

An Assembly for Seed to Saw

Here are some suggestions for a possible assembly. They are intended only as guidance, and can be used in any order, or just used to compliment any ideas you may already have.

The Benefits of the Assembly will be to:

- Highlight the importance of trees and how they help us.
- Promote respect, understanding and appreciation of trees.
- Understand why it is important to plant trees.
- Promote understanding of the work of forestry and conservation organisations.

Introduction

Introduce children to the topic of trees and timber

The tree planting season takes place from November to March (approximately).

Main Part of Assembly

Why should we plant trees?

The main reasons why trees are important are listed below:

In short, they:

- encourage wildlife by providing food and habitats
- provide timber and other useful products
- clean our air and improve air quality
- provide shelter for us and animals
- stop soil erosion
- create beautiful landscapes and help to improve people's sense of well being
- give out oxygen and take in Carbon Dioxide
- reduce noise pollution
- reduce the chance of flash floods
- provide some foods and drinks
- provide us with places to play and socialise
- provide us with some medicines

Some of the key reasons have been enlarged and are attached. These could be used in a question and answer session. The children who respond correctly could hold up the relevant information.

A fact sheet is enclosed for more detailed information on the value and benefits of trees.

Trees produce oxygen
and help us to
breathe

Trees trap dust and
keep the air clean

Bees feed on nectar
and carry pollen

Birds and animals live
in trees, feeding on
fruits, nuts and
insects

Trees soak up
sunlight and reduce
global warming

Trees reduce noise
pollution

Trees provide wind
breaks and shelter

Roots soak up water
and trap soil helping
to prevent floods

Trees provide us with
places to relax

Trees provide us with
places to play

Trees are nice to look
at and make us feel
good

Dead leaves and
rotting timber help to
enrich the soil

Roots provide support
for animal's burrows

Trees provide us with
paper and timber for
fuel, furniture,
houses, fences, etc.

The History of Tree Loss

Once the children have considered the importance of trees, it may be a good idea to let them know about why and when trees have been cut down historically.

Choose 20 children to stand at the front of the assembly - tell them that they represent the trees that covered nearly all of Britain over 4,000 years ago.

Explain that about 4,000 years ago Neolithic man started to clear the trees for farming - 3 children sit down.

By the Iron Age (500BC), 1,500 years later, half of the total forest cover had gone - a further 7 children sit down (10 altogether).

By 1086, (1,000 years ago and the time of the Domesday Book), trees had been reduced still further - 7 more children sit down leaving 3 remaining.

Explain that woodlands were very important in the local economy providing brushes, poles and timber for firewood, fencing and building needs. As the need for woodland products reduced, the woodland began to decline further.

By the beginning of the century the UK's woodland cover was 5% - 2 children sit down leaving only one remaining. This was the lowest in Europe.

Some trees were planted so they could be grown and cut down for the wood they produced. Trees that are cut down are replaced with other trees. 1 child stands up again.

Explain that organisations, such as the BTCV, the Tees Forest, the Tree Council and the Forestry Commission, are working hard to plant more trees. The trees are not only grown to be cut down for timber, but also for us to enjoy and gain the benefits that have been discussed with the children.

Tree planting is a long term commitment. It takes several years for trees to grow and provide all these benefits.

Recently, heavy storms and Dutch Elm Disease has reduced the number of mature trees. Advise children that in their area there are people working hard to plant more trees for them to enjoy. So we're aiming for more children to be standing up!

As an alternative, the poem Ten Tall Oak Trees could be performed by some of the children, possibly of varying ages, to the "Ten Green Bottles" tune.

Ten Tall Oaktrees

Ten tall oaktrees
Standing in a line,
'Warships,' cried King Henry,
Then there were nine.

Nine tall oaktrees
Growing strong and straight,
'Charcoal,' breathed the
furnace,
Then there were eight.

Eight tall oaktrees
Reaching towards heaven,
'Sizzle,' spoke the lightening,
Then there were seven.

Seven tall oaktrees
Branches, leaves and sticks,
'Firewood,' smiled the
merchant,
Then there were six.

Six tall oaktrees
Glad to be alive,
'Barrels,' Boomed the brewery,
There were five.

Five tall oaktrees
Suddenly a roar,
'Gangway,' screamed the west
wind,
Then there were four.

Four tall oaktrees
Sighing like the sea,
'Floorboards,' beamed the
builder,
Then there were three.

Three tall oaktrees
Groaning as trees do,
'Unsafe,' claimed the council,
Then there were two.

Two tall oaktrees
Spreading in the sun,
'Progress,' snarled the by-pass,
Then there was one.

One tall oaktree
Wishing it could run,
'Nuisance,' grumped the
farmer,
Then there were none.

No tall oaktrees
Search the field in vain,
Only empty skylines
And the cold, grey rain.

Richard Edwards

Interesting Trees Facts

Children could read out some interesting facts about trees, or alternatively, the facts could be read out and children hold them up.

- Trees are the largest living plant in the world
- Over 400 species of insect can live in an oak tree
- A mature Beech Tree standing alone in the open evaporates 75-100 gallons of water per day. (Show children how much 1 gallon is so they can understand the quantity being talked about).
- A mature Oak Tree weighs at least 1.5 tones, often much more. (weigh a child. 1 tonne = 160 stone, 1.5 tonnes = 240 stone. If a child weighs 4 stone then 60 children would only weigh as much as the smallest mature oak tree).
- The tallest tree in Britain is a Douglas Fir in Scotland - it is 64.6m high
- The oldest tree in Wales is a Yew tree which is between 3,500 and 4,000 years old

Resources: Scales, tape measure, a gallon of water.

The tree facts have been enlarged for use in the assembly, and are attached.

In addition, and depending on time, the story "Only Made of Wood" could be read, or alternatively, one of the poems - "The Acorn" or "Trees".

It would be nice to finish the assembly on a personal note. Trees are special to us all for different reasons. The teacher delivering the assembly could say why a particular tree is special to them.

Suggested hymns could be; Think of a World Without any Flowers and All Things Bright and Beautiful.

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Trees - By S Coleridge

The oak is called the King of Trees,
The Aspen quivers in the breeze,
The Poplar grows up straight and tall,
The Pear tree spreads along the wall,
The Sycamore gives pleasant shade,
The Willow droops in watery glade,
The Fire tree useful timber gives,
The Beech amid the forest lives.

The Acorn

In small green cup an acorn grew
On tall and stately oak;
The spreading leaves the secret knew,
And hid it like a cloak.
The breeze rocked it tenderly,
The sunbeams whispered low,
"Some day the smallest acorn here
Will make an oak, you know."
The little acorn heard it all,
And thought it quite a joke;
How could he dream an acorn small
Would ever be an oak?
He laughed so much that presently
He tumbled from his cup,
And rolled a long way from the tree,
Where no one picked him up.
Close by him was a rabbit hole,
And when the wind blew high,
Down went the acorn with a roll
For weeks in gloom to lie.
But, one bright day, a shoot of green
Broke from his body dry,
And pushed its way with longing keen
To see the glorious sky.
It grew, and grew, with all its might,
As weeks and months rolled on:
The sunbeams words were proving right.
For, ere a year had gone,
The shoot became a sturdy plant,
While now the country folk
Can sit beneath the spreading leaves
Of a mighty forest oak.