St. Joseph's
Catholic Primary School
Winsford Cheshire

Forest School Family Projects

Story Landscapes – Troll Mazes

EYFS & Year 1

Aim. To encourage narrative construction and storytelling.

In Brief. Children are told a story about nasty trolls. Children use sticks, wool, tiny pebbles and clay to make trolls. Children work together to make a maze to stop the trolls from escaping.

Main ELGs

Understanding. Children follow the sequence of instructions in respect of the activities and seek support in a way that is relevant to the activity.

Speaking. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Being imaginative: Children use materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes. They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through role play and stories.

Preparation. Make a small, three-circuit labyrinth out of pebbles to demonstrate the technique. Children can make a pebble maze to their own design

Activities

a) Children are told a short story about trolls and their habits. Explain how Norse sailors made mazes out of pebbles on the beaches so that the trolls couldn't follow them onto the boats and make mischief at sea.

b) Each child makes a troll, using clay, small sticks, tiny pebbles and sheep's wool for hair (trolls have very long hair)

c) Make a maze for your troll family out of pebbles that is so confusing they will not be able to escape.

d) Tell the Story. Children take it in turns to contribute to the narrative.

Reflection. What did you like best about making up your story?

Hazards. *Ensure all children are adequately clothed for the wet conditions. Remind children about the usual hedgerow hazards of fungi, brambles and nettles. Remind about not putting hands in mouth or eyes after handling clay, raw wool or found materials.*

Tools & Materials: Buckets containing pebbles of different sizes. Clay, very thin willow (thin enough to cut with scissors) but pre-cut a bucket of small pieces. Make an exemplar troll figure and pebble maze.

Making a Bird's Nest and Eggs out of Clay

Reception to Year 2

Aims. Children learn about aspects of the life of birds – the dangers they face and how that affects where they build their nests. Children make a nest and eggs.

Main ELGs

Children work cooperatively and with consideration in the making activities. They are prepared to take turns and play with consideration.

Children move confidently and are able to make simple nest and clay eggs. They negotiate the spaces safely.

Children are able to identify aspects of the environment that might be important to birds and their safety. They are able to identify the environmental factors that will influence bird behaviour in selecting a nest site.

Starter – Hawks and Birds Game. Create a small number of 'safe' places or nests on the school field. These are marked with tyres. Children pretend to be baby birds. They 'fly' freely on the lower half of the field looking for food until the 'hawks' appear (2 children flying a red piece of fabric). When the hawks appear the children must return to the nest and be very still. If they are tagged by a hawk they are 'dead' until the round is over.

Activities

Gathering Material to make a Nest. What do birds make their nests out of? What can a bird carry? Talk about the different materials used by small birds to build their nests.

Children are given a collecting back and collect long dry grasses, very thin twigs and moss for making a nest.

Make a Nest. Working in pairs, children make a simple nest.

Find a Safe Place for the Nest. Where would birds build their nests? They must be out of sight from humans, cats and hawks. Children now find a suitable place to put their nests. When this is done they share their nest location with other groups.

Make small speckled eggs for the Nest. Working in two colours of air-drying clay, make speckled eggs and position them in the nest. Do the nests hold the eggs safely?

Treasure Hunt. Find the chocolate eggs in the Forest School area.

Reflection – Did I work well with my friends? Did we help each other? What will happen if a bird does not hide its nest carefully? Crows and Rooks don't hide their nests. How do they keep them safe?

Materials: Provide extra grass and moss in case of shortage on the ground. Provide terracotta and stone coloured clay for egg-making. 4 red streamers for the hawks. Green twine or garden twists and safety scissors to help children in tying the nests to shape. Chocolate Eggs!!

Easter Garden

Years 1 to 3

Easter Garden

Aim. To celebrate Easter with a traditional Easter Activity.

In Brief. Children make an Easter Garden in the side of the mound facing the labyrinth. Children make mini- Easter Gardens to take home.

KS1 – Design & Technology.

Children gain insight into a basic production process where are series of pre-defined stages are followed to complete a product.

KS1 – Art

Children engage in making a decorative item and engage creatively with the making process.

Main Activities.

The group is split into 2. One group makes the mini – Easter Gardens whilst the second group makes the big Easter Garden. They swap over after the Easter Chocolate break.

Activity Stages for main Easter Garden.

Children gather the materials, including flowers, to make 3 crosses, stones for the tomb etc.

The tomb is made first, including a stone to cover the entrance.

Willow is cut with mini-hacksaws and then tied to make 3 crosses.

The flowers are planted around the tomb.

The crosses are positioned in the ground.

Hot Chocolate break.

Children gather moss, tiny flowers and very small stones for their Easter Garden.

They use mini-hacksaws or are supported with secateurs (adult use) to cut two pieces of willow to make a single cross (3 crosses if they are fast and able!). These are tied to make a small cross.

A golf ball size piece of clay is flattened on one side to make a small mound.

The tomb is carefully made with tiny stones pushed into the clay.

Using a tiny stick, mosses and tiny flowers are inserted into the mound.

The cross is places at the highest point on the clay mound.

Reflection. What is the story behind the Easter Garden?

Hazards. Children supervised at 1:4 for hacksaw use. Warn children to take care when gathering materials.

Tools & Materials: Fine willow. Mini-hacksaws and secateurs to cut. Clay, red or green wool on bobbins to tie the crosses. Scissors. Possibly cup-cake holders to make them in or similar. Trays to store finished products. Trowels, box of primroses or similar for full-size Easter Garden.

Stick Mobiles

Year 2 to 6

Aims. To improve their skills in applying their knowledge of basic measurement and 2D shapes. To enable children to enjoy their creativity.

In Brief. Children collect natural materials to make a mobile. Using a small number of demonstrated techniques children assemble a stick mobile. Children will be asked to 'theme' their mobile and explain the connections between the items used (shape, colour, season, trees etc.)

KS1 – Recognizing and handling 2D shapes.

Design & Technology – use a range of tools and materials to cut their wood to the desired size, and assemble and join their selected components to achieve the product as described.

Activities.

a) Children explore two exemplars. What are mobiles for? How are they put together? Talk about the mobiles in terms of materials used and possible themes (seasons, colours, shapes). Demonstrate how the sticks can be attached to the twine by untwisting a section of twine and inserting the stick into the resultant loop and then re-twisting closed.

b) Children are given plenty of time to collect a bag of 'treasure' to make their mobiles.

c) Children are given demonstrations on how to assemble their mobiles.

d) Children assemble the main form of their mobile with string or green sisal – and decorate sticks with colour pens, wools and tapes.

e) Additional items, such as feathers, leaves or small, decorative sticks are threaded through the string.

f) Children explain their mobiles to the rest of the group

Reflection - Are you happy with how you cooperated and worked together? Say that you liked about the activity and the product you made.

Hazards. *Warn about not running whilst carrying sticks. Remind them to look carefully before picking up 'found' objects to make sure there are no hazards. Remind them not to put fingers near mouth or eyes once they have started to collect. Supervise at one adult to 3 mini-hacksaws in use. Issue only as many tools as can be supervised Ensure that the hand holding the stick is gloved when sawing with mini-hacksaw. Give very clear instructions about working away from the body and not towards it*

Materials: Simplified rules to pin to shed. 5 mini-hacksaws and spare blades. Reels of coloured tape. 3 pairs of scissors. 5 grooved blocks. Spools of wool to make hanging loops. Spare 'found' sticks. Bale of string. Brace and bit in case children wish to drill holes through thicker sticks. 'Washing line' for hanging exemplar mobiles and 'made' mobiles.

Making a Mini – Worm Farm

Year 2 to 6

Aim. To find out about the functions of earthworms relative to the ecology of soil. To find out about the diet and behaviour of earthworms.

In Brief. Children go on a worm hunt in specific environments and make observations about their findings. Children begin work on a worm farm.

KS1 Science. Children identify that worms live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how the habitats provide for the basic needs. Children can describe how worms obtain their food using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food.

Main Activities.

Warm Up. Birds and Worms Game – can the birds pull the worm out of the whole (birds versus worms tug-of-war)

Stages for Worm Hunt.

Children are given a selected area within the Forest School Area to search for worms.

They are instructed to work with care in their worm hunt, turning over stones, logs, vegetation and careful digging, safeguarding worms. Found worms are stored in the containers provided.

Worms from each area are counted and checked for size.

Sharing information and conclusions based on finds.

Parts of the worm – describe what they see.

Make a Worm Farm. Working in teams of two or three Children cut the top off a large plastic bottle with scissors and tape the edge. Pour in 2 inches gravel or stones for drainage. Alternate 5cm layers of sand and earth. Lightly spray with water to provide some moisture. Put a few small pieces of semi-decomposed vegetable waste in the middle for worm food. Continue with soil layers till top of bottle. Add worms. Tape the top back on or cover top with plastic wrap and tape. Put in several air holes. Take worm farms back to the classroom to observe. Store in a dark place.

Reflection. How important are worms to us? What would happen if there were no worms?

Hazards. *Ensure children dig far enough away from each other not to cause accidental injury with any digging process. Warn about not moving any stone or log stump that are too heavy to move safely. Warn about placing soil in the bucket and not flicking or throwing such as to risk injury to eyes.*

Tools & Materials: Peg out worm find areas for 4 small groups – string, pegs, rubber mallets. Two buckets per group and trowel per child. 1 large plastic coke bottle per group, insulating tape. Bag of fine gravel. Bag of sand (B & Q). Small quantity rotten vegetable food waste or other garden waste.

Making Free-standing Shelters

Years 3 to 6

Aims. To provide an opportunity to utilize learnt skills in a creative task. To develop structure building and knot-tying skills. To discuss the role of shelters in moderating the environment to facilitate human activity.

In Brief – Working in teams if possible, children build shelters hazel poles, guy ropes, tarpaulins, with an emphasis on using the skills acquiring during the course to date.

Science – Structures & Materials – Identifying the suitability of materials to carry out particular functions.

Forces – understanding how structures work – Identifying how the wind and weight pressures are transferred to the ground via poles and guy ropes. Opposing forces providing strength.

A demonstration shelter is set up in advance. Children can examine, evaluate and copy or make a design of their own. It will be stressed that the activity is time limited. *The demonstration shelter frame consists of a 3 metre hazel pole supported by two 'A' frames made with 1.2 metre poles. The structure is braced by two guy ropes at either end. The tarpaulin is placed over the hazel pole and pegged down with steel tent pegs (picture to follow).*

Activity – To make a free-standing shelter per group that is wind and rain proof.

a) Divide into groups if possible and provide identical materials to each group (see below).

b) Discuss the functions of temporary shelters and their characteristics if they are to work properly – ability to shed rain, withstand wind forces, provide sufficient covered space. Discuss peoples and parts of the world where portable shelters are still used as primary living space.

c) Set the challenge – to build a free-standing rain and windproof shelter capable of sheltering the group building it.

Reflection. Have they worked successfully as teams with everyone having a function and the group having a mechanism for making decisions? Were the shelters successful? If there were aspects of the work that could have been done better, what were they?

Hazards. *Ensure that children are briefed on safety first in carrying poles. Provide guidance on the use of mallets and steel tent pegs. Ensure that all steel pegs are collected in at the end of the activity.*

Materials: (for 4 groups) 4 x 3 metre poles, 8 x 1.2 metre poles, 4 rubber mallets and 40 steel tent pegs, 2 balls of twine, 4 pairs safety scissors.