

# ArtReach Teacher Preparation Checklist

## *Trees*

### **Before the Visit, Please**

- ❑ Do the Pre-Visit Activity: ART TALK.
- ❑ Let the students know an educator from the Boise Art Museum will be visiting the classroom.
- ❑ Make large nametags for the students with their first names only and have students wear them during the visit.

An ArtReach Educator will contact you prior to the visit to discuss ways in which the experience can be tailored to your classroom curricula.

### **During the Visit, Please Provide**

- ❑ Your normal classroom discipline.
- ❑ An electric power source and projection screen (a white board or paper-covered wall will work)
- ❑ Space for discussion and a hands-on activity.
- ❑ The nametags in a visible place on the students.

### **After the Visit, Please**

- ❑ Complete and send in the evaluation card that you will receive from the ArtReach educator. Your comments are important in helping us tailor our programs to suit your needs.
- ❑ Do the enclosed **Make It!** activity.
- ❑ Consider using related ideas listed in Curricular Connections.

Thank you for participating in the *Trees* ArtReach visit!

## *Trees*

<b>Medium</b>	A specific kind of artistic technique or means of expression as determined by the materials used or the creative methods involved: <i>the medium of lithography</i> . The materials used in a specific artistic technique: <i>oil as a medium</i> .
<b>Media</b>	The plural of medium.
<b>Mood</b>	An emotion or expression of an emotion or attitude – happiness, sadness, anger, fear, etc.
<b>Symbol</b>	Something that stands for/represents something else. Symbols often express ideas. For example, the four-leaf clover can symbolize good luck or St. Patrick’s Day.

# ArtReach Pre-Visit Image



Baba Wagué Diakité, Mali (b. 1961)  
***Town Hall!!!***, 1999  
Glazed ceramic  
Anonymous Long Term Loan

# ArtReach Pre-Visit Image



Mark Citret  
***Shadows on Snow***, 1971  
Gelatin Silver Print  
Permanent Collection

# ArtReach Pre-Visit Activity: ART TALK

## Trees

*Please view the two reproductions with your class and lead a discussion using the following questions as guidelines. There are no “right” answers. The questions are meant to guide the group discussion. Students will re-visit and discuss these works as well as others during the ArtReach visit. The vocabulary in this packet will aid discussion.*

*Research and experience have shown that students feel more comfortable when they can connect with something familiar when the Museum educator conducts the program. The students enjoy sharing their insights from the pre-visit discussion with the educator.*

The *Trees* experience provides an opportunity to view and discuss works from Boise Art Museum’s Permanent Collection in which the artists depict trees. A variety of media and techniques are used in the works of art and include symbolic representations of trees. Students then create their own images of trees applying what they have learned about symbolism.

Baba Wagué Diakité  
**Town Hall!!**, 1999  
Glazed ceramic  
Permanent Collection

- What do you recognize in this artwork?
- Does this look like a real tree or an imaginary tree? Why?
- What time of year do you think it is? Why?
- What are the people doing?
- If you were able to step into this village, what do you think you would hear?

Mark Citret  
**Shadows on Snow**, 1971  
Gelatin silver print  
Permanent Collection

- How is this tree the same as the one you just looked at?
- How is it different?
- Can you tell what the medium is just by looking at the work of art?
- What time of year do you think it is? Why?
- Why do you think the artist took a picture of the shadows from the trees instead of the trees themselves?

# ArtReach Curricular Connections

## Trees

*Teachers can adapt the following curricular connections to meet the needs of any grade level.*

### Identification

- Have students observe a tree from the school grounds. They can document the tree by drawing it, photographing it, or describing it. Discuss the importance of making accurate descriptions of the trees (for identification purposes). Have students share their tree drawings and ask other students to identify their trees.
- Have students compare bark and leaves from a variety of trees. Using leaves is the easiest way to identify trees and tell them apart.
- Take the class outside with paper (not too thick) and crayons (unwrapped so that the sides may be used). Make rubbings of bark patterns by holding or taping the paper tightly against a tree and rubbing with the side of the crayon. Make rubbings of as many types of trees as possible. In the classroom, discuss and compare the different patterns. Can any of the trees be identified by their bark patterns?
- Bring several pieces of bark to school along with pictures of the types of trees from which they came. Place the pieces of bark in separate boxes or paper bags so they cannot be seen. Can students match bark to tree pictures merely by feeling the bark pattern of the samples?
- Ask the class: What color is tree bark? Collect and record the answers then take the class for a walk in the neighborhood. Find the colors that have been suggested. Then list all of the other colors you find. Ask students to draw a forest of trees and color the bark using all of the colors they observed.
- Have each student bring a leaf to class. Students should compare leaves to find classmates with matching leaves. Students with matching leaves should be grouped together and asked to identify their type of tree with the aid of a tree identification guide. Have students press the leaves. Repeat the exercise in a different season and have student compare leaves from different seasons by creating charts.
- Using a good guide to tree identification, take a neighborhood nature hike in the late spring and identify as many tree seeds as possible. Be sure to check the tree as well as the ground around it. If you encounter a flowering tree, point out that the seeds are developing in the flowers. In the fall, bring as many seeds as possible back to class, identify them with an identification book, and discuss how they might be dispersed naturally.
- Using a collection of seeds (walnut, pecan, acorn, etc.), place each seed in a sock and ask the students to reach inside the sock and identify the seed by its size and texture.

- Have students collect pictures from magazines that depict colorful fall scenes. Compare the pictures. Are the colors the same? Why are they different? Are they from different locations, different types of trees? Can students determine, with a good tree identification book, which trees are pictured?

## Habitats

- Have students research the importance of dead-standing trees and dead branches. How many different animals live in these areas? Have students draw a picture or write a story about the animals living in a dead-standing tree or construct a papier-mâché model of the tree.
- Divide the class into three groups. Individuals in the first group could draw or collect pictures concerning the relationship between trees and animals. The second group could focus on trees and people. The third group could be concerned with trees and the environment. When the pictures have been collected the groups should assemble them into three poster-size collages with titles of their choice.
- Have individual students, or a group of students, pick a single tree and observe it closely for a period of time – fifteen minutes, for example. Students should then draw or compile a list of all of the evidence of animal and insect activity that they found, including actual activity involving birds, squirrels, and other animals; observed nests; evidence of animals eating (holes in leaves, piles of sawdust, bare branches or empty fruit pods); etc.
- Write each of these animal names on an index card and distribute them to your students: squirrel, raccoon, hawk, opossum, bluebird, owl, bat, woodpecker, tree frog, wood duck, beetle, mouse, flying squirrel. Have pictures of the animals on the bulletin board. Each of these animals uses dead trees. Ask your student to imagine ways that these animals might find a dead tree useful. Students might be assigned an animal and asked to draw or find a picture of it. Pictures could be collected and pasted onto a poster-size diagram of a dead tree. Features like holes and nests should be added.

## Economics/Social Studies

- Have each student bring in or draw in class a picture of his or her favorite product that comes from a tree. You may want to discuss some foods that students would not suspect are tree products such as cinnamon, syrup, mustard and olives. Students could also provide pictures of the food in its natural state and as part of a finished product – apple pie or peach ice cream, for example.
- Make a chalkboard list, elicited from students, of items in the classroom that are made from trees. Don't overlook non-wood products such as crayons, paper, and paint. Discuss the parts of the tree that the products may have come from or the number of jobs that may have been required to produce the product. Have students copy the list and take it home to survey their home for those and other wood products.
- Explain that we make products from wood because it is strong, durable and easy to work with. Discuss with students useful things they could make simply with twigs and branches they find on the ground. Lead the students on a twig search, then actually construct some useful item or items (pencil holder, picture frame, etc.). Students could also do this individually or in groups.

- Have student create family trees. Family structure can include blood relatives, adopted parents, single parents, foster families, older siblings, grandparents, and other combinations of people.

## Environment

- Have students research how trees make a better world by helping to cause rain, clean the air we breathe, prevent erosion, provide shade in the summer and block cold winds in the winter.
- Have students discuss or plan a project with trees that could improve the environment. Discuss how even an individual student could accomplish some part of this project.
- Construct a classroom terrarium with small treelike plants to demonstrate how trees return moisture to their environment. Add water, seal the terrarium, then have the students observe how the moisture is recycled.
- Have students, as individuals or groups, create and answer their own “what if” questions for a world without trees. Examples might include: “What if birds didn’t have trees; where would they live?” “What if we didn’t have wood?” “What would we use to make chairs, if we couldn’t use wood?” “What if there were no trees?” What would be in the parks?”

## Language Arts

- Create a glossary of terms related to trees. Add words as students learn more about trees. For a starting point, go to [www.inhs.uiuc.edu/chf/pub/tree\\_kit/glossary.html](http://www.inhs.uiuc.edu/chf/pub/tree_kit/glossary.html)
- In stories dead trees are often portrayed as scary. Find a picture of a dead tree in a story book and discuss how it is portrayed. Have the class create a scary story involving a dead tree. Students must be able to explain any scary happenings with natural causes. Snakes, for instance, might be around dead trees to catch mice. Owls at night make ghost like sounds. Bats may live under loose sections of bark. White trunks and branches might look like skeletons in the moonlight. Go outside and look for dead trees and branches and any animals living in them.
- As a class, read “Johnny Appleseed” by Steve Kellogg. The story provides discussion points on planting trees, the environment and the relationship between people and nature.
- Divide the class into three groups. The students should develop a three-act play with one group being the leaves, one group being the trunk and one group being the root system. Each group should create its own description of the function of its part of the tree. An elected spokesperson should present the description while the others act it out.



# ArtReach Post-Visit Activity: MAKE IT!

## Trees

*To extend the ArtReach experience and connect the visit to your curriculum, consider using or adapting this lesson plan suggestion.*

### Symbolic Family Trees Class Sculpture

#### Discussion

- Have students discuss and identify the most significant people in their families. Have students think about the influence of these people on their lives. This project will take several weeks to complete and provides an opportunity for a meaningful long-term classroom project.

#### Materials

- Clothesline, 10' per student (For younger students, the clotheslines may be shorter.)
- Variety of materials to start the process (string, wire, steel wool, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, lace, felt, yarn and leather strips)

#### Instructions

Have students begin by creating a chart that lists in outline form each member of their family. Beside each name (or coded initials) have students include a column for line, color and texture. (Since some information will be difficult to share, giving students the option of referring to people by coded names will provide a strategy for confidentiality). (For younger students, the family tree could be limited to immediate family members and the writing aspects may be eliminated. Younger students can still draw and describe as well as answering the questions in discussions.)

Tell students to identify family members in terms of what kind of line or lines they are, color or colors they embody, and textures that best represent them.

Students might represent these people by artistic media (colored pencils, markers, etc.) or describe their qualities in terms of line, color and texture. Have students refer to their charts to begin the process of visually articulating the first family member.

Have students select materials that can be bound, wrapped, or tied around the clothesline and that show the kinds of lines, colors, and textures students have decided best represent individual family members. Students will need diverse materials to make this project effective. Ask students to bring to class anything that could be “wrapped.” Suggest “leftover” materials from home, such as yarn, ribbon, string and wire. Encourage any material that shows diversity. Also include materials such as steel wool, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, lace, felt and leather.

Distribute the 10' long clothesline to each student to use as an armature for the wrapping. The rope will provide an overall unified structure for the project. If your classroom has a drop ceiling, you can tie a loop at one end of the rope so that works can be hung from the ceiling for daily storage. Paper clips shaped into hooks and attached to the metal supports between the ceiling panels make this possible.

Have students choose their material for the first person and, starting at the top of the rope, bind it to the rope by wrapping or tying. After the first section is finished, ask students to reflect on their visual representations. Ask: “Why did you choose the specific line, color and texture to represent that person?” “Did you fully represent that person with the artistic materials you used?” “Did your ideas or concepts change from the original outline?” “If so, why?” As they reflect on and evaluate their work, have students decide whether or not they are satisfied with their visual statement. If they decide it is not complete, have them develop it further. As they finish each representation, have students write a paragraph or two reflecting on their visual statement. Have them do this for each person they represent, before they move on to the next person.

Encourage students to look at the other visual work as it hangs from the ceiling and observe the diversity among their classmates’ works of art. Some students’ work may show similarities among family members by repeating representations of the elements of line, color and texture. Some may choose to develop sections on grandparents and significant persons who have died.

The last section of this vertical sculpture adds root structures to show that each family tree has its own heritage or roots. Have students tie short pieces of thick and thin rope to the bottom section of the sculpture. This will create a sense of the roots spreading from the sculpture onto the floor. Students should then wrap the roots with neutral or earth colors. These root structures will add visual unity to the individual projects, as well as to the overall combined class sculpture.

When each student’s work is finished, hang it as part of the class unit from the ceiling. You might use a  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” piece of foam core measured 4’ by 8’ to support the collection of individual sculptures. Cut the foam in halves, each measure 4’ square. About twenty-five family tree sculptures will hang from each of the 4’ squares. These squares form the support of the work and are suspended from the ceiling using wire attached to each corner.

Individual family trees will be 10’ tall and when hung should be spaced 9” from the next tree unit. This will allow both the creators and viewers to see individual family trees brought together to symbolically form a larger community.

Have students critique their work using reflecting writing. Ask: “What did you learn about your relationship to your family?” “Did you gain insights into specific family members?” “If so, what did you learn?” “If you were to do this project over, what revisions would you make?” “Did you feel you were successful at symbolically representing your family members through this project?” “What aspects of this project surprised you?”

This lesson was taken from the book [From Ordinary to Extraordinary: Art and Design Problem Solving](#) by Ken Vieth, 1999, Davis Publications, Inc.

# ArtReach Bibliography

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