



Theatre and Culture for Early Years

Theatre Direct Canada Teacher Resources - *Knock*

Big Questions:

- What do we know about wood, and what it can be used for?
- How can we use natural materials to create music and art?
- How can we use music and our bodies to create and tell stories?

FDK Curriculum Links:

- 1.1: Retell experiences, events, and familiar stories in proper sequence
- 7.1: Participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities
- 13.3: Select and use materials to carry out their explorations
- 21.1: Express their responses to drama and dance
- 30.2: Explore a variety of tools, materials and processes to create movement, drama, and visual art forms in new and familiar ways

Pre-Show Discussion/Activities:

- What do we know about wood? Create a web, encouraging discussion with the children, including things like:
 - Where does wood come from?
 - What can wood be used for?
 - Are there any ways that we can use wood in our creative activities or play?

Post-Show Discussion:

- How did the performers use the wood in different ways to tell a story?
- Was there anything that surprised you about how wood can be used?

The following is an activity guide intended for use in the classroom after viewing the performance of *Knock*. Any number of these activities may be explored, based on children's interests and inquiries following post-show discussions. Also included are adaptations to make the activities more suitable for children of varying ages.



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Making Musical Shakers

Knock encourages children to think about different sounds they might find in their environments, especially by materials that they may already be familiar with. This simple musical activity will give children an instrument that they can use to interact with many other areas of their classroom play.

Curriculum Links:

21.3: Express their responses to music by moving, by making connections to their own experiences, or by talking about the musical form

23.3: Use problem solving skills and imagination to create music

31.2: Explore different elements of music

Materials:

- Plastic eggs
- Popcorn kernels
 - It is important to consider using food in the classroom – use beads, sand, pebbles, etc. if using food products might be viewed as unethical
- White tape
- Markers for decoration

Activity:

- Fill the plastic eggs with popcorn, or whatever material is used to create the sound
- Wrap tape around the egg to secure the materials inside
- If they would like, children can use markers to decorate their noise makers
- Test the shakers out – shake them using different rhythms and patterns to create different sound patterns

Extensions:

- Invite the children to keep their musical shakers in the classroom, or somewhere where they are accessible during different activities
- Encourage children to use the shakers when engaging in different activities, such as reading a story, dramatic play, math and patterning, and physical education



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Adaptations:

- For younger children:
 - Provide additional materials if needed to ensure the children are able to use and handle the shakers appropriately
- For older children:
 - Encourage children to think of other ways they might be able to make musical instruments
 - Invite the children to consider how the performers in *Knock* used wood to create many different sounds

Wooded Walk

This activity is not always possible, especially for some schools that are situated in busy city neighbourhoods. However, a walk that includes at least one tree can help children to consider how trees can help us by providing materials that allow for creative exploration and adventure.

Curriculum Links:

7.1: Participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities

21.5: Express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences, or talking about the form

29.2: Describe what would happen if something in the local environment changed

Activity Exploration:

- Prior to the walk, invite children to have a discussion about what kinds of things they might expect to see
 - Based on the location of the walk, will they see more living things or nonliving things?
 - Will they see trees? What do they know about the trees in their local environment?
- While on the walk, encourage children to think about and observe where they see wood in their local environment
 - This can include natural wood, such as trees and branches, as well as wood that has been manipulated by humans, such as wooden structures or objects
- Bring a paper and pen or audio recorder to take note of children's thoughts on the presence of wood and natural things within their local environments



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- Encourage children to use their senses safely and appropriately when engaging with the trees and other natural materials
 - Invite them to touch the trees to feel the texture of the bark, and if possible, compare textures of different types of trees

Reflection:

- After the walk, ask children to reflect on what they observed and experienced
 - Was there a lot of natural materials and wood in their environment or not?
 - Did they observe more living or nonliving things?
- Ask children to make predictions about what their environment would be like if there were less trees, more trees, or no trees?

Nature Paint Brushes

Knock encourages children to consider how wood and natural materials found in their local environment can be used to create music and art, and how we can interact with these materials to tell stories. While you should be cautious when removing natural materials from the local environment, this art activity allows children to use natural materials that they have found to create art and tell stories in new ways.

Curriculum Links:

14.3: Recognize, explore, describe, and compare patterns in the natural and built environment

21.5: Express their responses to visual art forms by making connections to their own experiences or by talking about the form

23.2: Use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms



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Materials:

- 1 stick for each paint brush
- A variety of interesting pieces of nature, including
 - Flowers
 - Grass
 - Leaves
 - More sticks
- Rubber bands
- Paint
- Paper

Introduction:

- If possible, allow the children to go on a walk to collect items that might make good nature paint brushes
- Ask children to seek out different textures and patterns, and to experiment with different kinds of natural materials
- If children are unable to seek out their own materials, bring a wide variety into the classroom that children can select to make paint brushes

Activity:

- Take a stick, and wrap an elastic band around one end of it
- Slide the piece of nature into the elastic band, so that it stays in place and can be controlled by the stick
- Provide paper and paint to children, and encourage them to explore how the paint brushes can be used
 - What do the different textures look like on the page?
 - How do different movement techniques with the brushes produce different images?
 - Are some materials easier to paint with than others? Why?
- Encourage children to experiment with a wide variety of brushes to create different patterns and textures on their page

Adaptations:

- For younger children:
 - Provide thick sticks as handles to ensure children are able to hold and use the brushes
- For older children:
 - Invite children to make predictions about different materials



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- Ask what might happen if they combine a number of different natural materials as the brush – how will this change the texture and form of the paint?

Additional Resources

Stick Man by Julia Donaldson

This book tells the story of a stick who is brought on an adventure. Different people use him in different ways, which helps to demonstrate to children the versatility of wood and natural objects.

<https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/document-category/curriculum/>

Ontario EcoSchools is an initiative that has been implemented in various school boards across the province. The student-centred program aims to foster environmental leadership in children, and build environmentally friendly school communities. This page on their website provides a wide range of lesson plans that can be used in classrooms to encourage children to think about nature, and their impacts on their local environments.

<https://artfulparent.com/2016/04/nature-art-for-kids.html>

This blog, written by Jean Van't Hul, provides a wide variety of art activities that incorporate natural materials. These activities allow children to explore natural materials and how they can use them to create art and tell stories, but also provide an opportunity to consider the human impact on the natural environment.

<http://native-drums.ca/en/home/>

Indigenous peoples in Canada use natural materials and wood to create drums and other instruments for a variety of purposes. This useful resource provides educators, parents, and children with knowledge surrounding different types of drums, as well as their uses by a number of different tribes and cultures. Some of the videos on the website can be used to demonstrate to children how Indigenous peoples create music and stories using materials that are native to their environments.



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