

Camp Fire
MINNESOTA

My nature connection

WRITING POETREE

GRADES: K+
TIME: 30-45 min.

Families will:

1. Foster a creative connection with a local tree by writing a poem or a story to it.
2. Boost dopamine levels by touching soil and plants while encouraging play outdoors!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Pen or Pencil
Paper
A hard surface to write on (clipboard, old book, etc.)

ACTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Trees are more similar to humans than you might think! Like humans, trees need to drink water and they rely on sunshine and different nutrients to survive.

But there are a couple of other mysterious practices trees and humans share too. Did you know, the part of the tree that we don't usually see is its massive root system which is TWICE as big as the canopy? This giant cluster of roots is where some really magical things can happen.

In the soil beneath you, many trees are connected and they are working as a community to help each other survive! Just like humans!

Trees of the same species can weave their roots together and help each other take in resources. If one tree does not get enough nutrients, another tree may share some of its nutrients by passing it through these root connections.

SETTING

Outdoors: In a yard, park or an area with trees.

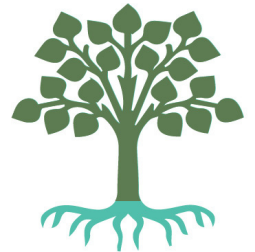
Indoors: This activity can take place indoors near a window that looks out at a tree if the weather or location permits.

UNDERSTANDING ROOT CONNECTIONS

Some trees are also connected with each other through fungi called Mycorrhizae- (My-cor-rhi-za) that make their root structures even bigger. These fungi give trees the ability to send off warning gases to trees they are connected to when they are being attacked by a predator. A predator is a species that preys upon another species. The warning lets other trees know to shield themselves with their own protective armor by extracting chemicals that are toxic to their predator.

Why do you think a tree would do this?

A forest is stronger when the trees are working together. Just like humans!



Can you think of a time when you were struggling and another person helped you?

IMAGINE ALL THAT WE HAVEN'T DISCOVERED YET!

Scientists have been able to learn some of the ways that trees connect to each other. Imagine all the things that we haven't discovered yet!

What other senses do you imagine a tree could have?

Can you imagine trees that can talk to each other?

If so, what do you think they would say?

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CONNECT TO A TREE

By writing stories or poems, and sharing them, we draw connections with the living things around us, similar to how trees create connections with each other. Now you get the chance to try this!

Ask family members to sit quietly under a tree for 10 minutes. If there are many young folks involved, ask them to spread out so they each have their own individual tree in the space provided. If indoors, choose a tree from a window.

Have them become physically familiar with their tree by feeling and smelling the bark and leaves, and digging their hands in the dirt below the canopy if they like. They may take a few minutes to lay under the canopy and trace the designs of the branches in their head.

Now that they are familiar with the tree's form, they can start to dig into what is going on below the surface. Ask them to think about all of the senses that their tree is experiencing like the relationships between trees that you discussed earlier and what other trees in the area theirs might be connected to.

What might their tree be doing to help the others around it? What do they think the tree might be feeling, seeing or what would it say if it could talk?



WRITING POETREE

Ask family members to write a poem or story to their tree. Explain that there are many different forms of poetry and they can choose to use one of these, or their very own style.

Acrostic: When written out vertically, the first letter in each line spells a word that you are using to convey and message or tell a story.

Example: Playing in the wind
Loving the sunshine
All around the world
Nutrients for the Earth
Tall trees & tiny seeds
Strong and beautiful

Free verse: This has no set style or form
Example: You might start each line saying "I am"
I am a lovely little plant
I am a home for critters
I am a part of the wilderness

Windspark: Five line poem with a pattern for starting each line:

(Line 1) "I dreamed..."
(Line 2) "I was (something or someone)..."
(Line 3) "Where..."
(Line 4) an action...
(Line 5) How...

Connecting with Questions:

Do you feel like your relationship with this tree changed while you were writing to it?

Is there anything that you learned about yourself while doing this activity?

How can you practice being more like a tree in your life?

Consider asking family members if they'd like to share their poetree with their tree and each other.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

take a short survey at: campfiremn.org/mynatureconnection

or here:

Kids Survey - [click here](#) | Teachers/Parents Survey - [click here](#)

