

Connecting Kids to Nature

Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea from PLT that introduces the concept of forest products.

Activity 13: We All Need Trees

Children are often surprised to learn how many different products we get from trees. Use this activity to help children learn just how much we depend on trees in our daily lives.

Doing the Activity

Take a walk with children, and bring along a daypack filled with a few tree products, for example, fruit (e.g., apple, orange, mango), a pencil and a journal or a book, sunblock, and chewing gum. Pick up a downed tree branch and ask where it came from (a tree). Eat the fruit, and ask children where it came from (a store? a tree?). Ask children to think of other items that come from trees. Discuss some unusual tree products, using the samples from your daypack. Ask critical questions, including:

- Have you used anything that comes from trees today?
- How are tree products alike and how are they different?
- What do you like most about trees?

In addition to giving us wood, paper, food, and other products, trees are invaluable assets to our communities. Take a neighborhood walk, and look for newly planted trees and shrubs. How are they protected? Find a place without trees, and compare it with a place with many. Which place do you like best? Why?

For a children’s story about the gifts of trees and our responsibility to care for them, check out *The Tree Farmer* by Chuck Leavell and Nicholas Cravotta, 2005, ISBN: 1893622169.

Complete this word search puzzle to discover ten tree products. Look below for the answers.

A	U	R	A	T	I	U	G	I
T	P	E	T	O	S	B	E	L
T	O	P	A	C	H	O	N	I
E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C
P	E	P	U	E	H	K	D	N
P	O	S	T	C	A	R	D	E
U	E	W	E	N	I	W	I	P
T	E	E	R	S	R	O	T	H
C	I	N	N	A	M	O	N	C

Adapted from Activity 13: We All Need Trees from *Project Learning Tree’s PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!

- Attend a workshop near you to receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- Contact your MN PLT State Coordinator, laura.duffey@state.mn.us or 651-259-5263, or visit www.plt.org.

Answers: apple, book, cinnamon, chair, chocolate, guitar, house, newspaper, pencil, postcard

www.plt.org



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