

Endings and Beginnings

Small Seeds and Big Trees



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Time Needed: 30 minutes

Arts Focus: Creative Dance

Age Range: 4-6

Mini-Lesson Description:

Explore growth and change through imagination, movement and mindfulness, growing in size from small seeds to big trees, and beginning again.

Key Concepts:

Growth; Change; Life Cycle; Size; Body Awareness; Imagining; Creating Together.

Materials Needed/Prep:

- 2-3 examples of trees to share (e.g. real-life outside, photos, art, online)
- Magic seeds: one to “plant” (e.g. small pinecone, stone) and one to hold and “toss” (e.g. small stuffed animal, scarf). Both seeds can be same thing; seeds can also be imagined
- Container to offer magic seeds to the learner(s) in (e.g. plate, bowl, basket)

Step-by-Step:

1. Speak and move with the learner(s) using any and all shared languages.
2. Invite the learner(s) to close their eyes and remember a tree (last one seen, touched, or sat under). Offer a brief “think time” and share tree memories.
3. Connect them to the truth of trees: they begin and end as small seed, even the biggest ones.
4. Reveal “magical” seeds. Give two seeds to each learner: one for planting and one for holding.
5. Tell them these magical seeds need them to grow. Instruct them to find a good spot to “plant” one seed in “dirt”, hold their second seed, and then to close their eyes and imagine a big and beautiful tree waiting “in the dirt” to grow.
6. Guide the learner(s) through a version of this suggested creative movement sequence:
 - Tell them: “*Now...the magic begins...you are sprinkled with rain and sunshine.*” (Optional: improvisation of rain and sun with words, movement, props and/or tactile.)
 - “*As I count to 4, I want you to grow. By the count of “4” your tree is a small, green sprout that just pushed up and through the dirt...1...2...3...4...Make a small, sprout shape!*”
 - “*Your tree sprout is sprinkled with more rain and sunshine.*”
 - “*Continue to grow so that by the count of “4” you are a medium tree shape—bigger than a sprout—but not as big as it can get...1...2...3...4...Make a medium tree shape!*”
 - “*As I count to 4 again, grow so by the count of “4” you are a big and beautiful tree, stretching and standing as big as possible...1...2...3...4...Make your big tree shape!*”
 - “*Oh...here comes the wind...don't be afraid to sway and bend with the wind; you are big and strong with roots wide and deep.... bend.... sway...stretch...and bend.*”
 - “*Now, get ready....at the count of 4 you're going to toss that seed you've been holding tight, into the wind, to a good spot on the floor...1...2...3...4...Let it go!*”
 - “*As I count backwards from 8 to 1, I want you to take small steps (i.e. tiptoe) toward your tossed seed and shrink back to the smallest seed shape possible in the spot where it landed. Make your small, seed shape.*”
 - “*You are planted, again...take a gentle breath in and out. And one more. And now you wait for the right, magical time to begin again.*”

Variations and Next Steps:

- Play a short selection of music to grow, shrink, plant, and begin again at a self-directed pace. A good song for beginning the day: “The World is Big, The World is Small,” by Ella Jenkins. A Good song for ending the day: “Deep in the Dirt,” by Caspar Babypants.

Watch a video of this Creative Start Mini-Lesson and find more at: <https://www.arts.wa.gov/creative-start/>