

Resources for the “From Nature to the Imagination” workshop

--MAEOE conference 2009--

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Journal prompts – From “The Nifty-fifty Journal Entry Starter” by Bill Hammond:

- Begin by getting an image on the page such as: the tracing of a coin, a leaf, a pencil, etc... of your choice. Then do your writing assignment inside the image.
- Read a passage or a whole book and create the assignment from the book's message (for example - Byrd Baylor's book, *Everybody Needs a Rock*, could lead everyone to find their own special rock by using the rules given in the book and recording the process in their journal)
- Complete a “wet on wet” watercolor image and a “dry on dry” and compare your effort with something meaningful in your life.
- Create a collection of sand from a beach, stream, or else where, a special leaf or mud from a puddle or pond or something else that grabs you and spread it on a page in your journal...write you thoughts and impressions in and all around it then cover it with clear contact paper.
- Collect a leaf and study it carefully for 10 minutes...then put the leaf totally out of sight and draw a perfect life-size reproduction (1:1 scale) in your journal. When you have completed your drawing, lay the leaf over the top of the one that you drew. Compare how accurately you were able to draw from memory. Paste the leaf in your journal next to the one you drew. Repeat this exercise often.
- Double Entry: Find a place or thing and study it carefully making all the quantitative and qualitative observations you can (write these on the right side of a page pair) in a given amount of time. Then write and draw upon the data from inside yourself (INSIGHTS) to describe the experience, your feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the observation (on the left side of the pair of pages)
- Watch and listen to a child explore for 10 minutes and document what you learned from the observation and how it relates to your life.
- Draw a life-size leaf; then write your thoughts around the edge of the leaf or entirely within the leaf in a way that replaces the venation pattern.

Get great blank, hard-cover books from - "barebooks.com"

Icebreakers

Human Bingo -

You need: a bingo sheet with categories like "someone who has blue shoes" or "someone who can name 3 rivers in MD," pencils or pens

Fill in the names of people who match each description on the bingo sheet. Depending on the number of participants, you can have rules about each person only signing each sheet once or participants must have a signature from each person present before they can repeat any.

Alliteration Name Game -

(aka-adjective name game)

No props required

Have everyone stand in a circle. The leader gives her/his name plus an adjective that begins with the same letter as her/his first name (ex. Terrible Tania). The next person in the circle begins by saying the leader's name and then adds their own. Continue around the circle each person saying the names of the people that came before them before saying their name. **You can also do this using names of animals instead of adjectives (ex. Tyrannosaurus Tania). ** Try adding a silly or descriptive movement with each name.

Group juggling -

Need - several balls of different sizes and shapes

The group stands in a circle. The first part of the game is to establish a pattern, so use one ball 1st. The leader puts the ball into play - throwing the ball to someone across the circle (you must find to and say aloud the person's name before you throw the ball). That person throws the ball to a new person, until everyone has had the ball once and everyone remembers who they threw it to. The ball ends up back with the leader. The leader starts the ball again, and the ball is thrown from person to person in the same pattern/order as before. The leader can then time the group (if the ball is dropped, it goes back to the beginning and the time starts over). The leader can also add in more than one ball - this can get pretty crazy but it's fun!

Two truths and a Lie

The group sits in a circle, one by one each player tells the group 3 things about themselves (2 things that are true, 1 that is not). The other players try to guess which statement is the lie.

Outdoor exploration

Weather experiments

Simple experiments can be used to explore topics like the weather. Materials needed: Several sturdy thermometers, a wind speed chart or meter, and rain gauge. We measured:

- Wind speed _____ MPH
- Temperature _____ C _____ F

- Rain _____ yes _____ no
- Cloud cover- 1 (no clouds).....2.....3.....4.....5 (total clouds, no blue)

Need a wind scale? Try here:

- http://ccrc.unh.edu/~stm/AS/Weather_Toolbox/Beaufort.html
- <http://www.stormfax.com/beaufort.htm>
- <http://www.miamisci.org/hurricane/windscale.html>
- <http://www.howtoons.com/data/orig/FF/B9/A17/FFB9A17C606474AB686A71DBC7468762E.pdf>

Here's how to make your own rain and snow gauges:

Rain - <http://education.usace.army.mil/clubhouse/science/experiment.cfm?Topic=weather&Id=82>

Snow - <http://www.salemclock.com/weather/snowH2O.htm> or

<http://www.salemclock.com/weather/snowgauge.htm>

Need a hand held Dwyer Wind Meter or thermometers, look here: benmeadows.com

For a cloud viewer kit, try : nature-watch.com

Other weather activity ideas:

Making kites!

This is a simple kite made with very minimal supplies, best made by people with good manual dexterity because of the small size.

Tear drop kite: (pattern below)

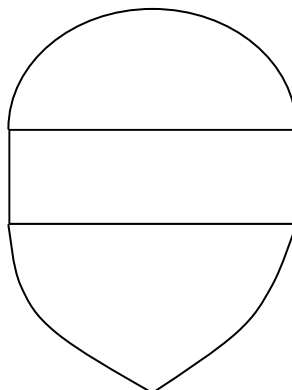
- Kite pattern (tear-drop shape 2" high by 1 1/2" wide...nearly circular with a point)
- Thread (~30 inches long)
- Wrapping paper
- 1/4 inch wide ribbon (~12 inches long)
- Clear tape
- Pencil

Trace pattern onto wrapping paper. Use the little bits of wrapping paper that aren't large enough to wrap presents in. Each person only needs a piece about 2"x2". Tape the thread to the center of the kite using as little tape as possible. Tape the ribbon onto the bottom (pointy side) of the kite, again using as little tape as possible. Fly your kite.

Tiny kite pattern.

Actual size. Ignore the lines thru the middle.

The left side is closer to actual curve.

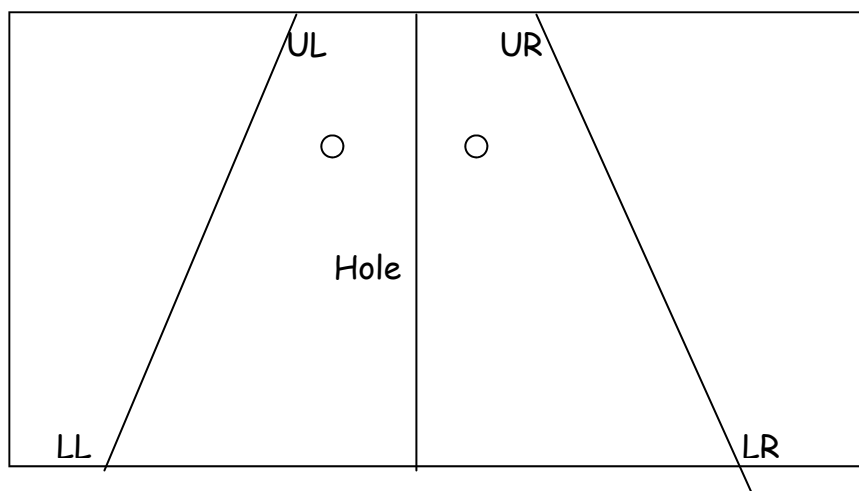


This kite pattern comes from "Go Outside" by Nancy Blakey. According to the title, the "easiest kite ever". Copy Paper Kite:

- 1 sheet of 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11" paper
- Paints, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- 1 8" bamboo skewer
- Masking tape or clear adhesive tape
- Plastic shopping bag for the tail
- Scissors
- Ruler
- String to fly with
- Paper punch (optional)

Decorate both sides of the paper. Fold in half (that center line). Make a mark (UL & UR) on the upper edge 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " in both directions from center line. Make a mark (LL & LR) on the lower edge 4" in both directions from center line. Fold these "wings" in the same manner you would a paper airplane. Use the bamboo skewer as a support across the wings (tape it down so it stretches between the 2 widest points). Punch a hole one third of the way down the keel and reinforce with tape, if desired; don't punch too close to the folded edge or it will pull out. Tie a string to this hole. Finally make a tail by cutting a plastic shopping bag into a 1" wide strip starting at the top of the bag and spiraling the cut down the bag; you will need 6-10 feet of tail (more wind needs a longer tail). Tape the bag strip to the bottom of the kite keel. Go out and fly!

This kite pattern is from "Go Outside" by Nancy Blakey.



Make a Pizza Box Solar Oven - <http://solarnow.org/printpizzabx.htm>

You may want to try making s'mores (graham crackers with melted marshmallow and chocolate) or English muffin pizzas.

Wind Catchers- great for preschoolers

Pick a stick and some ribbon. Tie the ribbon around the stick at one end leaving a long tail. What happens when you walk with your wind catcher? What about when you spin around? When you stop?

Supplies: Sticks, Ribbons, crepe paper, yarn, surveyors tape, scissors

Games

Camouflage/Owl and Mice

Props: one bandana, some space without poison ivy to play in

One child is picked to be the owl the rest are the mice/prey. The leader gives the owl his/her "perch" (a specific place to stand - the owl may not move their feet from this exact place, they may, however, squat or stand on tiptoe). The owl closes his/her eyes and counts to 30, while the prey all hide. The prey must be able to see the owl AT ALL TIMES. The object is to hide yourself as close to the owl as you can with out being seen. Be sure to give boundaries, or some kids will go halfway to the next county to hide. The owl opens her eyes and looks for her prey - she must be able to name the person she sees or at least the color they are wearing (no "I think I see someone behind that bush, etc...") The last person found who is closest to the owl becomes the next owl.

Salamander Scurry -

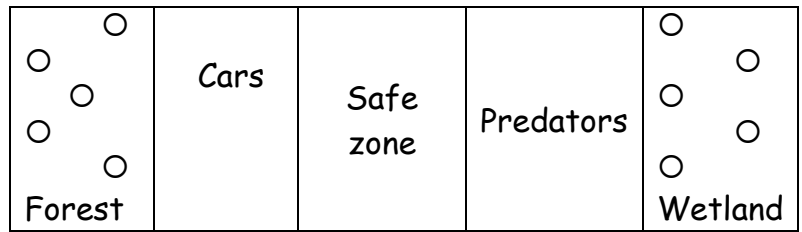
Purpose: students will gain an understanding of a salamander's life cycle and the hazards they encounter as they move between the wetland and forest habitats.

Props:

- Rectangular playing field
- 8-12 hula hoops (depending on number of students)
- 2 lengths of rope each about 15 feet long (or one very long rope)
- A set of "dilemma" cards

Playing field is divided into 5 zones

1. forest with 4-6 hula hoops (forest habitats)
2. forested area with a road and cars
3. safe zone
4. predators who live around the wetland
5. wetland with 4-6 hula hoops



Roles to play: 1-3 students are picked as cars; 2 to 4 are picked as herons or raccoons (predators), the rest are salamanders.

Each salamander student puts one foot into a forest hula hoop (only a certain number of "salamanders" are allowed in each habitat - for example: with a group of 25 students you could use 5 hula hoops and allow 5 students in each). Explain that the students' task as a salamander is to successfully travel the length of the playing field to reach the wetland where they will lay eggs and then return to the forest. However, "salamanders" will encounter problems while migrating:

1. They need to cross a road where there will be cars. The cars must stay on the road as they are driving (so the student playing a car can only go in a straight line). If caught, the salamander dies, retreating to the sideline until later.
2. They cross the predator zone inhabited by hungry raccoons and herons (predators can travel anywhere in their zone). If caught for dinner, the salamander goes to the sidelines.
3. They find a protected wetland habitat. Again space and habitat resources are limited - no more than 5 students can occupy a wetland habitat/hula hoop at a time.

Students are to move at a fast walk.

The leader counts how many salamanders survived the journey from forest to wetland.

While at the wetland, each habitat (hula hoop) group picks a wetland dilemma card. With assistance, if needed, they decide if their wetland will survive or be eliminated. Salamanders residing in an eliminated wetland must find another wetland, without overpopulating that wetland (if spaces are available).

At a signal, students leave the wetlands to return to the forest. After the students reach the forest a final salamander count is taken.

What percent survived? What were the problems? How could you change the number of salamanders that survive?

Repeat the game picking new cars and predators.

The teacher may want to suggest changing the number of cars or predators, removing the safe zone, cutting down forest, and other things that would affect the game.

You can create additional "dilemma cards" that are either positive or negative.

Local students write to support wetland protection (+)	State DNR stocks pond with bass (-)	Local students create a wetland area at their school (+)	Chemical spill leaches into water supply (-)
Homeowner creates a new wetland area in their backyard (+)	Forest surrounding breeding pond cut down (-)	Beavers move into area and flood the creek (+)	No rain this spring; water level is down (-)
Car parts and oil dumped in the wetland (-)	Acidity in pond increases to high level (pH 5) (-)	Road construction silts in breeding pond (-)	Heavy spring rainfall; Insect population larger (+)
ATV riders drive through wetlands (-)	Local students gather data for wetland study (+)	Wetland area filled to create a parking lot (-)	Local people get a tunnel built under road so salamanders can migrate (+)

Other game ideas:

- **Bat and Moth**

Need: a bandana, one person to be the "bat", 2 or so to be the "moths"

Everyone else stands in a circle holding hands (to form the "cave"). The "cave" must remain silent thru the game. The bat is blindfolded and placed in the middle of the "cave" with the moths. This game runs like "Marco Polo." The bat says "bat," when she does this the moths must reply "moth." The bat must use her hearing to try and catch the moths. When caught they become part of the cave. When the bat has caught both moths, the leader starts the game over with a new bat and moths.

- **Lemonade/What's your trade?**

Props - 3 ropes - 2 for end lines and 1 for the middle line

Divide into 2 teams and set up 2 parallel goal lines about 15 yards apart. Each team goes to their goal line and chooses a habitat and an animal that is common there (ex. The swamp - snapping turtle).

To start the game: each team lines up on their goal line and one team (the actors) yells "Here we come!" as they take two or so giant steps onto the field. The other group (now the guessers) yells back "Where ya from?" as they take 2 or so giant steps onto the field. Next as they take 2 or so more giant steps forward, the actors yell back the habitat name they chose, "the Swamp!" The guessers then step forward with, "What's your trade?" The actors step forward again now being just about in the middle of the field and shout, "Lemonade!" Now the guesses take their last steps forward to the middle of the field too and reply, "Show us some if you're not afraid!" The first team now acts out their animal. The guessers try to guess what the animal is. The actors continue to pantomime until a member of the other team correctly guesses what they are acting out. When the correct animal is said, they guessers chase the actors back to the actors' goal line. Any people that are caught switch teams. Play the game again - with the guessers becoming the actors and the actors guessing.

Creative snacks -

"Build your own"- First, decide what to use as your "glue" - cream cheese, easy cheese, peanut butter, edible clay of some sort. Then provide lots of "body part" options (pretzels, raisins, chex mix, etc...). You'll also need plates and napkins. Provide examples or suggestions for what to make or just let the kids go wild. You can also do show and tell with the animals/sculptures they make (for example: ask the kids to make an animal that would live in a pond then have them describe their animal's adaptations to the group).

Fishing - Softened cream cheese with blue food color is your "water" (you can also add some ranch dressing). Pretzel sticks are the "fishing poles" and goldfish crackers are your "fish." A little cream cheese on the end of a pretzel makes it easy it pick up the fish.

Other snack ideas:

- **Chocolate clay -**

From The Ultimate Book of Kid Concoctions by John E Thomas & Danita Pagel

You need:

- 10 oz. Semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup

Melt the chocolate chips in the microwave in a large bowl. When they thoroughly melted, mix in the corn syrup. Spread the concoction out to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick on some wax paper and let cool. You can use it to sculpt once it is cool enough or make it ahead of time and freeze it for a few weeks. Be sure to let it sit out overnight before you need it.

Note - you can use white chocolate chips and add food color (add a few drops before you mix in the corn syrup) for colored clay.

- **“Jellyfish tentacles”**

Follow the recipes on a package of jello to make jello jigglers. Be creative with your colors and shapes - pink/red jello cut into long strips can be worms or fatter strips could be slugs. Green or blue jello in long strips can be tentacles. Its all in the power of suggestion.

Craft ideas...

Recycled material sit-upons

These sit-upons are made from materials that might otherwise be thrown away, and are generally free or very inexpensive. This helps to teach about recycling, reusing, and repurposing in a way that is more interesting and personal than the usual “reduce, reuse, recycle” mantra. Materials needed for recycled sit-upons:

- Heavy duty fabric “squares”—ours were donated by a fabric supplier to hotels
- Waterproof fabric -old vinyl tablecloths or shower curtains are great
- Shredded paper—ask at offices or have the kids save them from home
- Packing peanuts—these are more difficult to come by and you want the Styrofoam ones not the cellulose ones
- Newspaper—save them yourself or have kids bring them in
- Hole punchers (for making holes in the vinyl cloth for ease in sewing)
- Yarn or crochet cotton—ask around, if you don't mind the color, people are willing to donate
- Large-eyed craft needles—enough for each child. (that's the only thing we had to purchase)

Directions for making sit-upons:

Cut your fabric and vinyl the size and shape you want. Sew the pieces together with a sewing machine to give the kids a head start with the sewing. Let everyone stuff their sit upon with different items and then let the kids sew up the last side. You can also staple them closed or punch holes (if using all vinyl) and let the kids pull yarn thru the big holes using a really big needle.

Other craft ideas:

- **Walking sticks -**

Choose and cut sticks ahead of time so they time to dry. Choose trees with smooth light-colored bark like maple, beech, pawpaw, or ailanthus. It is great if you can use non-native/invasive trees. Give kids paint, sharpies, and time to decorate their sticks. You can give decoration suggestion - like symbols or runes that stand for love, strength, birthdays, etc... This works great in conjunction with tree ID and the folklore of trees. I did mine as part of a Harry Potter “magic of nature” themed camp, so our walking sticks could also be magic wands or staffs.