

Children discover that plants have a special place in the world around them, and start a bond with them.



Nature and me 1



Process

- 1 Prepare your classroom with different stations (e.g. groups of tables / tuff trays) where the children can find different things grouped together, e.g. one with books, one with colourful objects, one with toys, etc. One station will feature materials from nature, e.g. stones, pebbles, sticks of different lengths, sand, water, seeds, seed pods, etc. Do not bring plants yet. No animals should be kept in classrooms, which are confined and stressful places for them.
- 2 Find the story *Poppy's World* in the **Online Resources**. Using the story outline, create the story with your children. The main character goes on a discovery journey around the classroom world and explores the materials it is made of. As you dramatise the story include tactile, motor coordination and creative elements, and bring out feelings associated with the different materials mentioned.
- 3 Ask the children what they think. Find out if they want a plant in their classroom too. Encourage children to bring a potted plant each. Involve the parents in your plan to have a green station in your classroom. Include some or all the objects of your nature station together with your new plants, (no animals!). Every morning children say good morning to the plants, learn how to water them and keep them healthy. Include these plants in your curriculum life.

Points

200 points

Send photos of (1) pupils feeling objects (2) pupils animating story (3) pupils meeting their plants (4) the nature station in your classroom.

50 points

Send photos of how this activity was linked with other learning in the curriculum.

Children learn to respect all creatures, however small, as they observe the fascinating way of ants.



Nature and me 2



Process

- 1 Take the children to a place in the school grounds where you know there are ants. See if they find the ants on their own and let them watch, discover and talk about what they see. Prompt observation with comments like: "I wonder what happens when I put crumbs near them." Place crumbs along the route and watch the ants carry food. See how they touch each other with their feelers. Make links with topics such as friendship, brothers and sisters (ants on the ground are all sisters), good food and bad food (ants will not be interested in artificial sweets but will carry off bread crumbs).
- 2 Carry art and craft materials with you to the ground and find a nice spot to do outdoor crafts. Take out the ant mask you have made for yourself from the design in the **Online Resources**. Wear it and let the children comment and react. See if they want to make their own ant mask. Provide materials for them to create their own mask from what they observed.
- 3 Wearing their masks, children now move on to physical activity. Use ant movements to inspire the way you move. Do individual and group coordination movements, such as walking in a line, touching hands and shoulders, passing a ball along a line, carrying something together in groups without dropping it (like ants) and so on.
- 4 Back in class, read the story *Nemla Wara l-Oħra* from the **Online Resources** about a group of ants whose home is destroyed by fire. The Resources have visuals you can use to create characters and other props as you read. To do this, print, cut out, stick to stiff backing and use kebab sticks to hold them up as you dramatise the story together.
- 5 While reading, allow the concepts to grow in the children's mind and follow up on conversations and activities that emerge. Make sure that showing care for living things comes across, no matter how small the creatures may be.
- 6 After the reading, let the children represent the story by drawing, creating, using letters and any material you wish to develop at the time. You could display the children's work in a frieze with a title about ants that you make together.

Points

200 points

Send photos of children (1) observing ants (2) making ant masks (3) doing physical ant-like activity (4) dramatising ant story (5) participating in story follow-up.

50 points

Send photos of how this activity was linked with other learning in the curriculum.

Children grow their bond with plants by creating a schoolground greenspot.



Process

- 1 By March, your classroom should have a nature space with healthy potted plants that children are looking after and bonding with through curriculum links. This activity strengthens that bond by extending your nature space into the schoolyard. Talk about the idea of outdoor lessons with your children and let them express their feelings. Explore these feelings.
- 2 Prepare (a) a crate of soil (b) a small empty pot for every child (c) a bag of recent fennel seeds (d) bags of small objects, e.g. beads, etc. (e) child-friendly trowels. Place everything in the school yard.
- 3 Take the children out into the schoolyard with your cushions/chairs/beanbags. Talk about what you see and hear as you walk to the spot. Get a feel for being outdoors. Choose a spot together, settle and dramatise the story *Poppy's World Grows Bigger* (**Online Resources**). The story should have tactile, motor coordination and creative elements.
- 4 Lead the children to the place where you prepared the pots, soil and seeds and tell them they have to find something that will turn into a plant when you water it. Allow them time to explore, guide them to touch and smell and ask questions. Link with what they know. Don't tell them the answer yet. After some time, call the children back to hear the rest of the story.
- 5 Each child now has their pot, a trowel and the fennel seeds. If a child feels that one of the inanimate objects will grow, let them experiment. Sow the seeds (instructions in the **Online Resources**). Take the pots back to class and each child personalises their own pot with materials you have prepared. Put the pots on a window sill and water them. Make sure you don't over-water – soil should be damp not wet (draw out the difference between the two words).
- 6 Make links with the growing seeds, which should sprout within a couple of weeks if carried out in spring. Watch the seedlings develop 'fingers' and green colour, see whose seedlings grow best, discuss what that child did and so on.
- 7 This activity chooses fennel seeds because they are easy to grow especially at this time of year; they are also aromatic and they attract butterflies and bees. When the seedlings grow big enough, take them outdoors and continue to care for them. You could start off your outdoors lesson spot with other potted plants (see **Online Resources**). For long holidays the plants can be taken by the children to 'foster' at home, providing you with more links to related topics of caring and growing.

Points

200 points

Send photos of (1) children dramatising story (2) children sowing fennel seeds (3) personalised pots (4) the outdoor greenspot.

50 points

Send photos of how this activity was linked with other learning in the curriculum.