

Kindergarten and First Grade

John Muir: Long Ago and Now

Unit Concept: *John Muir showed he cared about nature by writing and drawing and speaking to others.*

Objective: In two or three 45- to 50-minute sessions, students explore nature center objects, hear stories about John Muir's life, and make booklets.

Preparation:

1. Create a simple indoor or outdoor nature center, including various rocks, seeds, leaves, shells, etc.
2. Make a master copy of page 5, John Muir Loved Nature, and then make copies for each student to make a booklet.
3. Review one or two stories about John Muir, preferably to tell to the children instead of reading.

Procedure:

4. Invite students to use the center to group the natural objects by kind, shape, color, or size (or do this as a group activity). Give the students a task, such as sequencing the objects or making patterns with them, then ask a buddy to guess how the pieces were sorted.
5. Ask the students where these things came from and, if they were pieces in a puzzle, what would that puzzle be? For example, a shell is part of a seashore picture and a twig is part of a forest picture.
6. Read the quote from John Muir on the cover of the Study Guide. Ask what else the nature items would be "hitched to." Invite them to draw a picture of an item and the bigger puzzle. Or, use chart paper and invite student volunteers to draw, for example, a stick from the center, the branch, the tree, the ground, air, sun, water, animals, other plants, and so on, to illustrate the stick's connections to the universe.
7. Ask the students to describe people they know who care about nature. Introduce John Muir by telling stories about his life. Explain that John Muir saw the "big picture" of living things in their habitats or homes, and cared enough to write, draw, and speak to people so they could save forests for future children.
8. Give directions for students to make their own booklets, by folding, writing, and drawing. Allow time for sharing students' work.

Extensions:

9. Ask the students to create their own page of their own experiences in a forest or park. Bind the pages together to make a big book for the class library. Include pages on how students care for nature, such as, "I am like John Muir. I care about nature by . . ."
10. Sing "The Green Grass Grows All Around" or "I Know An Old Woman Who Swallowed A Fly" from the songbook *Rise Up Singing* to sing sequencing songs about connections between living things.
11. As you study about other living things, create word webs or picture puzzles to show how they are connected to "everything else in the universe."

