

Field Trip Planning Guide

Steps for Planning a Field Trip

1. Review your curriculum at the beginning of the school year. Which topics and skills could best be taught by including a field trip? Consider how an outdoor field trip can relate divergent disciplines, such as math, reading, art, and science, into a meaningful experience with relevance to children.
2. Identify your objectives. What are your reasons for the field trip?
3. Review the activities in this guide.
4. Choose a date, time, and location for the field trip.
5. Contact the park naturalist to schedule your field trip. Field trips should be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. You will be asked the following information:
 - A: Objectives for the field trip.
 - B: Activities you are considering for the day
 - C: Your first choices of dates, times, and locations (be sure to have at least one alternative date).
 - D: Contact information.
6. After your date has been confirmed, get necessary administrative approval, arrange for chaperones (1 per every 10 - 12 students) and make bus/travel arrangements.
7. Make final decision on field trip activities. Re-confirm date and activities with naturalist. The naturalist will create and send you a schedule for the day.
8. Send out copies of the "Note to parents" and permission slips if necessary. This may be a good time to solicit chaperones if still needed.
9. Prepare the students:
 - This is not just a play day. It will be a fun day in an outdoor classroom to learn about some interesting and important topics.
 - Wear appropriate clothing; long pants (no shorts), walking shoes and socks. Clothes may get dirty. Be prepared for the weather: raincoat and boots for wet weather; layers of warm clothing for cold weather.
 - Each student should bring a bottle of drinking water that can be collected at school and passed out later at the appropriate time.

Hints for planning field trip activities

1. **How long?** Any group may choose to spend the entire day on a field trip. Often, however, preschool classes schedule a half-day trip. Each activity usually lasts 20 to 40 minutes.
2. **When?** Activities and programs may be scheduled throughout the school year. Seasonal field trips can be especially interesting, comparing changes at the park over time.
3. **Group size** Most activities require dividing the classes into small groups of 8-15 students. Small groups may be assigned prior to the field trip to save time during the day.
4. **Nametags** Nametags are great. Tags can be made prior to the field trip and coded by color, number, leaf type, etc. Let the naturalist know prior to the field trip how you chose to code the nametags. A recommended way to code is by color (one color for each small group).
5. **Sharing circle** Arranging students in a circle or semicircle helps focus attention while stopping along a trail or giving directions in an open area.
6. **Be flexible** Capitalize on unexpected occurrences and discoveries - an unexpected insect or a hawk flying overhead, for example. The outdoor classroom is dynamic, exciting, and naturally captures a child's sense of wonder. Feel free to change or adapt any activity.
7. **Workshops** Various educator workshops are held at many locations in Iowa throughout the year. These workshops will help train educators and field trip leaders in conducting outdoor field trip activities. Check out the Iowa Conservation Education Council web site for a listing of workshop opportunities: www.iowaee.org.
8. **Techniques** Many educational techniques used in outdoor education fall into the field of Nature Interpretation. *The Six Principles of Nature Interpretation* by Freeman Tilden are excellent ideas to keep in mind while on a field trip.

Note to Parents

Dear Parent(s),

Your child's class will be taking a field trip to _____ located near _____. Because we will be hiking and the weather could be very warm, we ask that you send a bottle of water with your child that day. Please also make sure that your child is dressed appropriately; including long pants, shoes and socks. Clothing may get somewhat dirty as we will be sitting on the ground and participating in outdoor activities. If rain is in the forecast, it might be a good idea to send a plastic garbage bag along that could be made into a rain poncho or used as a sit-upon on damp grass.

Thank you! Your assistance will help to insure an enjoyable and successful field trip. We look forward to guiding your child to an exciting day exploring and learning at the park!

Sincerely,

Katie L. Cantu, Naturalist
Jasper County Conservation
Board (641) 792-9780

Tilden's Six Principles of Nature Interpretation

- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the material presented is scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some way teachable.
- The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.
- Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Definition of Interpretation:

"An educational activity which aims to **reveal** meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by **firsthand experience**, and by illustrative media, rather than to simply communicate factual information."

Teacher / Chaperone Responsibilities

1. Teachers and chaperones are responsible for discipline, not the Jasper County Conservation staff.
2. Teachers and chaperones need to be aware of any medical or special needs of students in your group. (For example, Sue is allergic to bee stings.) Let the naturalist know ahead of time if such needs exist. Please bring a first aid kit. The naturalist will have some supplies at the park as well.
3. Teachers and chaperones are expected to participate in all activities with the students. Students look to adults as models.
4. Teachers are requested to fill out an evaluation form after their visit. This will help the Jasper County Conservation Board best meet the needs of future groups that take part in the activities.

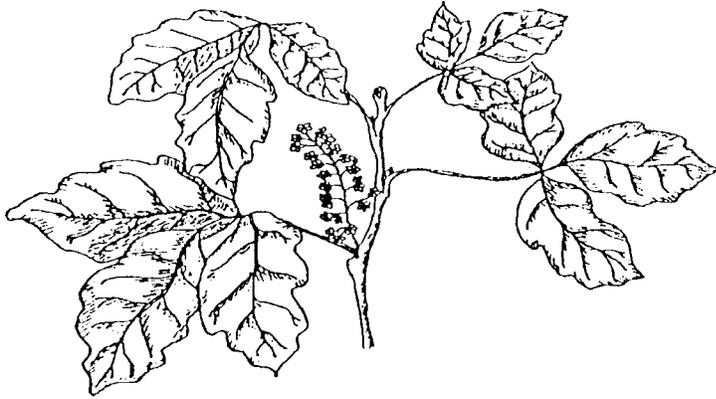
Staff Responsibilities

1. The naturalist will work with the teacher to plan the schedule of activities.
2. The naturalist will lead the group activities and provide all materials needed for the activities.

Field Trip Rules

1. Teachers and chaperones need to establish their own "quiet" signal. If you use a special quiet signal with the students, you may wish to inform the naturalist prior to starting the field trip.
2. Do not remove natural items from the park.
3. Please do not pick plants, flowers, leaves, etc. without prior approval.
4. The naturalist will handle any wildlife encountered unless they give another person permission. Chasing, disturbing, and handling wildlife is prohibited.
5. The naturalist or adult leaders of the group will lead hiking. This will provide proper pacing and quality of learning experience while ensure safety.

Poison Ivy



Many parks and natural areas have poison ivy. Staff and students should learn how to identify this plant and know what to do to counteract the poison. Remember the phrase, "Leaflets three, let it be!" Poison ivy has three leaflets. It grows in various ways, as a vine, shrub, or small short plant. When growing like a vine, it may be found wrapping around a tree. The leaflets have a reddish tinge when the leaves first emerge in the spring and it also turns bright red in autumn.

Some people have a dermal reaction to the plant while others do not seem to be affected, but the allergy to poison ivy can develop at anytime during one's lifetime.

Benefits of Poison Ivy:

This plant produces white berries. These berries provide a winter food source for many birds.

Stinging Nettle



Stinging nettle, or itch weed, grows in many disturbed areas. It may range from six inches to three feet tall. It has minute prickles along the stem and leaf petiole. The plant must be touched for a reaction to occur.

The plant may cause a stinging sensation on exposed skin. Small white welts may also occur. The stinging usually lasts from 10 - 30 minutes and does not spread. The reaction almost instantly occurs when the plant is touched.

Benefits of Stinging Nettles:

The earliest pioneers used the stinging nettles for nutritious fresh greens in the early spring. Nettles are high in vitamins. Nettles can be used as a vegetable, in soup or in casseroles.

The Tick Dilemma

Lyme disease is an infection resulting from a bite by certain species of tick. Not all ticks transmit Lyme disease. The infection is caused by a spirochete bacterium and is treatable. The spirochete is transmitted to people by a bite of the tick *Ixodes dammini*. This tick is much smaller than the tick known as the American dog tick or wood tick.

Initial symptoms may be a bulls-eye rash around the bite area, joint pain, and swelling. Later symptoms can include complications of the heart, nervous system and joints.

Important Tips

Prevention

- Wear protective clothing.
Wear long pants when hiking and tuck pant legs into socks.
Do not wear sandals. Wear shoes that cover the foot.
Wear light colored clothing (ticks are easier to detect on light clothing).
- Check body frequently for ticks.
- Use tick repellent.
- Remove tick carefully with tweezers. Do not kill tick before it has been removed. Do not squeeze tick's body. Grasp the tick where the mouthparts enter the skin and tug gently, but firmly, until it releases its hold on the skin. The barbed mouthparts will not release easily, so take your time. Save ticks in a jar. Monitor the bite area for a few weeks for rash development. Record when and where on your body you had the bite and tell your doctor if a rash occurs.

Detection

- Monitor tick bites and save ticks that have bitten you.
- Check for rash
- Check for other symptoms. (1-8 weeks after being bitten)

Treatment

- See doctor if rash develops.
- If medicine is prescribed, follow the directions on the container.

Four Senses Walk

Summary

Students will go on a nature walk in the park, discovering the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the plants and animals that surround them.

Objectives

Students will discover how to best explore the outdoors using the senses of sight, hearing, touch and smell. They will discover some sights, sounds, odors, and textures in the park. They will learn some simple characteristics of plants based on their exploration.

National Content Standards

Physical Science Content Standards

As a result of activities in grades K-2nd, students should develop an understanding of: Properties of objects and materials

Life Science Content Standards

As a result of activities in grades K-2nd, students should develop an understanding of: Characteristics of organisms

Group Size

Ideal group size is 8-15 students. The activity can be adapted for groups of up to 25 students by providing more adult leaders and materials.

Subject Areas: Senses, diversity, scientific method, observation, data collection

Key Words and Terms

The five senses

Materials Needed

One clipboard, pencil and paper for every two or three students

Time Length: 40 minutes

Background Information

A good naturalist or scientist must be a keen observer of nature. The best scientists learn to use all their senses to explore subjects within their environments.

Using one's senses is a skill developed over a long period of time. Young children, with their sense of wonder, are easily encouraged to use all their senses. As they spend time exploring the outdoors, students will discover that their senses are important in identifying plants and animals. For example, senses can be used in the following ways to identify certain tree species:

Sight: Cottonwoods have triangular leaves, flat leaf stems, and rounded-toothed edges.

Sound: The leaves on quaking aspen rattle in the wind more than other trees.

Smell: Pines have a characteristic odor, especially in spring.

Touch: American elms often have very rough leaf surfaces.

Obviously, by concentrating their use of senses, students will learn more about the plants and animals they encounter.

Back at school Divide the students into "lookers," "listeners," "smellers," and "touchers." Make a large poster or mural by allowing each student to choose their favorite item from their group and draw it on the poster or mural.

Service Learning

Visit a senior center or nursing home, or have the elderly visit the school. Allow the students to share the sights, sounds, textures, and odors that they experienced with the older people.

Additional Resources

Sharing Nature With Children, Joseph Cornell

The Sense of Wonder, Rachel Carson

Trees Are Terrific NatureScope Series, Iowa Wildlife Federation; Washington, DC; 1988.

Activity Procedure

1. Discuss and identify the five senses and how they are used to learn about the surrounding environment. Explain to the students that they will be going on a nature walk, and will be using their senses to explore nature at the park. They will concentrate on using four senses. They will not taste things because some plants and animals are not safe to taste. However, explain that scientists who know more about plant and animal dangers do use taste to identify and describe certain plants.
2. Lead the students on a walk through the park, stopping to show them things they can see. Have the children point out other things that they see and discuss these as they are discovered.
3. Gather the students in a circle. With a show of hands find out how many items on the data sheet were seen. Discuss what the most distinguishing characteristics were for each of the things they saw. Go around the circle, allowing each student to describe his or her favorite item to the rest of the group.
4. Walk to a new spot in the park and have the children sit down and close their eyes. Discuss ways to increase the awareness of certain senses. (For example,

closing their eyes may ease visual distractions and allow better concentration of the remaining senses.) Have the children announce things that they hear and discuss these things. You may want to ask; "Does anyone hear a bird? Where is the sound coming from? Why do you think the bird would be making that sound?" etc. Continue with other observed sounds.

5. Walk to a new area and have the group make observations using the sense of touch.
6. Repeat the procedure, using the sense of smell. Discuss the importance of smell to the plants and animals that inhabit the park.
7. If time allows, get into a sharing circle and distribute clipboards with sheets of paper. Have the children draw one of the things that they saw, heard, felt, or smelled during the activity. Invite them to share their memory and drawing with the group.

Leaf Friend

Summary

Students will find a special leaf. They make careful observations of their leaves, and then try to distinguish them from other leaves.

Objectives

Students learn to use their senses to carefully distinguish special characteristics of leaves.

National Content Standards

Life Science Content Standards

As a result of activities in grades K-2nd, students should develop an understanding of: Characteristics of organisms

Group Size

Ideal group size is 10 students. More than one group can do this activity at a time.

Subject Areas: Leaves, senses

Key Words and Terms: Five senses

Materials Needed

A cloth or blanket, collection of leaves

Time length: 30 minutes

Background Information

A good naturalist or scientist must be a keen observer of nature. The best learn to use all their senses to explore their subjects and their environments.

Using one's senses is a skill developed over a long time. Young children, with their sense of wonder, are easily encouraged to use all their senses. As they spend time exploring the outdoors, students will discover that their senses are important in identifying plants and animals. A good place to begin is by exploring leaves. Leaves have a variety of shapes and textures, and often have very distinguishing characteristics. Some leaves even have a special odor. Only by careful observation and use of senses can a person really get to know a leaf. When children learn to look for distinguishing leaf characteristics, they are ready to begin identifying species that belong to the huge and marvelous world of plants.

Additional Resources

Trees Are Terrific NatureScope Series, Iowa Wildlife Federation; Washington, DC; 1988.

Activity Procedure

1. Lead the students on a walk through the park. Along the way, point out some interesting leaves on trees. Using their fingers, ask the students to count how many colors they see in the leaves around them. How many do they see? Are there different shades of green, brown, and yellow? Point to leaves blowing in the wind. Some leaves blow straight across, while others seem to flip-flop and dance in the breeze.
2. Gather the students. Have each choose a leaf from the collection provided. The leaf should be whole, although it is all right if it has a few holes in it. It should be a leaf they like. Allow the students a few minutes to find their "leaf friend".
3. Gather the students in a circle. As a group, lead the students through some careful observations. The following are some suggested observation exercises:
 - *Shake hands with their leaf friend - say hello.*
 - *Look carefully at the shape of the leaf- is it triangular, rounded, or odd shaped?*
 - *Look at the leaf's color(s) - how many colors are there?*
 - *Look around the entire outside margin of the leaf- is it smooth, bumpy, pointed?*
 - *Hold the leaf up and look at it backlit by the sun - can you see lines (veins)? Do the lines have a pattern?*
 - *Hold the leaf stem (petiole) between thumb and forefinger, and twirl the leaf- is the stem flat or rounded?*
 - *Rub the leaf on your cheek - is it rough, hairy, or smooth?*
 - *Smell the leaf- does it have an odor?*

4. **Find their friends** Tell the students it is time for their leaves to go away for a while. Allow them to give their friends one last, good look-over and say goodbye. Tell the students to place their leaves in the center of the circle. Lay a blanket or cloth over the pile of leaves. While the students' backs are turned, rearrange the leaves under the blanket. Explain to the students that their leaves are now mixed up with lots of friends. Uncover the pile of leaves. Allow the students to come up, one at a time, and take their leaf back to where they were sitting in the circle.

5. Once all the students are sitting in the circle again, ask them if they all found their friends. Go around the circle, and allow each student to tell why he or she thinks (or does not think) the leaf they now have is truly the same as the one they had before. What special thing(s) do they remember about their leaf friend that distinguishes it from other leaves?

6. Pass out clipboards and crayons. Have the students make leaf rubbings of their leaf friends. (They can add arms, legs, and a face to their drawings if they like and even name their leaf friends!) Invite each child to show his or her drawing to the group.

For more information, please contact Katie Cantu, Naturalist, Jasper County Conservation Board, 115 N. 2nd Ave. E., Newton, IA 50208. Email kcantu@co.jasper.ia.us or phone (641) 792-9780.