who live here. Would you like some Tonya?

Tonya: I will use my sense of taste as I eat them! Oh these are so yummy! I love using my sense of taste!

Squirrel: Your senses are important gifts from nature!

Tonya: Madame Squirrel, I used my sense of **sight** and **touch** to explore leaves with Old man spruce. And now I am using my sense of taste to eat the radishes. That makes three senses. Can you tell me about other senses I can use to explore nature?

Mme. Squirrel: Well, I am pretty busy right now. But I bet Oli Earthworm can help you. He lives in the soil and is pretty smart! I must be off now, lots of food to gather for the winter. (*she exits below the stage*)

Tonya: I wonder where I will find Oli Earthworm? I wish I had asked Madame Squirrel before she scurried off.

Oli: Hey!! Did I hear my name? I'm Oli the Earthworm, I am down here! I live down here underground.

Tonya: Oh! Hi there Oli - what's an earthworm?

Oli: I'm a creature that lives in the soil, eating dead plants and pooping out soil! I'm sure important because without me, the trees and plants wouldn't have enough nutrients to live. And nutrients are kind of like vitamins for plants.

Tonya: Oh! That does sound important. My mom makes me take a vitamin every morning... So you're part of nature too.

Oli: Say! Would you like to learn how I get around underground without any arms or legs?

Tonya: Sure! *Get down on the students level, and have all preschoolers lay on their tummies to squirm.*

Oli: All right! Now, get down on the ground, and wiggle around, it's pretty fun! Give it a try.

Tonya: You're right, that is fun! Get all of the children back onto their bottoms. All right, now I have a question for you. My teacher said we need to use our senses to learn about nature on the school yard. I have learned about three senses. I learned about sight and touch from Old Man Spruce tree. And I learned about taste from Madame Squirrel. She was eating some acorns and said they were delicious. Do you know anything about senses?

Oli: We use the sense of smell all the time. Things smell great - dead leaves, animal poop, bugs, and worms. Umm! Us worms smell great! And we also use the sense of hearing all the time. I have to listen closely to make sure that creatures, like birds, are not nearby because they like to eat me. That reminds me, I gotta go! I don't want to be here when a hungry bird comes around. Bye! *(he bops up and then drops below the stage)*

Tonya: Wow! I never realized there was so much nature right outside my classroom at school. A tree, a worm, and a squirrel. And I learned all about my five senses! I hope I get a chance to use my senses while I am outside in my Nature Club. *Runs off the stage, yelling "I am so excited!"*

THE END