Session 6: The Tree Farmer

Program Outline

A. Gathering Activity: Make a Gardening Calendar (20 min.)
B. Reading: The *Tree Farmer (*15 min.)
C. Hands-on Horticulture activity: Plant an acorn or seedling (10 min.)
D. Discussion, wrap up and pass out certificates(15 min.)

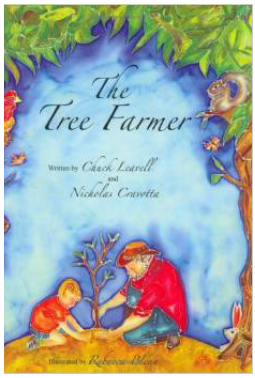
Extra Advance Preparations:

Gather acorns for planting or order tree seedlings. (Wait until the majority of acorns are falling from the tree, and then gather a supply of them. However, you should not wait too long to collect acorns as they will begin to dry as soon as they hit the ground.)

Supplies:

- Sign-in sheets
- Session 5 KWL Sheet
- Name tags
- Table covers
- ***My SPROUTS Monthly Calendar*** sheet, 12 for each child
- Construction paper (12" x 18" size works well)
- Markers, crayons and pencils
- Gardening catalogs and magazines
- Means of fastening calendar together, such as a clear plastic report cover (sliding bar style will work well), a stapler, brass brads and hole punch, etc.
- Acorns (1 for each child)
- Potting soil
- Measuring spoons
- 4-6" flower pots (1 for each child)
- Plant tag
- Watering bottles
- Plastic food storage bags and twist ties
- Trash bags, hand whisk broom and dustpan
- KWL Sheets from Session 1-5
- Journal sheets (***Where I Live and Play*** & any other)
- ***My SPROUTS Journal***
- Copies of ***Grow On!*** for Session 6
- ***MG SPROUTS Certificates***

MG SPROUTS
Horticulture Activities for Kids



The Tree Farmer by Chuck Leavell and Nicholas Cravotta, illustrated by Rebecca Bleau. 32 pages. Evergreen Arts; © 2010. ISBN-13: 978-061535520

A grandfather who owns a tree farm takes his grandson on a magical journey through the forest, where trees become musical instruments, books, a baby's crib and more. The story explains the vital role that trees play in our lives, providing us with the wood for our homes, furniture and other products--and mankind's responsibility to protect and care for them. -Amazon.com

Themes: Value of forests and trees in our lives, connecting our role as stewards of natural resources.

***BIG Idea*:** We can influence the health of the environment through our own gardens.

Reading Vocabulary

responsible

consider

steward

marvelous

A. Gathering Activity: Making a Gardening Calendar (15 minutes)

Have one volunteer at the sign-in table to greet participants and parents, and help fill out name tags. Have the volunteer collect any journal sheets as participants check in. Hand out the KWL sheets saved from Session 5: Indoor Plants and have participants take a few minutes to finish the final section, "L-learned." When they have completed that section, collect those sheets and have a volunteer arrange the participants' sheets into the ***My SPROUTS Journal.***

While journals are being assembled, participants will make a garden calendar. Lay the full sheet of 12 x 18 paper vertically (portrait layout) and fold in half. Have participants decorate the top half with markers, crayons, and pictures cut and pasted from magazines or garden catalogs. The printed calendar pages are stacked in order and stapled or fastened with brads to the bottom half of the paper.

B. Reading Aloud: The Tree Farmer (15 minutes)

Introduce the book and set the stage for what's going to happen in the book. Ask an "I wonder" statement based on the cover illustration. Read the title and author's name. Encourage the children to comment and predict what will happen in the story.

Read the book aloud, pausing briefly along the way to discuss the book with the group. Conclude the reading with a short discussion about the book. Some questions you might ask to spur discussion are:

- *Where was the story set?*
- *What are some of the things that the trees do for us?*
- *Why did the farmer cut the trees down?*
- *What are some things that would be made from the cut trees?*
- *What you think the word "steward" means?*

C. Hands-on Horticulture: Planting an Acorn

The Tree Farmer tells the story of responsibility for the land and caring for the trees so that the benefits of the land and trees continue. We will plant an acorn, an act of stewardship.	
MATERIALS • Acorns (1 for each child) • Potting soil • Measuring spoons • 4-6" flower pots (1 for each child) • Plant tag • Watering bottles • Plastic food storage bags and twist ties	
Discuss stewardship activities mentioned in The Tree Farmer and connect to our own gardening activities.	*In our story, Grandfather lives on a farm. What does he grow on his farm? (Trees) Do you remember what Grandfather said he is responsible for? (Planting, trimming, protecting from insects and fire, keeping nature in balance for other plants and animals) Does he ever cut down the trees? (Yes, for particular uses, such as making furniture, musical instruments, paper, etc.)* *Grandfather calls himself a "steward of this land." Do you remember what a steward is? A steward is someone who responsibly takes care of something he or she has been trusted with. Grandfather goes on to tell us that we have to respect and love our trees and plants, our gardens. If we do not carefully tend our plants and gardens, we could destroy the earth and the animals that call it home.*

	Do any of you live on a farm? Do you have to live on a farm to be a steward? (No) Our yards and gardens are kind of like Grandfather's farm. Our gardens are entrusted to us to care for them. Our gardens are part of our community. They can make our community a pretty place, they can be a habitat for other animals, and they can even grow food for us. Can you think of other gardens in our community? (Discuss places where they see plants and landscapes or farms.) *When we take care of our gardens and yards, we are helping to take care of the earth. The way we prune and plant affects the air that we breathe, the quality of our oceans, streams, and lakes.* *When we take care of our yards and gardens in a responsible way, we are acting for the common good and are demonstrating good stewardship of the earth*.
Let's plant a tree!	*Remember what Grandfather did first with trees? He had to plant them! We're going to plant a tree today!* (Hold up an acorn) *Do you know what this is? It is the seed of an oak tree. Let's fill our pots with potting soil. Remember to use your spoon to measure the space at the top of your pot.*
	Now, get an acorn and push it down into the soil in the center of your pot. We want it to be 2 inches deep. We can use our spoon handle again to make sure that we have planted it deep enough. *Gently firm the potting soil over the seed. Water gently with your watering bottle.* Create a plant tag and label for the acorns that were sown. Place pots in a plastic food storage bag and secure neck of bag with a twist tie. Send home with ***Grow On!*** newsletter that contains additional details for caring for the seedling as it emerges.
Clean up and put away.	

D. Program Wrap-up

After materials are cleaned up, gather children together. Explain that this is the last Sprouts session. *We are so proud of all that we have learned and accomplished together here in MG SPROUTS. We started out learning about seeds and flowers in the book* ***Sunflower House****. We learned about diversity - with different plants and insects in* ***Jack's Garden****. We talked about how composting makes soil and helps the earth when we read* ***Compost Stew****. Remember when we learned how gardening can bring people together with Grace and her mother in* ***The Ugly Vegetables****? We even learned a little about Chinese vegetables, too. We laughed at the pictures of Mortimer and Grollier in* ***Plantzilla*** *and found out how interesting growing plants can be. Finally, we learned about being stewards of the land with Grandfather in the* ***The Tree Farmer****. We did a lot with our hands, too! We made soil and planted seeds. We created plant tags, made plant pets, and water bottles to water them. Now,we are growing those plant pets, seeds from seed tapes, and garlic from cloves. We made beautiful calendars and garden journals describing what we've seen and learned. There are more pages in the* ***My SPROUTS Journal*** *so that you can keep observing and recording. Now, we have a special certificate for you to recognize your efforts!* (Give each child his/her personalized certificate.) Call each child up to shake their hand and others can clap.

Children go home with: ***MG SPROUTS Certificate***, planted acorn or seedling, watering bottle, ***My SPROUTS Journal***, ***Grow On!*** and ***My SPROUTS Monthly Calendar***.

Session Notes:

Review