



Nature Nuggets: Tall Tree Tales

Audience: 3-7 year olds and parents/guardians.

Theme: Trees have many tales to tell about how they live.

Materials:

Blanket for sitting
'Dirty Gert' storybook
Tree Song lyrics
Tree outlines for rubbing
Items for rubbings (bark pieces, leaves)
Crayons

INTRODUCTION

Ask the kids if they like trees. Take some examples of why they do or don't like trees. Explain that today we are going to learn about what makes trees so cool and get to know some of the trees around us. Read "Dirty Gert" storybook and share the pictures with the kids.

What makes a tree?

Trees have many parts to them, so let's learn about them. Sing the "Tree Song" with the kids. It goes to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus" which they probably know and will be able to pick up quickly if they don't. Be silly and include a sound or motion as appropriate to engage the kids. Encourage the kids to participate!

"Tree Song"

The roots of the tree go slurp, slurp, slurp. Slurp, slurp, slurp. Slurp, slurp, slurp. The roots of the tree go slurp, slurp, slurp all around the world.
The trunk of the tree grows tall and strong, tall and strong.... all around the world.
The bark of the tree protects the tree, protects the tree...all around the world.
The branches of the tree reach toward the sky, toward the sky...all around the world.
The leaves on the tree make food, food, food; food, food, food...all around the world.
The seeds of the tree go twirl and plunk, twirl and plunk...all around the world.
The wind in the trees blows back and forth, back and forth...all around the world.
The sight of the trees makes me happy and free, happy and free...all around the world.

This is an opportunity to ask the kids what trees make them feel and think of.

Ask the children:

- *Do trees make you happy?*
- *Do they make you feel small?*
- *Do they make you think of something special?*
- *Do you like the way they smell?*

Ask these questions and others to get them to talk about what trees mean to them. You can share what you like about trees and why they are special to you.

ACTIVITY

Build a Tree

Now that we know what the parts of the tree are and what they do, let's build our own tree! Use the kids to build a tree by making them into the parts of the tree and organizing them into a "tree". Use a few kids for each part depending on how many kids are there. If they are uncomfortable participating in such close quarters they don't have to.

- The trunk supports the tree so it grows tall and strong: have the kids stand tall in a close circle facing out.
- The tree grows branches for its leaves: have another ring of kids stand around the trunk, facing out with their arms up and out.
- The branches grow leaves to make food, provide shade, and look pretty: have the "branches" spread their fingers out and wiggle them.
- The trunk needs bark to protect it: have another ring of kids around the trunk, facing out. Have them link arms for protection (if they can).
- The trunk needs roots so it doesn't fall over and can get water to drink: have kids lay on the ground, face up, with their feet at the "trunk" and arms out.
- Trees produce seeds to grow more trees: have the rest of the kids scatter themselves around and near the tree and crouch into a ball or lay on the ground.

Compliment the kids on what a beautiful tree they make! Call them back to sitting on the blanket, and ask them what their favorite part of a tree is. What animals use trees? How? Talk about birds, insects, deer, squirrels, and all the other animals that use trees and how they use them.

Meet a tree

Time to go meet some of the trees here with us today! Point out a few trees nearby and invite the parents and kids to go explore them. Ask them to think about the following questions:

- *Look around, are there any animals?*
- *What does the bark feel like?*
- *Are there leaves or needles?*
- *What does it smell like?*
- *What is on the ground beneath the tree?*
- *What kind of tree is it?*
- *Do you have a tree like this in your yard at home?*

Give some time for exploring and allow them to share with the group afterwards.

CRAFT

Make a tree

Give each child a sheet with a tree outline on it. Using crayons and either the trees they explored a minute ago or other loose items tree items (bark pieces and leaves) and have them color their trees with rubbing marks. They can take their tree rubbing art home with them.

CONCLUSION

Ask the kids if they had fun learning about trees today. Do they think trees are interesting? Explain that trees are a very important part of our planet, they help so many animals live, they provide shade, they look beautiful, and they clean our air so we can breathe fresh air, they keep our skies blue. Thank the kids for coming to learn more about trees and encourage them to spend time with the trees near their home.