



Quarrybrook

EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CENTER

Program Title: **Signs of Spring**

Audience: K1 students

Program Theme: The transition from winter to spring brings many observable changes to the forest, including melting snow, new plant growth, and the completion of hibernation cycles for many animals.

Program Goals: Through simulation activities and observation, students will gain a better understanding of the change in seasons. Students will walk through the woods looking for physical signs of the end of winter and the beginning of a new season of growth. They will engage in investigations and games that will help them to identify specific clues and evidence of this transition to a warmer time.

Next Generation/Common Core Connections:

Topic: K-ESS2 Earth's Systems

Dimensions: Patterns

Program Outline:

Activity 1: RACE TO SPRING (15 min.) – In this activity students explore some of the challenges presented to animals in the wintertime, including snow cover, reduced food supply, freezing temperatures, and the ever-present predators. Students will take on the role of ground squirrels that need to cross an open field in which there are hazards that they must pass without getting tagged. With each new round, some of the winter hazards will be removed, to symbolize the ending of winter and the coming of spring. We will see how the switch from winter to spring does not happen overnight but is a zone of dynamic transition within the landscape.



Teachers and other grown-ups will help by being the hazards! Each will wear a picture of either a snowflake or a predator, and try to tag the students out. If they are tagged by a snowflake, they must hop on one foot for the rest of their journey toward the finish line. If they are tagged by a predator, they have been “eaten” and are therefore “out.” Adults will also be helpful in reminding students of the rules and boundaries as we play.

Objective: Students will recognize that the transition between seasons is a zone of dynamic change, not just a date on the calendar.

Intended Outcome: Students will simulate the challenges of surviving winter and the transitions encountered in the warming of spring.

Activity 2: SIGNS OF SPRING TRAIL WALK (45 min.) – Students will look for physical signs within the landscape that signal the coming of spring. To encourage the students to investigate for themselves and to notice details within the habitat around them, student pairs will be given a picture card with photos of some of the possible evidence to look for. The goal is to find real examples of all the signs on the card within the landscape itself.



Teachers and other grown-ups will each work with several student pairs, assisting them in spotting these signs throughout the walk.

Objective: Students will notice the physical signs of seasonal warming that are all around, such as melting ice, mud, budding trees, new plant growth, etc.

Intended Outcome: Students will be able to describe the evidence of winter transitioning into spring, that they can expect to observe annually.

Conclusion/Wrap-up: (30 min.) Students will have an opportunity to reflect on their observations and to learn about recording data. Students will draw pictures of the signs of spring they discovered along the trail. Students will be able to use their picture search cards for reference. Students will have the opportunity to share and explain some of the illustrations they have created.



Teachers and other grown-ups will be helpful in guiding students through their illustrations with reflective questions that help them to remember signs that were most evident of spring. Are there any other signs that were not on the card? What do they think of when they hear the word “spring?”

Successful completion of this program will help support your students’ proficiency in NGSS

Performance Expectations:

K-PS3-1 Make observations to determine the effect of sunlight on Earth’s surface.

K-ESS2-1 Use and share observations of local weather conditions to describe patterns over time.