If Only Trees Could Talk
IF ONLY TREES COULD TALK
By
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UNIT CONCEPT: Learning to identify trees and understanding the economical, environmental and aesthetic value of trees is the motivating force in discovering what events and people make a community unique.

SUB-CONCEPTS:
1) Trees can be identified and are valuable economically, environmentally, and aesthetically.
2) Counting tree rings sets the time theme to use in discovering the events that help to develop a community.
3) Counting tree rings sets the time theme to use in discovering the people whose lives have made a difference in the development of a community.

INTRODUCTORY LESSON:
1) Give Pre-test (attached page # 1)
2) Read The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein. Discuss what the tree gives.
3) Ask everyone to share the name of a favorite tree and why.
4) Play tape - Earthy Tunes - Mary Miche
   You Big Trees, Bugs in Your Bark, and What is a Tree?
5) Read: Third grade Social Studies text - Communities
   What is a Community? (pages 22-25)
   Roxaboxen (pages 26-37) (A story about children making their own make-believe community.)

SUB-CONCEPT I: Trees can be identified and are valuable economically, environmentally, and aesthetically.

A. Identifying Trees
1) NAME THAT TREE - # 68 - Project Learning Tree (PLT) (Students learn to identify trees by observing different features and shapes.)
2) THE CLOSER YOU LOOK - # 61 - PLT (Students observe structure and function of trees.)
3) TREE FACTORY - # 63 - PLT (Students label parts of a tree and see how a tree works like a factory.)
4) Map your school ground.
   a) Read - Communities - Read A Map (pages 46-47)
   b) Make a map of your school - locating various trees.
   c) Ask a local nursery person, tree expert or forester to walk around the school with you - identifying trees.
   d) Locate problem areas (diseased tree, need for more trees, etc.)
   e) Assessment - Homework assignment - Ask children to make a map of their home or neighborhood and mark the location of trees. Name as many of the trees as they can.
5) Visit a local park or arboretum.
   a) HOW BIG IS YOUR TREE? - # 67 - PLT (Children measure trees and become familiar with similar and different structures of trees.)
   b) Read and discuss - Communities - Adopt A Park - (pages 132-133)

B. Economic Value of Trees
1) Read - Communities - What We Need - Community Resources (pages 53-54)
2) TREE TREASURES - # 12 - PLT (Identify the many tree products we depend on in our daily lives.)
3) Read and discuss - Communities - Products and Services in Your Community - (pages 234-241)
4) Read - Forests: Trees and Woods by Tim and Mary Livingston.
   a) Students list as many things as they can that come from trees in the community.
   b) Chart and make a bulletin board of the things that come from trees in your community.
   c) Assessment - Read - Communities - Products Map - (page 120) Students make a products map of trees in the community.
5) MAKE YOUR OWN PAPER - # 51 - PLT

C. Environmental Value of Trees
1) Read The Lorax by Dr. Seuss.
2) TREES FOR MANY REASONS - # 89 - PLT (Story shows the importance of conserving trees.)
3) CAN DO - Project Wild - (pages 322-323) (Plan to improve the school ground by planting a tree. Students conduct research and make plans to accomplish the project.)
   a) Review school ground maps of trees made earlier. Decide where there is a need for a tree.
   b) Read and discuss - Communities - (180-181) How to Solve a Problem
c) PLANT A TREE - #31 - PLT - (After learning the value of tree products, students also see the benefits of tree shade and beauty.)

4) Read - When Dad Cuts Down the Chestnut Tree by Pam Ayres.

5) Assessment - Students draw a picture showing how the tree they planted will benefit the school in years to come.

D. Aesthetic Value of Trees

1) Read - The People Who Hugged The Trees - adapted by Deborah Le Rose.

2) THREE CHEERS FOR TREES - #30 - PLT - (Students learn the benefits provided by trees and the value they add to peoples' lives.)

3) Read - Have You Seen Trees? by Joanne Oppenheim.

4) ADOPT A TREE - #21 - (Children adopt a local tree and by spending time observing a tree become aware of the aesthetic value a tree provides.)

5) Assessment - POETS TREE - # 5 - PLT - (Students write and share a poem to express knowledge, beliefs and feelings about trees.)

6) Students will make a journal. Use paper made earlier as a cover. Write and draw anything they choose.

SUB-CONCEPT II: Counting tree rings sets the time theme to use in discovering the events that help to develop a community.

A. Homework Assignment (attached pages 2 and 3)

1) Students list three important events in their life. (Parents can help.)

2) Students ask a grandparent or senior citizen to list three to five important events in their life.

B. Classroom Lessons

1) Give each child a "slice" of a tree for counting rings. (These may be purchased from Thomas Catchpole (559) 855-2194) A paper with rings to count may be substituted. (attached page 4)

TREES COOKIES - # 76 - PLT - (Students observe environmental and historical changes by viewing a cross section of a tree trunk.)

2) Read - Communities - (page 61) - A Time Line, (page 76) - Time Line of Any Town History, and (pages 154-161) - Communities Change Yet Stay the Same.

3) Ask students -

a) Is there any way we could find out about things that happened in our community a long time ago?

b) Are there living things in our community that were alive over one hundred years ago? (trees)

c) What if these trees could talk? What could they tell us?

d) (Additional questions if appropriate)

What trees lined our streets fifty to one hundred years ago?

Are any trees still here?

Did wood from trees help people with transportation?

Were any tools or machines made of wood?

How did wood from these trees help people to stay warm or run factories?

4) Read The Tree of Time by Kayla Baron. Discuss the time line.

5) Read and discuss - Communities - (pages 196-201) - Every Community Has A History and (reference pages R2-R15) Lists skills needed and how to find information, research, interviews, etc.

6) Have senior citizens come to class and tell stories of early events in the community.

7) Assessment - Make a time line around the classroom. Post the important events that helped make this community what it is today. Use old photographs where possible. Talk to local newspaper about reporting class project.

SUB-CONCEPT III: Counting tree rings sets the time theme to use in discovering people whose lives have made a difference in the development of a community.

A. Homework Assignment -

1) Review - Communities - (reference pages R2-R15) Discovering the History of Your Community.

2) Make a list of the names of five people important in your community. (Hint - What are the names of schools, buildings, streets, parks, etc. ?)

3) Discuss and list names and how we can find out why these names were given to these places and things.

B. Classroom Lessons -

1) Read Johnny Appleseed. Discuss why this story is so well known.

2) PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS - # 74 - PLT - (Students recognize and understand the importance of people in their community.)
3) Invite members of the historical society and/or people who have made a difference in the community to come to class and speak.
4) THEN AND NOW - # 40 - PLT - (Students will better understand how people affect our lives and the environment in which we live.)
5) Assessment - Write a story choosing one person who has made a difference in your community...telling why you would like to know him/her. Write any additional questions you would like to ask that person.

FINAL ASSESSMENT:

Preparation: TO BE A TREE - # 62 - PLT - (Students will make their own tree costumes, selecting trees from the community, becoming even more aware of a tree's structure.)

Students will write their own play using the information they have acquired. They can perform the play for their parents and for the senior citizens and other people who have made a difference in the community...honoring their roles and influence.

Play title: IF ONLY TREES COULD TALK

Setting: A family is walking among the trees of the community, commenting on their beauty, etc. One member of the family comments, "Think of all these trees have seen and observed in their lifetime. I wonder what stories these trees could tell if only they could talk." The family exits. Then each tree, in turn, faces the audience, identifies it's tree by name, and tells an item or two that he/she has learned about the events, people and contributions made by the trees of the community.
PRE TEST - IF ONLY TREES COULD TALK

1. Name five trees growing in our community and tell why each is important.
   1) ____________________________
   2) ____________________________
   3) ____________________________
   4) ____________________________
   5) ____________________________

2. Name five events that have helped to make our community what it is.
   1) ____________________________
   2) ____________________________
   3) ____________________________
   4) ____________________________
   5) ____________________________

3. Name five people who have made a difference in the life of our community.
   1) ____________________________
   2) ____________________________
   3) ____________________________
   4) ____________________________
   5) ____________________________
Name - ________________________________

Three Important Events in My Life

Make a time line by writing the year you were born on the first line and ending with this calendar year. Think of three events in your life and write each event near the year it happened.

Sample: (Create sample with class before sending home)

_________ __________ _______ __________ _______ __________ _______ _______
Name - 

Important Events in the Life of ____________________________

Ask a grandparent or a senior member of your community to list three to five important events that happened in their lifetime. The year can be listed if it is known.

1) __________________________________________________________

2) __________________________________________________________

3) __________________________________________________________

4) __________________________________________________________

5) __________________________________________________________
Counting Tree Rings

Count the rings in this tree to find its age. The tree was _______ years old.
Name - ____________________________

People

Make a list of the names of five important people in your community.  
(Hint: The names of schools, buildings, streets, parks, etc. can give you clues.)

1) __________________________________________

2) __________________________________________

3) __________________________________________

4) __________________________________________

5) __________________________________________

Name five people important in your life.

1) __________________________________________

2) __________________________________________

3) __________________________________________

4) __________________________________________

5) __________________________________________
"Forest Secrets"

The forest talks,
The forest sings
Snapping twigs,
Brushing wings,
Doves are cooing,
Owls are whooing,
But I can't see
Who's doing things.

The forest talks.
The forest sings.
The underbrush is
Rustling
from some small creature's feet,
I'm sure,
But I can't find
The rustle-er.

Secrets make good listening
When forests talk,
When forests sing.

A Tree Place and Other Poems - Constance Levy
(Margaret K Mc Elderry Books NY 1994)
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<td>#51 Make Your Own Paper</td>
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Harcourt Bree - Social Studies Text - 3rd grade - Communities