Pre-Lesson Activity: What is Nature?

Program name: What is Nature?
Duration: 30 Minutes
Audience: Kindergarten

Theme(s):
We can find nature outside, but not everything outdoors is part of nature.

Goal(s):
Introduce the concept of nature and spur an initial understanding of what is nature and what is not.
Introduce a scavenger hunt format that can be used throughout the year by teachers in their classrooms, on school yards, or throughout Oxbow.

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<th>Objective- Students Will Be Able To:</th>
<th>Educator verification method/success criteria:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comprehend and define the basic concept of “nature.”</td>
<td>1. Students are able to correctly identify items that can be considered part of nature.</td>
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<td>2. Demonstrate that objects found outside are not necessarily part of nature.</td>
<td>2. Students will place items gathered from the outdoors in their respective sides of the egg carton either marked nature and not nature depending on what the item is.</td>
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<td>3. Safely explore and familiarize themselves with their school yard.</td>
<td>3. Students will navigate their school yard and through interacting with it find items that can be used in the scavenger hunt.</td>
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<td>4. Practice using the egg carton scavenger hunt.</td>
<td>4. Students will successfully use this format of a scavenger hunt and will successfully be able to use this scavenger hunt tool in the future.</td>
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Introduction (5 minutes):

Introduce the theme statement: “Not everything outdoors is part of nature.”

Start with a discussion that introduces the concept of nature. Ask students, “What is nature?” Nature is the world and everything in it (animals, plants, mountains, rivers, etc.) that is not made by people. Ask for an example of something that is part of nature. Most examples will be things that are found outdoors. Then ask, “Is there anything outdoors that is not part of nature?” Ask for examples. Then explain that you will be exploring the school yard and embarking on a scavenger hunt collecting things that are part of nature and things that are not.

Activity (20 minutes):

15 minutes- Students are divided into partners or will work individually, each is given an empty egg carton. Explain that the students will be heading outside and, will be using the egg carton to collect and sort objects that are “part of nature” and things that are “not part of nature.” They will be sorting items into two categories within the egg carton. One side of the will be “nature” and the other side will be “not nature.” Remind students of expectations for going outdoors. Students are then led into the school yard and given boundaries within which they will complete their scavenger hunt. Students are instructed

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that they will be free to search within this boundary but when they hear a “coyote howl,” this is a sign that the scavenger hunt is over, and they should return back to their teacher. Be sure to check for understanding to ensure students know what they are sorting into which categories and where those are located within their egg carton. Be sure they know the boundaries and when to come back as a group. Note: It is helpful to have students take turns holding the egg carton and collecting, or to assign different roles to group members. Teachers can decide if they would prefer for students to work individually and therefore not have to share the egg carton.

5 minutes- Back in the classroom, student groups share their findings before the class. Some or all of the following inquiry questions are asked in order to dig deeper and explore what makes something part of nature and what makes something not part of nature. (Option: collect data and present data by tallying how many students found each type of item).

Inquiry Q’s:

- Why do you think ____ (object) belongs in the nature/not nature category?
- Where did _____ come from?
- Where did you find _____? Could you have found _____ somewhere else?
- Have you ever seen _____ somewhere that isn’t the school yard? Where?
- Do you see any patterns between what is part of nature and what is not part of nature?

Conclusion (5 minutes):

Have students wash their hands after handling the items they found. Review: “Nature is the world around us and everything in it that is not made by people; these are things like animals, plants, rivers, etc. Like we saw, we normally find nature in the outdoors, but not everything in the outdoors is part of nature.”

Some items we found were not part of nature, maybe we even found trash or plastic. What can we do with these things we found? (Give students an opportunity to talk about properly disposing of waste/recycling or not littering). How else can we take care of nature?

This year, we are going to be exploring and learning about nature both here at the school, at Oxbow Farm, and you can even explore nature at your home.