

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:



What is the first feeling you express when you enter nature?

Animal of the Week: Burrowing Owl



These animals are known to nest in underground burrows that are decorated with droppings of their favourite prey such as deer or cattle. This attracts dung beetles which the owl can eat, and also hides the owl's smell from nearby predators. These creatures can be found in the Okanagan area and Kamloops but are listed as one of the three endangered animals under the BC Wildlife Act.

At Home Activity: Mason Jar Lantern

What you need:

- Mason jar
- white school glue
- food colouring
- paint brushes
- tea lights

How to:

1. Ensure your jar is clean and all residue from labels is wiped off.
2. Pour 1-2 tablespoons of glue on a plate and add a few drops of food colouring. Repeat as many times for more colours.
3. Paint your first coat on the lantern and wait for it to completely dry before coating with 2nd coat. If needed, you can paint up to 3 coats.
4. Add your candles and enjoy!

Other Resources:

Burrowing owl conservation: Learn more about what is currently being done to save our burrowing owl population in BC. www.burrowingowlbc.org/index.php/our-activities

De-stress with nature's spa remedies: Find ways you can relax and feel more replenished with hydrotherapy, meditation, sound and solar therapy, and more in this article! www.hellobc.com/stories/psst-this-spa-is-free/?source=igodigital

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What can we do better to protect our natural world?

Animal of the Week: Red Squirrel



Red squirrels are one of the native squirrel species in British Columbia. They eat a variety of seeds, nuts, berries, and leaves, which they gather and store for later. Their food-gathering habits help spread plant seeds so new plants can grow and thrive. These creatures are skillful foragers, and are even known to hang fungi over tree branches in the fall to dry so their food lasts longer during the winter!

At Home Activity: 5-Day Sprouts

What you need:

- Plastic zip top bag
- A paper towel
- A few bean seeds (any kind)

How to:

1. Take your paper towel and fold it so it will fit inside your plastic zip top bag. Once your paper towel is folded, wet it and place it into the bag.
2. Grab 3-4 beans and place them in the bag on top of the wet paper towel.
3. Put your plastic bag near a window, and in about 5 days your bean should germinate and begin to sprout!

Other Resources:

Indoor & Outdoor Scavenger Hunt: Inside out fun! Check out this scavenger hunt that will lead you to find interesting things both in and out of your home. <https://buff.ly/2Aix3M0>

Learn about Soil Erosion with this Experiment: Understand the importance of vegetation covering soil with this hands-on science experiment! <https://www.lifeisagarden.co.za/soil-erosion-experiment/#.U3uAtVhdVmc>

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What does summer look like, feel like, and sound like?



Animal of the Week: Garter Snake



Garter Snakes are a type of snake that is found all across Canada. They can live in any environment except for water, so you may find these creatures in marshes, fields, forests, and more. These snakes hibernate in burrows, holes, and under rocks for almost 6 months a year, and only emerge in the spring. Female garter snakes can have up to 80 baby snakes in a single litter!

At Home Activity: Time Capsule

What you need: How to:

- Container (jar, box, etc.)
 - Items, photos, and other things to put inside.
1. Find a container that you can bury or put in a safe place.
 2. Gather your items. These can be toys, pictures, drawings, or anything you want your future self to see! Make sure they fit in the container you've chosen.
 3. Place your items in the container and bury it in your backyard, or place it in a safe place you'll remember to open in 5, 10, or more years!

Other Resources:

Aquatic Learning at Home: Ever wanted to learn more about marine biology? Monterey Bay Aquarium has several online courses and activities for youth of all ages:

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/for-educators/learning-at-home>

Edible Plants for Play and Learning: Learn the importance of edible landscaping for youth:

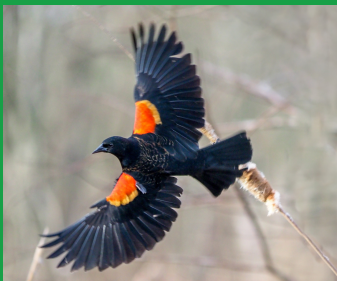
<https://naturalearning.org/edible-plants-for-play-and-learning/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is your favorite season, and why?

Animal of the Week: Red Winged Blackbird



The Red Winged Blackbird lives in saltwater marshes and watercourse areas, as well as in fields and meadows. The males have unmistakable red and yellow shoulder badges, which they use to attract the female birds. Male Red Winged Blackbirds are known to do anything for attention from females, from sitting on high perches to belting out their unique song.

At Home Activity: Bug Light Trap

What you need: How to:

- White sheet
 - Tent Pegs
 - Rope
 - String
 - Flashlight
 - Jar
1. Find a location with trees and little outside light.
 2. Tie your rope across two trees, and drape your sheet over the rope.
 3. Secure your sheet to the ground with tent pegs.
 4. Hang and secure the flashlight over one side of the sheet with string.
 5. When it gets dark, turn on the flashlight.
 6. Insects will be drawn to the light, where you can capture and observe them!
 7. Return the insects to the wild where they belong.

Other Resources:

#RecreateResponsibly: Learn how to safely enjoy outdoor spaces during COVID-19 and how to responsibly and equitably participate in recreation:

https://www.findingnature.org/post/recreate-responsibly?mc_cid=8471bddeaf&mc_eid=6ee9152cc1

Virtual Outdoor Exploration: metrovancouver's Nature Break has videos of the outdoors that will immerse you in wilderness spaces from your home: <https://buff.ly/39hiCVA>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is your favorite time of day to be outside, and why?

Animal of the Week: White-Tailed Deer



The White-tailed Deer is one of the most common large mammals in North America. They can be found in meadows and forests as they forage for green plants, nuts, and wood vegetation. The deer's unique white tail is used as a signal to warn its fawn and other deer of predators. The animals are also skilled jumpers, and can make horizontal jumps up to nine metres long!

At Home Activity: Recycled Bird Feeder

What you need:

- Recycled paper towel roll or toilet paper roll
- bird seed
- peanut butter
- string

How to:

1. Pour your birdseed into a shallow container that your recycled paper roll can fit in.
2. Coat the exterior of your paper roll in peanut butter.
3. Roll your coated roll into the birdseed.
4. String a loop through the paper towel roll and tie it.
5. Hang your DIY bird feeder on a tree outside to feed the birds!

Other Resources:

Spot Whales in BC: Find out the best places in BC to spot whales, and the times of year to see them: <https://www.hellobc.com/stories/top-5-places-to-spot-whales-in-bc/?source=igodigital>

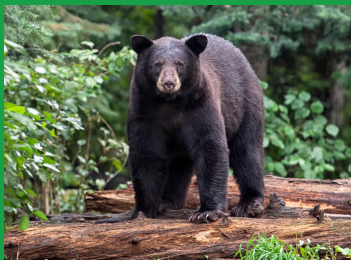
How do Plants Absorb Water?: A simple celery experiment to show kids capillary action in plants: <https://www.kiwico.com/diy/Science-Projects-for-Kids/3/project/Celery-Experiment/571>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

Write about your favorite animal. Why is it your favorite?
What does it eat? What does it look like?

Animal of the Week: Black Bear



Black bears are one of the three types of bears native to North America. These bears are extremely skilled climbers, and have long, retractable claws that help them scale trees and terrain. Black bears have a varied diet, and will eat almost anything- from berries and nuts, to insects like ants, to small mammals and birds.

At Home Activity: Nuclear Reactor Leadership Game

What you need:

- 2 meter lengths of string or twine (1 per player)
- assorted toys
- 5 thick rubber bands

How to:

1. Group the rubber bands together and tie your 2 meter lengths to the rubber band bunch.
2. Find an open area outside to play. Place the rubber band bunch in the center.
3. Have each player take one string.
4. Designate one member as a group leader to assign the task!
5. All players do the task by manipulating the rubber band with the strings.

Video Demonstration: https://youtu.be/O_wu4EuUYC8

Other Resources:

Spiral Bee Combs: Learn about new research that explains why one type of Australian Bee constructs spiral combs: <https://buff.ly/311SDxw>

Nature Craft Ideas at Home: A list of fun and easy craft ideas using supplies you can find at home and in nature. <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/kids-nature-activities-self-isolation/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What was your favorite outdoor adventure? It could be a hike, a trip, or exploring your own backyard!

Animal of the Week: White Sturgeon



Window

At Home Activity: Windowsill Garden

What you need:

- Windowsill or area in your home with natural light
- Plant pots or containers
- Leafy green or herb ends

How to:

1. Find an windowsill or area of your home with lots of natural light and a place to put your plant pots.
2. Fill your pots with potting soil and place your plant starts (leafy green or herb ends) in the pot.
3. Water and rotate the plants weekly.
4. Enjoy your fresh herbs and produce grown in your home!

Other Resources:

Scientist Discover Penguin Colonies From Space: Learn about how scientists used satellites to discover new penguin colonies in Antarctica :

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200804200809.htm>

Painting With Nature: Use natural items from the outdoors to create pieces of art!

<https://teachmama.com/backyard-painting-with-nature/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is a natural place you wish you could visit? Why do you want to go there? What would you do?

Animal of the Week: American Pika



The American Pika is an animal in the Lagomorpha family, and is related to rabbits. These creatures live in rocky, isolated, mountainous areas up to 3000 metres in elevation! They eat any vegetation they can find. American Pikas live in colonies and communicate with cute squeaks and scent markings.

At Home Activity: DIY Sunprints

What you need:

- Dark coloured construction paper
- Small toys, sticks, leaves, or flowers
- Rocks or paperweights

How to:

1. Take a piece of dark coloured construction paper and place it outside.
2. If it is a windy day, weigh it down with paperweights.
3. Make a design on the paper with your objects by placing them on the paper.
4. Leave the paper and objects in the sun for six hours.
5. Remove the objects to see the pattern preserved on the paper!

Other Resources:

Sea Otters' Return to BC Ecosystems: Learn about how sea otters are radically changing BC ecosystems after being absent for 50 years : <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/otters?fbclid=IwAR3FI3OwBepP7uFaY46v9B44vwIMaqLIMnzRDkbfpuZtJq3xbhzrFOchPIA>

10 Backyard Camping Ideas: Enjoy the fun and adventure of camping at home!
<https://outdoorafro.com/2020/05/ten-backyard-camping-ideas-from-outdoor-afro/?fbclid=IwAR2Qt-7L3yXdm4ZuXuD1ZORg127g-g2HLECDZuHnuxIXnq0Z1777Xq78>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is the most interesting thing you have found in nature?

Animal of the Week: Pacific Tree Frog



Pacific Tree Frogs are small frogs that are primarily found in the Pacific Northwest. As fully grown adults, they only grow to be five centimeters in length! These creatures eat tiny insects, spiders, and plants. Although they need to reside near a wetland or pond, their skin's waxy coating keeps them moist outside of water. A fun fact about this animal is that air temperature and humidity change the color of the Pacific Tree Frog's skin!

At Home Activity: Pressing Flowers

What you need:

- Flowers with flat buds
- Heavy book
- Absorbent paper (i.e. coffee filters or parchment paper)
- Weight (more books, dumbbell, etc.)

How to:

1. Find flowers outside with flat buds to make pressing easier. If possible, choose flowers which have just bloomed and are dry.
2. Remove the flower from the stem and place it flat on your absorbent paper.
3. Fold the absorbent paper in half, keeping the flower flat. Place the folded paper in the heavy book and press closed.
4. Place other weight on top of the book, and let sit for 3-4 weeks. Your flower will then be preserved!

Other Resources:

Garden with Your Family: Learn how to make gardening a fun activity that encourages family bonding : <https://buff.ly/2Fzgu0p>

Climate Change & Wildlife: Learn how climate change is creating a radical redistribution of life on Earth: <https://buff.ly/3aE63UV>

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What do you think is the most beautiful place in the world?



Animal of the Week: Tufted Puffin



Tufted Puffins are found in rocky, cliffed islands located on remote islands in British Columbia. This unique type of puffin have unmistakable plumage, with long, wispy plumes which hang down the bird's neck. In order to fly, the puffins take a running start, unlike other types of birds. They feed on small fish which they catch in the ocean. The Tufted Puffin is the largest puffin and can live upwards of twenty years.

At Home Activity: Leaf Scrapbook

What you need:

- Different types of leaves
- Acid-free construction paper or cardstock
- Acid-free glue
- Stickers, rulers, and other scrapbook supplies.

How to:

1. Find and collect different types of leaves that you want to include in your scrapbook.
2. Design your scrapbook page with your decorations and supplies. Have your scrapbook page designed before glueing any leaves down!
3. Put your leaves on your scrapbook page and apply thin layers of diluted glue to seal the leaf. Keep applying thin layers until its completely sealed!
4. Put on your final touches and put into a scrapbook! Try making pages in different seasons to keep a record of leaves' beautiful colors.

Other Resources:

Birds, Extreme Temperature, & Conservation: Learn how birds' responses to extreme weather can help conservation efforts:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200821120043.htm>

DIY Cardboard Snails: These easy recycled cardboard snails will put a smile on your face: <https://buff.ly/3htfV6l>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is your favorite insect? What makes it interesting to you?



Animal of the Week: American Marten



The American Marten, also known as the Pine Marten, is a creature found throughout Canada in boreal forests. These long, slender mammals are avid hunters with a high metabolism, and love to eat birds, fruits, nuts, insects, and carrion. Although they are small, they are mighty, and are capable of hunting larger prey like hares and marmots.

At Home Activity: Nature Rubbings

What you need:

- Paper
- Crayons, pencils, or colored pencils
- A place outside

How to:

1. Find an area outside that has a lot of natural objects like trees, leaves, twigs, and flowers.
2. Look around for interesting natural objects.
3. When you find something you find interesting, place your paper on top of the natural object and lightly color on top of it. As you color, you should see the shape of your natural object appear on the paper!
4. Repeat for as many times as you would like.

Other Resources:

School on the Land: Learn about how Indigenous teachings are getting kids outside:
<https://buff.ly/34Vj0sj>

12 Outdoor Activities: Enjoy the remainder of summer with these fun and easy outdoor activities for families <https://www.bhg.com/crafts/kids/outdoor-projects/outdoor-summer-kids-crafts/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

Go on a 15-minute nature walk and write or draw your surroundings. What do you notice most?

Animal of the Month: Kermode Bear



Kermode bears, also known as spirit bears, are a type of American Black Bear that has recessive genes that make its fur a light cream color. They are found in British Columbia's north and central coasts, and are only found in BC! The animal feeds on salmon, berries, fruit, insects, fawns, and other things that can be found in its forested BC habitat. They are extremely rare, with only about 400 of the bears remaining in the wild.

At Home Activity: Nature Tic Tac Toe

What you need:

- 10 rocks
- Paint, markers, or other decoration supplies
- A pen, marker, or chalk
- A piece of cardstock or cardboard

How to:

1. Find 10 rocks in nature to be your Tic Tac Toe game pieces.
2. Decorate 5 of the rocks in identical ways. They can be all the same color, or the same pattern.
3. Decorate the remaining 5 rocks in a different color or pattern.
4. Draw a Tic Tac Toe board on the sidewalk with chalk, or on your cardstock or cardboard with your pen or marker.
5. Play Tic Tac Toe with your painted rocks!

Other Resources:

Make a Stick Wind Chime: Learn how to make a colorful and easy wind chime with natural objects. <https://happyhooligans.ca/homemade-wind-chimes/>

DIY Bouncy Ball: Learn how to use science and materials you have at home to make a DIY bouncy ball. <https://www.the36thavenue.com/how-to-make-a-bouncy-ball/>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What do you think your neighborhood looked like 100 years ago?

Animal of the Month: Vancouver Island Marmot



Vancouver Island Marmots is the only exclusively Canadian endangered mammal species. They have a chocolate-colored fur with white patches, and are found on Vancouver Island. These animals spend seven months of the year underground, in deep burrows which are covered in snow and keep the marmots safe and at a stable temperature. When the creatures emerge from hibernation in the spring, they sometimes have to climb through six feet of snow to emerge!

At Home Activity: Nature Bracelet

What you need:

- Duct Tape
- A place with lots of natural surroundings

How to:

1. Wrap the piece of tape around your child's wrist, sticky side up. Make sure it is comfortable!
2. Talk a walk outside and notice small details nature has to offer, from small blooms, acorns, pinecones, and more.
3. When your child finds something natural that piques their interest, encourage them to stick it on their nature bracelet.
4. Walk home and admire your nature bracelet.

Other Resources:

Make Your Own Snake: Learn how to make a salt dough snake. <https://frugalfun4boys.com/salt-dough-snake-craft/>

Paint with Rain: Brighten up gloomy weather with this easy family painting activity, using the power of the rain! <https://nurturestore.co.uk/kids-art-painting-rain>

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What element of nature speaks to you the most? Why?



Animal of the Month: Big Brown Bat



The Big Brown Bat is a species of bat that is found all across North America in many different habitats, from deserts to forests, meadows, and even cities. These creatures love to use their echolocation skills to eat insects, and beetles are known as their favourite snack. Big brown bats are known to be the fastest species of bat, and can fly up to 40 km per hour!

At Home Activity: Nature Prints

What you need:

- Play-doh, modeling clay, or any other type of clay.
- Natural objects like leaves, pine cones, or flowers.

How to:

1. Gather interesting natural objects like leaves, pine cones, flowers, or anything else you can find.
2. Form your clay into a ball and press it into a flat disc shape.
3. Press your natural objects firmly into the clay.
4. Slowly remove your natural object from your clay and reveal the nature print underneath!
5. Optional: If you are using air dry clay, let dry and preserve your print!

Other Resources:

Easy Winter Crafts for Kids: Lots of ideas for winter craft activities for your family to enjoy and get into the seasonal spirit! <https://www.happinessishomemade.net/easy-winter-kids-crafts-that-anyone-can-make/>

10 Ways to Help Kids Fall in Love with Being Outside: Inspire the youth in your life to appreciate the great outdoors! <https://buff.ly/1rtYV62>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

How will you protect our natural world in the new year?

Animal of the Month: Fin Whale



The Fin Whale is the second largest mammal in the world, and is nicknamed the "greyhound of the sea". These creatures can be as big as 80 feet in length and consume up to 2,000 kilograms of krill in a single day. Fin whales are solitary creatures, and can be found in coasts across the globe, including in the waters of British Columbia!

At Home Activity: Frozen Tree Decorations

What you need:

- Shallow plastic dishes or containers
- Natural decorations like berries, leaves, or twigs.
- String

How to:

1. Fill your shallow dishes with water
2. Decorate and arrange your natural decorations on to the water-filled dishes
3. Create a loop with string by placing two ends of a string into the water. If needed, use tape to secure the string to the dish.
4. Freeze your decorations! If it is cold enough, simply put your decorations outside to freeze overnight. Otherwise, use your freezer!
5. Once frozen, place your ornament on a tree outside and watch it melt away.

Other Resources:

Winter Activities for Kids: Ideas to enjoy outdoor play even with cold temperatures!
<https://www.montessorinature.com/outdoor-winter-activities/>

The Molecular Magic of Ice and Snow: Learn about the science of freezing!
<http://resources4rethinking.ca/en/step-outside/nature-guides/page/early-december-2020>

Nature Near You

Journal Prompt:

What is your favourite type of bird, and why?

Animal of the Month: Sockeye Salmon



The sockeye salmon is one of the smaller species of pacific salmon, and typically grow to 18-31 centimeters in length. Freshwater lakes, streams, and rivers are important habitats for the fish when they are spawning and rearing. Their unique bright orange bodies come from the zooplankton and krill they eat in the ocean.

At Home Activity: Heart Leaf Lantern

What you need:

- Leaves
- Scissors
- Jar
- White tissue paper
- Mod podge
- Tea light

How to:

1. Collect leaves from the outdoors that you think have nice colours!
2. Cut small hearts out from the leaves.
3. Tear the white tissue paper into strips and apply them to the jar with mod podge. Let dry.
4. Apply the leaves on the jar with mod podge. Let dry
5. Mod podge the entire jar to seal the design.
6. Place the tea light in the jar and have an adult light it. Watch your lantern shine!

Other Resources:

Valentine Activities for Kids: Outdoor Valentine's Day activities for kids!

<http://goexplore nature.com/2014/01/valentines-day-nature-activities-for-kids.html>

5 Young Climate Activists: Learn about the incredible work these 5 youth have done to protect our planet! <https://yourstory.com/herstory/2019/10/5-young-climate-change-activists-autumn-peltier-ridhima-pandey>

Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What are you most excited to see in nature this spring?



Animal of the Month: Meadow Vole



Meadow voles are small rodents that are found all across North America. They live in grassy areas in places like agricultural fields, marshes, open-canopied bogs, and forested areas. They love to eat all kinds of greenery. These animals are small but mighty: the 4.5 inch creatures can run as fast as six miles per hour!

At Home Activity: Paper Bag Flower Crown

What you need:

- Brown paper bag
- Scissors
- Tape
- Flowers
- Glue
- Decoration supplies
 - Markers, paint, etc.

How to:

1. Fold open your paper bag so it lays flat.
2. Cut a 4-6 inch strip, depending on how thick you would like your crown to be.
3. Cut a zig-zag along the top of your strip.
4. Go outside! Collect flowers you want to adorn your crown with.
5. Glue or tape your flowers onto the crown.
6. Cut the crown to the circumference of your head and tape it into a circle.
7. Add other decorations to your crown with markers and paint.
8. Wear your crown!

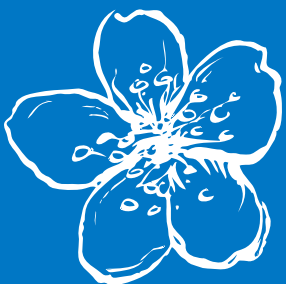
Other Resources:

Teaching Equity through Gardening: How nourishing plants can teach the difference between equity and equality to kids. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-concept-equity-through-gardening>

Nature Art Frames : Appreciate nature's beautiful scenery with this easy activity! <https://childsplayabc.wordpress.com/2020/06/08/nature-art-frames-2/>



Nature Near You

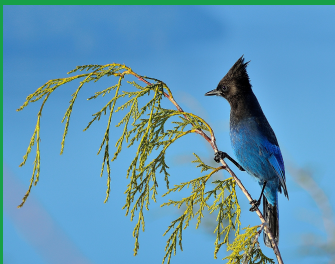


Journal Prompt:

What is your favourite type of pollinator and why?



Animal of the Month: Pacific Steller's Jay



The Pacific Steller's Jay is a bird which lives along the Pacific Coast from southern California all the way to Alaska. These birds' favourite foods are nuts and berries in the winter, and eggs of smaller birds in the summer. . The birds are known to hide nuts in caches during the winter, marking the location with a leaf. The forgetful creates often don't return for their food, allowing the nuts to grow into big and strong trees!

At Home Activity: DIY Chia Pet

What you need:

- Empty 2-litre bottle
- Soil
- Chia seeds
- Decoration supplies (Googly eyes, paint, permanent markers, etc.)
- Glue

How to:

1. Cut your 2-litre bottle in half horizontally, leaving a cup shape (bottom half) and a bottle top (top half).
2. Recycle the top half of the bottle.
3. Using your decoration supplies and glue, create a face on your bottle. Make sure the open-top is right-side up!
4. Fill your bottle with soil and plant the chia seeds.
5. Water your plant and watch your bottle character grow hair!

Other Resources:

Making Outdoor Education Accessible: Interest in nature-based education has increased during the pandemic, but affordability is an issue. <https://www.hcn.org/articles/education-the-benefits-of-outdoor-education-arent-accessible-to-all>

Spring Crafts for Kids: Try your hand at these kid-friendly spring activities! <https://www.easypeasyandfun.com/spring-crafts-for-kids/>



Nature Near You



Journal Prompt:

What outdoor activity do you want to do this spring?



Animal of the Month: Rufous Hummingbird



The Rufous Hummingbird is a small, 7-9 inch bird that is best known for their incredible flying skills. These tiny creatures fly over 2,000 miles during their migratory transits. The hummingbirds have bright orange throat patches and they feed on nectar from flowers using their long tongue. During their mating and breeding seasons, they can be found in open areas, mountainsides, and forests in the Pacific Northwest.

At Home Activity: Twig Star Ornaments

What you need:

- Sticks or twigs
- Wire, string or twine
- Paint
- Hot glue

How to:

1. Go on a nature walk and gather some sticks and twigs. You'll need 5 equal-sized sticks for one star!
2. Using the hot glue, stick together your sticks into the star shape.
3. Paint the star your desired colour or leave it as is for a rustic look.
4. Wrap around your twine, wire, or string around the star shape. Make sure to make a loop so you can hang your ornament!
5. Hang your ornament outside and admire your work!

Other Resources:

Resources for Outdoor Learning: This article gives teachers the knowledge and tools to incorporate nature based learning in their classes. <https://www.surrey.ca/parks-recreation/surrey-parks/park-programs/resources-outdoor-learning>

Decolonizing Physical Activity and Sport : Watch the webinar hosted by the University of British Columbia: <https://learningcircle.ubc.ca/2021/02/01/decolonizing-physical-activity-and-sport>

