



What is Nature?

(adapted from the David Suzuki Foundation's "Connecting with Nature" publication)

Age: Grades 2-8

Lesson Plan One: The Child in Nature

Objective: To have students begin to think about their relationship with nature.

Background: A lot of times we forget how many things in our world can actually be included in a definition of nature. There are obvious things, like the tree you see through your classroom window but there's also things you aren't reminded of as often.

Activity: Spend some time in an outdoor space. This could be around your school or a nearby green space or it could be your own backyard. Share with your family or friends or your classmates what you see, what you feel and what you can touch.

Now focus on one observation and record it on paper using words and/or pictures. Your observations should be in answer to the question "what is nature". Once individual observations have been made by each student ask them to turn over their paper and use only one word to answer the question "what is nature". Make sure they record their single word in large letters on their page. Next have the students stand holding their papers in front of them for others to observe. Students can now circulate amongst themselves to silently take in what their classmates have written.

Next ask the class to pair up with a partner and spend a moment explaining their word choices to their partner. Once this has been done ask students with similar words to stand together. This is an opportunity to discuss how we are all part of nature.

Group Discussion:

1. What kinds of groups did you make?
2. How were they different from each other? How were they similar?
3. How were the groups connected to each other?
4. Are any ideas about nature more right than others? Explain
5. How do we affect nature and vice versa?



Writing Activity: Now that you've shared your ideas as to what nature is, write a paragraph about what YOU think nature is and how it can best be defined. Include in your writing what your relationship is with nature and how you are connected to it. It could be as simple as swimming in an outdoor pool and enjoying the trees that line that outdoor space and the sun beaming down on you or maybe even the rain!

Challenge: Now that you've discovered how connected we are to nature, what are some things we can do everyday to have a more positive effect on our environment.

OR

Challenge: Brainstorm with your classmates for ways to connect (or reconnect) with nature.

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