

Autumn is a brilliant time to take your class outdoors to investigate all the changes in nature happening around the park. Leaf and seed hunts are especially popular and can easily be carried out using the Leaf and Seed ID guides.

It is important that you contact Belfast City Council Parks Section to obtain approval for your visit. Visiting the park before the school visit is recommended as it is important to know where the trees are located and familiarise yourself with your surroundings.

There are many things to see when walking around your local park.

Suggested Activity Location

Parks / Area with trees

You Will Need

- Information on 6 main trees that you should find;
- Leaf ID Guide;
- Seed ID guide;
- Also included are simple activities for the pupils to complete whilst enjoying the park;
- Art palettes;
- History photos;
- History statements;
- Paper bags - so children can collect natural items for their classroom (1 bag / 2 children, have extra in case of rips and tears!);
- Seeds;
- Paper acorns;

Information contained in this section is:

- Information on 6 trees;
- Leaf ID Guide;
- Seed ID Guide;
- Curriculum links

Time: These activities have been timed to enable you to plan and select what you have time for on the day. (see next page)

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Introduction 10/20 mins (depending on break)

- Walk to the park.
- Distribute brown collecting bags if available (useful for collecting items for art palettes (1 bag for 2 children) or leaf hunt or leaf design (see below)

Trees (activity time 40 mins)

- Two trees to be looked at (there is information provided for 6) Oak; Horse Chestnut; Ash; Sycamore; Holly; Hawthorn.

Activity - A choice of activities to do, some in the park, some indoors

- Feed the birds - Make bird feeders from cones (*You will need for a list of ingredients*) (20 mins prep, 30 min activity)
- Leaf Hunt Activity (activity time 10-15 mins)
- View finder Activity (activity time 30 minutes) (NB. Remember to take photos)

Parks in the Past (activity time 20 mins)

- Photos and statements relating to parks - specific information provided on Alexandra; Ballysillan; Botanic; Ormeau; Waterworks. Generic information is provided and can be used in all parks as can the drama section.

Art in the Park option of two activities (15 mins for one activity)

- Art palettes to be provided to all children (Download the double art palette pdf) near the end of each session. Can be completed in park or back in school.
- Leaf Design

Wildlife Games in Parks (activity time 15 mins each)

- Three wildlife Games - Leaf Scramble Game; Squirrel Acorn Game; Seed dispersal activity

During the pupils' visit to the park:

- Divide the class in two as it will enable the children to get a closer look at every thing discussed
- Follow a trail which takes in six trees or fewer depending on time
- Help the children identify each species using the Tree leaves and Seed ID Guides
- Discuss how each tree disperses its seeds (using separate seed dispersal activity sheet)

Learning objectives and Curriculum links

The Curriculum links and learning outcomes that are particular to the tree activities are included on the next programme sheet. Other curriculum links that relate to the other activities are included on those sheets.

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Learning objectives and Curriculum links

- To recognise six main trees in the park and their seed dispersal techniques;
- To understand the inter-relationships between plants, animals and humans;
- To increase healthy living by using parks;
- To appreciate parks in your local area;
- To develop observational and communication skills.

The World Around Us—Interdependence Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- How living things rely on each other within the natural world;

The World Around Us -Place Pupils should be enabled to explore:

- Ways in which people, plants and animals depend on the features and materials in places and how they adapt to their environment;

Language and Literacy Talking and listening Pupils should be enabled to:

- participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes; know, understand and use the conventions of group discussion;
- share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals;
- formulate, give and respond to guidance, directions and instructions;

Games Pupils should be enabled to:

- progress from developing individual skills and partner activities and games to suitable small-sided, adapted and mini-games through both co-operative and then competitive play;
- develop control in running, jumping, changing speed, stopping and starting, with and without small equipment;

Personal and Mutual understanding

Mutual Understanding in the local and wider community

- playing an active and meaningful part in the life of the community and being concerned about the wider environment.

Mathematics - Patterns, Relationships and Sequences in Number

Pupils should be enabled to:

- explore and predict patterns and sequences of whole numbers; follow and devise rules for generating sequences;

Art and Design Pupils should be enabled to:

- engage with observing, investigating, and responding to first hand experiences, memory and imagination;
- collect, examine and select resource material to use in the development of ideas;
- appreciate methods used in the resource materials and use their appreciation to stimulate personal ideas and engage with informed art making;
- develop their understanding of the visual elements of colour, tone, line, shape, form, space, texture and pattern to communicate their ideas.

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Key Terms

There are a number of key terms the Autumn Programme introduces

Habitat

This is basically a home. A habitat is the natural environment in which a particular species lives. It could include a park, forest, lake, upland, pond, river, grassland, farmland, wildflower meadow or mountain.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of habitats, plants and animals in any given place. Plants, animals and humans have interdependence upon each other. Increasing biodiversity will create a healthy and sustainable environment.

Seed types

Seeds come in different shapes and sizes – some are found within nuts, some in cases helping them to fly and some inside tasty berries which humans and animals alike cannot resist!

Mother tree

This is the tree from which seeds fall from. Plants and trees aim to place their seeds some distance away from them. Doing so will set up more colonies and will prevent lack of space. If trees or plants grow too closely together, they compete for nutrients from the soil, water and sunlight. During heavy winds, if trees have grown too closely together, their trunks will be very tall and thin, hence they will be susceptible to falling over!



Kids always enjoy collecting items to bring back to school. Why not bring some bags on your visit and ask the children to fill them with interesting natural objects. You could discuss them back in the classroom and display them on a nature table!

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