

Soil Lesson

(approximately 30-45 minutes)

*Note to teacher: There are various activities listed in this lesson plan, feel free to pick and choose which ones work best with the class and based on time constraints.

Objective:

The objective of this lesson is to teach children the importance of soil and allow them to examine it up close.

Materials:

- Several Ziploc bags filled with soil and other items naturally found in the soil (grass, leaves, plant pieces, rocks, plastic bugs, etc.)
- White paper
- Magnifying glasses if available
- Colored pencils

Preparation:

- Place a plastic bag with soil on each table (make sure it is well sealed)
- Ask students a couple days before in class to bring in if possible a small sample of soil from their home or somewhere in their community and write down where it came from

Introduction:

- Soil is one of the most important resources for all living things on earth
 - Impacts both plants and animals (ask students how it might impact animals)
 - Plants: grow in soil
 - Animals: some use it as a shelter, others eat plants that grow in soil
 - Make list of various items that come from and rely on soil
- What is soil made up of?
 - Contains living and nonliving thing (other dead plants and animals, rocks,
- How does soil make things grow?
 - Provides nutrients to plants
 - Nutrients come from decomposition of dead plants and animals. Give the
 - example of the leaves that fall during the fall.
- Soil Pollution: have to keep our soil clean!

- When things get into the soil that shouldn't be there
 - Examples: paint from house, smoke from smokestacks,
 - Have students make a list of items that should be in the soil and items that should not be there (should be: leaves, bugs, worms, plants, sticks, rocks; should not be there: paint, oil, unnatural chemicals, etc.)

Activity:

1. Ask students about their experiences with soil (have they ever gardened? Have they ever found a worm in the soil? Have they ever eaten a plant directly from the soil?)
2. Have students draw three foods they have eaten or plants they have seen in the last three days that come from the soil.
3. Soil observation
 - Have each student observe the bags of soil and identify an item mixed in with the soil- they can draw it if they want).
 - 4. Go to the garden and have students observe the soil
 - What is growing?
 - If possible, allow the class to pick a vegetable out of the soil

Wrap-up:

- Ask students what they learned
- Recap some points on soil from above introduction
- Have students wash hands (remind them there are germs and chemicals in dirt and even though it is fun to play in it it is important to wash your hands after)