

Wild About Winter

Welcome to the natural world of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods Nature Centers! Below is a guide to pre and post field trip activities that you can do with your students either indoors or on your school grounds. These activities will greatly enhance your students' field trip experience and are also a lot of fun!

We look forward to your students' arrival and are excited to provide them with a fun and educational experience. If you have any questions, please call us at 731-3140.

Suggested Grade Level(s): Pre-K - 1st

Program Objectives:

- Students will learn some of the physical signs that winter is coming.
- Students will begin to understand some of the ways animals survive the winter.
- Students will be taught about migrating, hibernating, and ways that animals stay active during the winter season.

Pre- and Post-Visit Activity Suggestions

Snowflake Mobiles

Suggested Timing: Pre-Trip

Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors

Materials: one foot-long stick for each student (sticks may be larger), white paint, white scrap paper, thread, scissors

Procedure: Dab white paint along the top edge of stick to represent snow. Let dry. Fold a piece of scrap paper in half and then fold it in half again. Keeping the inner, folded corner as the center, fold again and possibly a fourth time. Cut designs in the paper, making sure to leave some paper between each cut. Unfold to see your snowflake. Create as many snowflakes as possible, then tie them to the stick using different lengths of thread.

First Snowflake Chant

Suggested Timing: Pre-Trip or Post-Trip

Time: 10 minutes

Location: Indoors

Materials: snow

Chant: "A snowflake falls this wintry day, I welcome you and shout, 'Hooray!'"

Suet Recipe

Suggested Timing: Post-Trip

Time: 45 minutes

Location: Indoors and Outdoors

Materials: flour, birdseed, corn meal, peanut butter, shortening

Procedure: Have students mix up the following ingredients: 1 part flour, 1 part bird seed, 3 parts corn meal, 1 part peanut butter and 1 part shortening. The best way to mix this is with your hands! Make a picture recipe to have on the worktable so they can do

this independently. This mixture can be put in mesh bags (onion or orange) or on pinecones. Hang the mesh bags and pine cones from the trees with yarn. Tree branch feeders can be hung with a hook that will fit over a tree branch. Go on a walk and hang up your feeders. Watch and listen for birds! (Peanut butter can be left out of the recipe if any of the students are allergic to it.)

Jackwax (Maple Snow Taffy)

Suggested Timing: Post-Trip

Time: 45 minutes

Location: Indoors or Outdoors

Materials: maple syrup (start with about 1/2 cup), candy thermometer, pot, stove, tray of clean snow

Procedure: Cook syrup over low heat, stirring constantly until temperature hits soft-ball candy stage on candy thermometer (234 °F to 240 °F). Immediately drizzle cooked syrup over tray of snow (or outside on clean snow). Syrup will harden almost immediately to taffy-like substance and can be picked up with fingers to be eaten.

Natural Bird Feeders

Materials:

Pinecone Feeder: pinecones, suet or peanut butter, birdseed, string

Dried Fruit Feeder: dried fruit (figs, apples, apricots, etc.), needle, floss

Sunflower Feeder: sunflowers, string

Procedure:

Pinecone Feeder: Take a pinecone and spread suet or peanut butter on its sides. Roll it in birdseed and hang it on a tree branch (make sure there's a nearby perch for the birds).

Dried Fruit Feeder: String dried fruit using a blunt needle and dental floss. Drape garland on tree.

Sunflower Feeder: Hang dried sunflower heads upside-down. The birds will peck out the tasty seeds.

Winter Mural

Materials: winter mural that includes pond, woods, prairie, trees with holes; animal cards with pictures of hawk, blue jay, woodpecker, mouse, squirrel, woodchuck, beaver, raccoon, skunk, weasel, fox, rabbit, deer, frog, salamander, toad, snake, turtle, butterfly, honeybee, etc.

Procedure: Each student takes a turn choosing an animal card and should tape it to the winter mural in an appropriate habitat for that animal and explain why that place was chosen (availability of food and/or shelter, etc.) Designate a place on the mural for hibernating animals (i.e. frogs will hibernate at the bottom of the pond, turtles will hibernate underground) and for migrating animals (i.e. a corner of the sky for birds that migrate and monarch butterflies that fly to Mexico).

Resources

Acorn Naturalists: Resources for the Trail and Classroom. To order this educational resource catalogue for environmental and science education call 1-800-422-8886. To look at these resources on-line go to <http://www.acornnaturalists.com>.

LaChapelle, Delores, and Janet Bourque. Earth Festivals: Seasonal Celebrations for Everyone Young and Old. Silverton, CO: Finn Hill Arts, 1976.

Lingelbach, Jenepher, ed. Hands-On Nature Activities. Woodstock, VT: Vermont

Institute of Natural Science, 1986.

Sheehan, Kathryn, and Mary Waidner. *Earth Child: Games, Stories, Activities, Experiments and Ideas About Living Lightly on Planet Earth*. Tulsa: Council Oak Books, 1991.

Stokes, Donald and Lillian Stokes. *A Guide to Nature in Winter*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co. 1998.

Selected Stories

Bauer, Caroline F. *Midnight Snowman*. New York: Atheneum, 1987.

Falconer, Elizabeth, and Sara Coleridge. *January Brings the Snow: A Seasonal Hide and Seek*. London: Orchard Books, 1989.

Singer, Marilyn. *Turtle in July*. London: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1989. (Animals' viewpoint of seasons)

Strichartz, Naomi. *The Wisewoman's Sacred Wheel of the Year*. Spencer, NY: Cranehill Press, 1988.

Yolen, Jane. *Owl Moon*. New York: Philomel Books. 1987

Revised 01/22/04