



News

November 2015

Editorial

There has been a lot of interest within the Early Years sector this term. NIFSA has been delivering the Level 3 Forest School Leader Award to Sunshine Nursery in Ballinderry and Mossley Nursery in Newtownabbey. We have also delivered a crash course in Introduction to Forest Schools Level 1 for Comber Nursery and Primary School. Great to see interest from this sector, the sooner children get involved with Forest Schools the better for them.

Challenge Fund

In April of this year NIFSA applied to the Challenge Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency for funding to support Forest School training for disadvantaged groups in Donegal Pass, Sandy Row and the Markets area of South Belfast. We were thrilled to here our application had been successful this month and we can begin delivering the Level 3 Forest School Leadership Award to Belfast City Council Support Workers and volunteers from these centres.



Markets area of South Belfast



Sandy Row Community Centre



Green space outside Donegal Pass Community Centre



Resources



<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-9qmg5h>

Forestry Commission England have created some great downloadable lesson plans to be used in the forest. They contain links to the new national curriculum, but are just as appropriate for non-education groups.



Free downloadable lesson plan: Explore with your senses

For more learning resources from the Forestry Commission, visit www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning

The Forestry Commission (FC) looks after more than 1500 woods and forests in England – together they make up the public forest estate. Forests provide endless learning opportunities, and are great for sensory exploration. Take your class for a visit to your local FC woodland, and use all five senses to discover it.

Curriculum links:
EYFSP: Communication and language; Moving and handling; Understanding the world; Exploring through materials.

Science: Year 1 - Plants; Animals including humans; Everyday materials; Seasonal changes. Year 2 - Living things and their habitats.

Before your visit:

Before you visit the forest, ask the children to draw a picture of what they think it will be like. With older children, invite them to add a sentence about each sense - what sights, sounds, smells and touches would there be in a forest?

- What do they think a tree trunk will feel like?
- Do they think they will hear any animals or birds?
- Do they think they will see people in the forest – what will those people be doing?

For a great introduction to the forest and how it is cared for by the Forestry Commission, visit www.forestry.gov.uk/england-learning and look at the downloads page, where you will find an informative, child-friendly photo show, with notes and discussion questions. You will also find some useful health and safety advice for your visit.

- You will need to bring:**
- Paint swatches
 - Crayons
 - Listening maps (small pieces of card with 'me' in the centre)
 - Paper
 - Water
 - Pencils
 - Picnic
 - Yogurt pot

Forest Lesson Plan

Starter activity

Find an area in the forest to sit or stand in a circle. Give out the pictures and descriptions of the forest they completed at school.

- What things are the same?
- What is different?
- Is there anything extra?

Explain that you are going to turn the 2D picture into a 3D memory, but that they need to use their senses to explore fully to do this. If needed, invite the children to remind you what their five senses are.

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Free downloadable lesson plan: Terrific Trees

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The Forestry Commission (FC) looks after more than 1500 woods and forests in England – together they make up the public forest estate. Forests are the perfect place to learn about trees and how important they are for people and wildlife, so print out this lesson plan and bring your class or group to your local FC woodland to learn more about the terrific world of trees.

Curriculum links:
Science (Year 1 – 3) – Plants; Animals including humans; Seasonal changes; Living things and their habitats; Working scientifically

Before your visit:

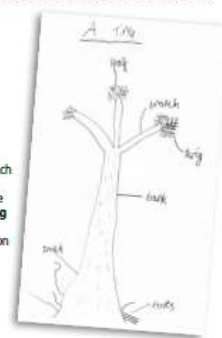
- Find out how much the children already know about trees.
- Do they know the names of any tree species?
 - Do they know anything about how a tree grows / what it grows from?
 - Do they know why we grow trees?
 - Do they know how a deciduous tree changes throughout the year?

Ask the children to draw a picture of a tree, showing and labelling (if appropriate) the different parts e.g. trunk, bark, branch

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You will need to bring:

- Whistle
- 'be a seed' cards (see page 7)
- mobile phone (real or pretend)
- 'shrinking forest' tree pictures
- blindfolds
- collecting bags



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Free downloadable lesson plan: Exploring natural materials – forest art

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The Forestry Commission (FC) looks after more than 1500 woods and forests in England – together they make up the public forest estate. Forests provide endless learning opportunities, and are great places to inspire creativity. Take your class for a visit to your local FC woodland, and collect forest materials to make wonderful pieces of natural art.

Curriculum links:
Art: Using a range of materials creatively; Using sculpture to develop and share ideas and imagination; Using colour, pattern, texture, shape and form in the development of artworks.
Science: Plants and animals; Everyday materials; Seasonal changes.

Before your visit:

Ask the children to draw a picture of what they think the forest will be like. With older children, invite them to add a sentence about the different kinds of natural materials that they would expect to find in the forest. How would this vary according to the time of year?

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You will need to bring:

- Selection of pictures of animals you would expect to find in a UK woodland
- Laminated scavenger hunt cards – prepared in advance
- Collecting bags
- Tree ID guides or 'Trees in Your Forest' explorer sheet – from the FC downloads page
- Clipboards
- Plain paper and wax crayons



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