



Theme: Plants (Grades 3-5)

Pre-Visit Activity #1 What is Your Gift?

Overview:

Students will listen to the story *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein. This is a story about the gift of giving and unconditional love. Students will create a giving tree for the classroom.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the parts of a tree.
- Students will understand the importance of giving and sharing.

Materials:

- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Colored paper square – hole punched
- Pencil crayons
- Yarn or string
- Tall Plant (optional)

Activity:

1. Read the story *The Giving Tree* to the students.
2. Discuss what this story means to them.
3. Encourage higher level thinking about giving unconditionally with no expectations.
4. Challenge each student to think of a gift that they would like to give or share.
5. Students may think very concretely - encourage abstract thinking.
6. Students are encouraged to come up with a minimum of two gifts.
7. Provide each student with a minimum of three colored paper squares.
8. Ask them to write the gift(s) they would like to give/share on the paper.
9. Instruct the students to tie a piece of yarn through the hole punched in the paper.
10. Provide time for the students to share their gifts with the class.
11. Hang these gifts on the plant or hang them on the wall creating your own giving tree.
12. Challenge the students to be conscious of their gifts and to make an effort to share them with their classmates.

Suggested Reading:

1. ***Eddie's Garden*** by Sarah Garland. Eddie learns all of the things plants need in order to grow as he and his family create their own garden.
2. ***The Gardener*** by Sarah Stewart. In the middle of the Great Depression, little Lydia Grace finds happiness in a new home by gardening to create beauty.
3. ***Jack's Garden*** by Henry Cole. Readers get an up-close look at a garden and its inhabitants as it is planted and grown by Jack.
4. ***Ladybug at Orchard Avenue*** by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld. Readers follow a ladybug through a garden as it prepares for the cold winter ahead.
5. ***Miss Rumphius*** by Barbara Cooney. A woman discovers the splendor of plants and the wonders of seed travel while on a quest to make the world more beautiful.
6. ***A Packet of Seeds*** by Deborah Hopkinson. Annie's mother is upset about having to move away from their home, but finds comfort in creating a garden full of plants from home.
7. ***A Place to Grow*** by Soyung Pak. A father teaches his daughter about the importance of a proper environment, both for plants to grow, and people.
8. ***Plantzilla*** by Jerdine Nolen. Mortimer Henryson and his family learn about the importance of caring for a plant when Mortimer brings Plantzilla home from school.
9. ***Tops & Bottoms*** by Janet Stevens. A clever hare tricks a lazy bear out of his share of the harvest until the bear understands the value of hard work in the garden.
10. ***Weslandia*** by Paul Fleischman. A boy creates his own civilization entirely based on his garden with unusual plants.
11. ***Whose Garden Is It?*** by Mary Ann Hoberman. Mrs. McGee learns about the great amount of impact a garden and the plants within it have on many different creatures.