



THE ART OF NATURE

A Natural Experience

Description of Lesson

This lesson will delve into our natural world and how it influences our wellbeing, connecting our future young stewards of the natural world to the importance of natural wildlife areas. Drawing inspiration from this connection, students will immerse themselves using natural materials collected during a nature hike. These materials will be integrated into individual and collective pieces of art. Students will be lead through a guided imagery exercise depicting their own personal connection with nature. To recap this connection with nature, students will express themselves through an ancient Japanese poem technique called a Haiku.



www.longpointbiosphere.com
education@longpointbiosphere.com

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At a Glance

Grade Level: 3

Learning Environment:

Indoor classroom and outdoor classroom

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Print handouts, read through lesson plan

Length of Lesson: 2 hours
(plus optional extension activities)

Key Vocabulary:

Reflecting, creativity

Staffing: 1 educator

Materials:

Cardboard, red thread, ruler, marker, tape, pencil, paint, jar, water, paper and paper towel, viewfinder, printout, scissors

Groupings: Whole class and small groups of 2-3 students each

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

Discussion, observing, techniques of visual arts to communicate feelings

Lesson Outline

Time	Activity	Location	Materials
20 minutes	Part 1 Nature Mandala	Schoolyard or forest trail.	Each student is given a paper bag to collect their raw materials.
20 minutes	Guided Imagery Experience	Outdoors	Space to lie down on the grass.
20 minutes	Part 2 Nature Mandala	Outdoor	2' X 2' space and paper bag full of collected natural materials
20 minutes	Nature Haiku	Indoor	Pencil and paper
1 Hour	Viewfinder /painting	Indoor/ outdoor	Cardboard, red thread, ruler, marker, tape, pencil, paint, jar, water, paper and paper towel.

Curriculum Expectations

Grade 3: WRITING

- 2.1 Write short texts using a variety of forms (e.g., a personal or factual recount of events or experiences that includes photographs or drawings and captions; a report comparing transportation in urban and rural communities; a paragraph explaining how physical geography and natural resources affected the development of early settler communities; a letter from the point of view of a settler, describing how First Nations people have taught the settlers to adapt to their new environment; a familiar story told from a new perspective; a patterned poem using rhyme or repetition)

Grade 3: The Arts - VISUAL ARTS

- D1.1 Create two and three-dimensional works of art that express feelings and ideas inspired by personal experiences (e.g., a tempera painting that communicates feelings about a special occasion or event such as a fair or a parade; a sculpture of a favourite musical instrument made with found objects; a watercolour painting of a favourite part of the schoolyard; an assemblage in which images and objects from home and school are used to represent special memories)
- D1.2 Demonstrate an understanding of composition, using principles of design, to create narrative art works or art works on a theme or topic (e.g., a drawing of an approaching storm that uses a variety of lines, like dashed, jagged, curved or spiral, to create contrast; a cardboard or paper mâché sculpture of a mythical animal in a dynamic pose that uses surface materials to show a contrast in texture like fuzzy yarn, coarse materials, prickly sawdust, etc.

Curriculum Expectations Continued

D1.3 Use elements of design in art works to communicate ideas, messages, and personal understandings (e.g., a pattern of broken, wavy, and zigzag lines to make the bark of a tree look rough in a drawing; size and arrangement of organic shapes in a painting of flowers to create the impression that the various flowers are at different distances from the viewer)

Teaching and Learning

Nature Mandala 20 Minutes

Introduction:

There are two ways to prepare for this first exercise. It depends on time and school policy. If your students have the ability to hike around areas that have natural materials to collect, wonderful! If not have students bring supplies from their backyards. Collect materials such as flower petals, blades of grass, pinecones, leaves, acorns, pine needles, stones, sticks, or anything else you find. Gather these materials together to make your mandala. What is a mandala, you ask? A mandala, is Sanskrit word for “circle” or “discoid object”, it is a geometric design that holds a great deal of symbolism in Hindu and Buddhist cultures.

1. During a hike in the schoolyard, or nearby area, students will collect various items from their surroundings to incorporate into their mandala. Try to collect only non-living items found during your excursion - pulling leaves from trees, pulling out plants/moss or damaging any living thing should not be encouraged. The only time you should use living items is if you have a school garden and permission to cut fresh flowers and plants.
2. Once the students have finished gathering all their materials and are back at the area the class has chosen to create their mandalas, have the students spread out to have enough space to create a 2'x2' design and a space to lie down nearby.

Now that you have gathered all your materials let's do a guided imagery experience to calm and settle everyone before starting to create their mandalas.

Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery Experience 15-20 Minutes

This is a good activity to calm the students before starting your mandala art project. Help guide your students through this experience. Use a gentle tone and go through the exercise slowly with the students, using these instructions:

- Find your spot on the grass, lay down, get your body comfortable and close your eyes.
- Slowly take three deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Spend a moment or two, relaxing your feet and legs, letting go of any tightness and letting them become heavy like tree trunks. Imagine a wave of warm golden light traveling up from the earth into your feet and up your legs. As it travels up your legs to your hips notice the peaceful warm energy it brings.
- Feel this wave of warm golden light gently traveling up through your tummy, chest, and shoulders. Relax your breath and the beating of your heart. The warm golden light feels warm and as surrounds your heart.
- Feel it travel down your arms and to your fingertips, allow the warm golden light to flow. Feel how relaxed you are. Continue to breathe slow relaxed breaths.
- Bring the warm golden light to your neck and jaw area, softening your clenched jaw. Let the warm golden light flow to your ears and notice that your ears feel warm and relaxed without any worries of loud sounds. Bring the warm golden light right up between your two eyes and feel how peaceful your thoughts are becoming.
- Now let it travel to the top of your head, feel the gentle flow of warm golden energy encircling your whole body. Take a minute to experience this.
- Now let that energy out of the top of your head and into the air around you, back down and into the ground, then back into the souls of your feet.
- In your mind's eye let warm golden energy flow through the same cycle over and over again. Let this cycle play out for a few minutes.
- Now imagine you are standing in front of a beautiful massive tree. This tree has deep roots that reach down into the earth where that warm golden energy is. Notice how the warm golden energy is connecting to the tree the same way it is connected to you.
- This tree is home to your very own peaceful warm golden energy. Consider how this connection makes you feel even more deeply connected to this tree.
- Complete your connection with this tree by imagining that your forehead is pressed against its bark. The warm golden light is now flowing out of the top of your head and into every branch of this amazing tree. Can you see it? Good. Now allow yourself to travel inside the tree with this warm golden energy flowing between you and the tree
- (Pause) Are you inside? Good.
- Pause and just breathe... you and the tree are one.
- Imagine yourself being the tree. Imagine what you see as the tree looking out onto the world. Plants, trees, birds, sunshine, deer and squirrels, anything that makes you feel peaceful.
- Notice that when the warm golden light flows between you and the tree, it makes you feel very relaxed. This is a place to let go of all your thoughts and all your worries.
- Take a deep breath and allow yourself to breathe and relax.

Guided Imagery continued

- This is a place that you can go to any time you would like to feel more peaceful and calm. Know that your connection with this tree is special. You can connect to it wherever and whenever you would like to.
- Now take a deep breath and imagine yourself walking around your special tree in the warm golden yellow light that connects you with the tree. Gently bring your attention back to the grass you're lying on.
- Rub your hands together to make them warm. Gently place them over your eyes then whenever you are ready you can open your eyes.

Nature Mandala

20 Minutes

Instructions:

1. Clear a 2'x2' area to work in by brushing away any leaf litter, etc.
2. Find the center of your mandala and mark it with a special natural object.
3. Select the first material you'll use to create your first layer.
4. Continue to add on as many layers as you would like!
5. Admire your work. It's beautiful!
6. Now go out and fill the world with more nature-based mandalas! You can make a new mandala each day. You can create large group mandalas at parks, beaches, anywhere you want to feel a connection with nature.
7. Don't forget to capture your mandalas in a photo. Send them to education@longpointbiosphere.com to be featured in our social media posts. We love to share the connection between children and nature.

If you have time, your class can collaborate in creating a large mandala with all the items used make the individual mandalas.

Samples: <https://www.pinterest.ca/mcsoda21/mandalas-in-nature/>

Nature Haiku

20 Minutes

What Is a Haiku?

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry made of short, unrhyming lines that make you think about nature. A haiku is a three-line poem with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern.

- The entire poem consists of just three lines.
- The first line is 5 syllables
- The second line is 7 syllables
- The third line is 5 syllables

Use this link to help explain this to your students.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQQmv38Xgt0&ab_channel=HelpfulDIY

Have your students write a Haiku about their outdoor experience. If students are comfortable, you or they, can read them to the class. Send them in to us at education@longpointbiosphere.com. We always love to highlight class accomplishments.

Nature Viewfinder

1 Hour

Introduction:

Learning to use tools like a viewfinder will help young artists to see a focal point that will help with scale of a subject. Art is truly in the mind's eye of the young artist. Choice of subject matter will also be a personal choice and preference. Help your students develop a sense of confidence by using the viewfinder. You can choose to do this lesson in the classroom or in outdoor spaces. If you use the classroom for this lesson use what you have on hand. Photos, magazines, any simple illustrations will do. If done outdoors you can use a leaf, flower, acorn, or anything you find outdoors.

Group: The whole class

Supplies: Cardboard, red thread, ruler, marker, tape, pencil, paint, jar, water, paper and paper towel.

Setting: Schoolyard, woods, forest edge, local park, shoreline, neighbourhood and in the classroom.

Nature Viewfinder continued

Instructions: Make a viewfinder.

Print: https://www.toadhollowstudio.com/wp_blog/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Large-Frame-Grid-Template.pdf

1. Cut out the viewfinder and snip the small lines on the outer edges. Then insert red thread into the snips so that they cross in the middle. Tape the thread in place.
2. Place the viewfinder on your piece of paper and use a pencil to lightly draw around the outside edge of the viewfinder on the of piece of paper. Add the crossed lines through the middle with the help of a ruler.
3. Use a leaf or something simple from nature to create a simple silhouette. It can be a bit challenging to draw freehand, but the viewfinder makes it easier.
4. Center the viewfinder over whatever object you choose and now you can see how it's divided into four smaller quarters, with lots of reference points to help guide your drawing.
5. With your pencil, mark the points on the drawing grid on your piece of paper where the object crosses each line of the string and touches the inner edges of the viewfinder. You can estimate where the points are, or you can measure with your pencil tip and thumb.
6. As you work, look back and forth between the object and your drawing. Use the marks to help place the lines. If you've haven't drawn very much before, this probably seems like a lot to keep track of. Just go slowly.
7. Now that you have your sketch completed, paint it!

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