

MOONBEAMS® TREES



OVERVIEW

Moonbeams explore evidence of God's creativity at work in nature as they learn about trees. They'll learn about the important role trees play in nature and have opportunities to interact with nature through outdoor exploration.

OBJECTIVES

To earn this emblem, Moonbeams need to complete at least one activity from each section and the Bible lesson.



WORD BANK

- Habitat
- Tree
- Seed
- Leaf

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS SUPPORTED BY THE ACTIVITIES

- Positive Peer Relationships
- Play and Creative Activities
- Engagement in Learning Experiences
- Self-Regulation

GROUP ACTIVITIES

NATURAL INSTINCTS

Take the Moonbeams outside to look at trees in their natural space and discuss the role trees play in their natural habitats. Can the Moonbeams see evidence of the following?

- Trees provide homes for animals and insects.

- Trees provide food (nuts, fruit).
- Trees cool the earth.

EXPERIMENT: On a warm, sunny day place one ice cube in the sun and another in the shade of a tree. Ask Moonbeams to predict which cube will melt first. Watch together the way the shade affects the ice and surrounding area. Talk about how trees affect our climate.

WOOD PRODUCTS

Explore the corps with the Moonbeams to see how many different things are made from tree products. Encourage them to try it again when they get home.

- Furniture (Even a stuffed couch may have a wooden frame. Allow children to crawl under or behind to feel and see if wood is “hiding” in larger pieces of furniture.)
- Woodwork
- Toys
- Pencils
- Kitchenware—spoons, cutting boards, etc.
- Paper, books
- Rubber products
- Maple syrup
- Chewing gum

GROWTH SPURTS ✱

Talk about how trees grow. Ask the Moonbeams what trees need to be healthy. (Answer: sunshine, water, dirt, space)

Visit a Christmas tree farm, orchard, nursery, or forest preserve with the Moonbeams. Arrange in advance for an expert to talk to the children about how trees are planted and cared for.

PLANT A SEEDLING

Seedlings are available from your local forest service or The National Arbor Day Foundation. Check the web for local resources or nurseries.

PLAY IN LEAVES ✱

Go outdoors and have the Moonbeams rake leaves into big piles. Then let the Moonbeams hide and jump in the leaves.

ADOPT A TREE

Have the Moonbeams choose a favorite tree to adopt, and then spend time getting to know about the tree. What makes it special and unique?

Observe the tree throughout the year to learn about the stages of growth and change it undergoes.

CRAFTS ✱

Make a craft from a tree product. Some ideas are listed below or complete another tree craft of your choice.

PINE CONE BIRD FEEDER

SUPPLIES:

- String or pipe cleaners
- Pine cones
- Peanut butter or margarine
- Bird seed

Have each Moonbeam do the following:

1. Tie a string to the top of a pine cone.
2. Roll pine cone in peanut butter and dip in bird seed.
3. Hang the feeder in a tree for birds and squirrels to enjoy! If possible, hang feeders in a tree that's visible from class window.

NOTE: Most birds can eat only while they're perched. Make sure to hang feeders where they may enjoy a sit-down lunch.

NOTE: In case of allergies, soft margarine can be substituted for peanut butter.



PINE CONE CHRISTMAS TREES DECORATIONS

SUPPLIES:

- Pine cones (flat top)
- Craft glue
- Green glitter
- Beads

Choose pine cones with flat tops, so they will stand up. Show children that the pine cones look like small trees.

Lead the Moonbeams through these steps:

1. Roll pine cones in craft glue. (School glue will not dry as quickly and is messier.)
2. Roll the pine cones in green glitter and allow them to dry.
3. "Trees" may then be decorated with beads or miniature ornaments, if desired.

NOTE: For a slightly less messy project, use thin paintbrushes to apply glue and show the children how to pinch and sprinkle the glitter.

LEAF BOOK

SUPPLIES:

- Empty cereal or cracker boxes
- Scrap paper (e.g. office paper that has been printed on only one side)
- Scissors
- Three-hole punch
- String or yarn
- Glue or tape

Make a scrapbook for collecting leaves—either a large one for the troop to share or a small one for each Moonbeam. Use this as an opportunity to talk about reusing and recycling.

Guide the Moonbeams through these steps:

1. Cut the front and back off a cereal or cracker box. These will be the front and back cover of the scrapbook.
2. Punch three holes on one side of several sheets of scrap paper.
3. Place scrap paper inside the covers.
4. Tie pages and covers together using pieces of string or yarn.
5. Once they have finished their scrapbooks, lead the Moonbeams on a nature hike to collect leaves. Have the Moonbeams attach the leaves they gathered to the scrapbook pages with glue or tape.

SONGS & RHYMES

ZACCHAEUS WAS A WEE LITTLE MAN

Zacchaeus was a wee little man,
And a wee little man was he.
He climbed up in a sycamore tree,
For the Lord he wanted to see.
And as the Savior passed that way,
He looked up in the tree, and he said,
“Zacchaeus, you come down;
For, I’m going to your house today,
For, I’m going to your house today.”

Find the tune at: www.kidsongs.wordpress.com/2006/08/04/zacchaeus/.

ALL THE LEAVES ARE FALLING DOWN

(To the tune of “London Bridge”)

All the leaves are falling down, falling down,
falling down.

All the leaves are falling down, to the ground.

Take a rake and pile them up, pile them up,
pile them up.

Take a rake and pile them up. Make a mound.

Now we all can jump and play, jump and play,
jump and play.

Now we all can jump and play, in the leaves.

GAMES

ANY WAY THE WIND BLOWS

Play a game about leaves and wind. Ask the children to pretend they’re leaves and do what you say the leaves are doing.

Make the following statements:

- **The leaves are floating gently from the tree to the ground.**
- **Suddenly a big wind blows the leaves and spins them flying in circles.** (Make the sound of wind blowing.)
- **The wind stops and the leaves float gently back to the ground.**
- Once all the children have settled, “rake” (gently move) the leaves back into a big pile.

TRY IT: Play an instrumental song and pretend to be trees swaying in the wind.

WE'RE GOING ON A LEAF HUNT ✱

SUPPLIES:

- Paper bags
- Stickers
- Crayons

Children at this age may be too young to name various species of trees, but they are able to distinguish between shapes and sizes. They'll enjoy collecting different leaves, especially if approached as a treasure hunt.

Before going outdoors, give each child a paper bag to use for collecting treasures. If you have time, have the children use stickers and crayons to decorate their bags.

During the hunt, children may find other treasures from trees, such as seeds, pine cones or acorns. These should surely be added to the treasure bags. Help the children search for one type of leaf at a time. Tell them to be on the lookout for the following leaves:

- A leaf bigger than your foot
- A heart-shaped leaf
- A mitten-shaped leaf
- A leaf that was chewed by an insect
- A pointed leaf
- A golden leaf
- A tiny leaf

ALL SORTS OF LEAVES ✱

During the fall, gather a variety of leaves. Silk leaves may be used, if that is preferable, or a handout of leaves in various sizes and colors



is included in the *Leaders' Resource Pages*. If using the handout, print onto cardstock and cut apart. The number of leaves needed will vary with the number of Moonbeams in the troop.

Ask children to sort the leaves according to size (arrange smallest to largest), shape or color.

SNACKS ✱

Serve up tree snacks—apples, oranges, bananas, and fruit juice. (CHORUS: I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas.) Find the words, music and directions at: www.KIDiddles.com.

This is a fabulous opportunity for children to try new tastes. Check the pantry for foods that are tree products... chocolate, olives, coconut, tree nuts, spices, tea, etc. Offer sample tastes from a tree smorgasbord.

BIBLE LESSON

SUPPLIES:

- *Zachaeus* handout from *Leaders' Resource Pages* (one per child)
- Crayons

Share the Bible story of Zacchaeus. (Luke 19:1-10)

Explain that good manners meant Zacchaeus could not refuse to serve Jesus food. Consider what would have happened if he wasn't prepared to have a guest for dinner. He would have to find food quickly. Ask the Moonbeams what kinds of food can be found in trees.

Pass out the *Zachaeus* handouts and have Moonbeams draw an imaginary meal for Jesus. Tell them to be sure to include foods that come from trees. Then have them pretend to gather food for Jesus.

Pray and thank God for trees and for the foods they provide.

LEADERS' RESOURCES

BOOKS

The Lorax by Dr. Seuss

A Tree is Nice by Janice May Udry

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Ehlert

Leaves! Leaves! Leaves! by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

The Apple Pie Tree by Zoe Hall

DVDS/VIDEOS

The Lorax by Illumination Entertainment, Universal Studios

WEBSITES

Project Learning Tree's *Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood* integrates nature-based exploration, art, literature, math, music and movement into early childhood education programs. It has a number of activities which would supplement this activity, including:

- "Signs of Fall"
- "Get In Touch with Trees"
- "We All Need Trees"
- "To Be a Tree"
- "Three Cheers for Trees"

To learn more about Project Learning Tree's materials, visit: www.plt.org/early-childhood.

Children and leaders can order seedlings from the Arbor Day Tree Store at: www.arborday.org.

For craft resources, check out the leaf crafts at Enchanted Learning's leaf page: www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/leaf/.

Many people think Johnny Appleseed was a fictional character, but he was a real person. These activities and lessons that make learning about Johnny Appleseed fun can be found at: www.enchantedlearning.com/school/usa/people/Appleseedindex.shtml.

Ideas and lesson plans for tree activities: www.first-school.ws/activities/seasons/trees.htm.

To find activities, craft ideas and games to use with this emblem, check out: <http://pinterest.com/samoonbeams/trees/>.

Explore www.enature.com/zipguides.com to find out what trees can be found in your area.