

Lesson 16: LET'S EXPLORE THIS PLACE WITH POETRY

TIME: 20 to 25 minutes

PURPOSE: to teach the children
about their local habitat and encourage
them to use their sensory experience of place
as material for writing poems

Materials

boom box	any other books filled with
music	flora and fauna local to
copies of the poems	your area
you will use (to	<i>Optional:</i>
paste in their books)	paint, markers, crayons
glue sticks	

Suggested Books, Music and Poems

Baylor, Byrd. *Desert Voices*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981.

Kennedy, X. J. and Dorothy Kennedy. *Talking Like the Rain: A First Book of Poems*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1992.

Mora, Pat and Daniel Lechón. *The Desert is My Mother/El desierto es mi madre*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico, 1994.

Scruggs, Joe. *Bahamas Pajamas*. Compact Disc. Lyons Group/Lyrick, 1998.

Taylor, James. *Greatest Hits*. Compact Disc. Warner Brothers/Wea, 1990.

At the Playground

by William Stafford

Away down deep and away up high,
a swing drops you into the sky.
Back, it flings you in a sweep
all the way to the stars and back
—Goodbye, Jill; Goodbye, Jack:
shuddering climb wild and steep,
away up high, away down deep.

At the Sea-side

by Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was down beside the sea
A wooden spade they gave to me
To dig the sandy shore.

My holes were empty like a cup.
In every hole the sea came up,
'Til it could come no more.

Lemonade Stand

by Myra Cohn Livingston

Every summer
under the shade
we fix up a stand
to sell lemonade.

A stack of cups,
a pitcher of ice,
a shirtboard sign
to tell the price.

A dime for the big,

A nickel for small.
The nickel cup's short.
The dime cup's tall.

Plenty of sugar
to make it sweet,
and sometimes cookies
for us to eat.

But when the sun
moves into the shade
it gets too hot
to sell lemonade.

Nobody stops
so we put things away
and drink what's left
and start to play.

What to Do

You may want to walk outside before or after this lesson.

1. Begin the lesson by asking the children to find their bubbles and to move however they wish in rhythm to a song about place. We recommend Joe Scruggs' song "Almost Home" or James Taylor's "Carolina In My Mind." Ask them to listen to the words as well as move to the music.
2. Once the kids have left their bubbles and entered circle time, invite them into a conversation about the meaning of the song. Shift the focus of the talk to place. Where do we live? What do we like about home? What animals do we find here? What's the weather like? What flowers grow here? Which plants? What bugs bug us and what bugs do we love? Write their thoughts down as you go.
3. Read the poems above or share some poetry about your local area. Invite the children to identify and describe the setting of each poem.

4. Once the children are settled, begin to write a collaborative poem. Here are some suggested prompts:

This place sounds like_____.

When it's hot I _____.

My favorite critter likes to visit me in my sleep to _____.

I like to walk around and look at_____ and talk to_____.

5. Try to use a color, a critter or a sound in every line. Encourage the use of images and metaphors:

The sunset reminds me of_____.

In the heat, I feel like_____.

6. Make copies of your collaborative poem and have the children paste them in their poetry books. Encourage the children to illustrate the poems with sketches, paint or collage.