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# Planting Birthday Celebrations

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## Activity Overview

Students celebrate their native planting.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Participate in and/or plan a planting celebration
- Celebrate doing a good action for the environment

**Subjects Covered:** Science, Language Arts, Art, and Social Studies

**Grades:** K through 12

**Activity Time:** Varies

**Season:** Spring or Fall

**Materials:** Variable

## State Standards

### Science:

Select multiple information sources (C.4.3)

Use data to answer questions (C.4.5)

Communicate results (C.4.6)

Identify data and sources to answer questions (C.8.2)

State learning from investigations (C.8.6)

Evaluate data (C.12.3)

Present results (C.12.6)

### Language Arts:

Orally communicate (C.4.1, C.8.1, C.12.1)

Listen & comprehend oral communications (C.4.2, C.8.2, C.12.2)

Participate in discussion (C.4.3, C.8.3, C.12.3)

### Art:

Identify how art is way to think & communicate (A.4.6, A.8.6, A.12.6)

## Background

When students plant a native restoration at their school it is a monumental step in creating a positive relationship with nature. The action connects students to the natural world and nurtures an awareness of their natural heritage and the value of preserving and restoring native plant communities. This activity helps students feel they can make a difference in our world and improve the health of our planet.

Celebrating the birth of a planting or adding to an existing natural area reinforces the significance of the event. A planting celebration may involve the entire school or a classroom of students. The size of the celebration or degree of planning can vary significantly, but the involvement of students in the planning is imperative. A school-wide celebration is a wonderful experience and a great way to involve the community and unite the school. Celebrations done on a smaller scale are just as successful. When a class-size group of students plant, then celebrate with a reading, original poetry, or a song, they experience an intimate connection to their plants and planting.

## Possible activities for a celebration include:

1. Readings from poetry, nature-related literature, and children's books. Books may spark ideas for other celebration activities such as acting out a portion of the book or writing and performing something inspired by the book's style. Suggested books for celebrations are listed under Additional Resources.
2. Talk about the values—historical, ecological, ethical, social, educational, and biological—for restoring a native ecosystem. Congratulate the students and school community for their role in the restoration.
3. Sing published songs or compose a song or rap specific to your school.
4. Create a short skit. Use ideas for skits from Earth Partnership for Schools activity 1-2, "Rain Shadow Play." Themes for skits that have been presented at school celebrations include the value of soil, formation of the earth and ecosystems, Laura Ingalls Wilder trying to find the perfect ecosystem to live in, how to plant a plant, and the story of a seed's experience. Skits can be an entertaining way to teach a subject-based lesson about the restoration.
5. Create banners and signs for the plants.
6. Have a parade using the signs or use ribbons and streamers.
7. Name and dedicate the planting.
8. Invite a guest speaker. Some schools have invited Native American speakers, naturalists, or even a "pioneer."
9. Perform a dance such as the Native American ceremonial dance in *Keepers of Life* (see Additional Resources), or a pioneer square dance.

## Planting Birthday Celebrations (cont.)

### Social Studies:

Identify & examine sources of information about history (B.4.1)

Use timelines to describe history (B.4.2)

Examine biographies (B.4.3)

Compare & contrast contemporary & historical lives (B.4.4)

Identify important political values (B.4.5)

Explain significance of holidays & symbols (B.4.6)

Identify & examine historical events & people (B.4.7)

Explain history of WI Indian tribes (B.4.10)

Use & evaluate primary sources of information (B.8.1)

Employ arguments about historical events (B.8.2)

Describe relationships between historical events (B.8.3)

Explain different interpretations of events (B.8.4)

Analyze political values (B.8.6)

Identify significant historical events and people (B.8.7)

Summarize issues associated with WI Indian tribes (B.8.11)

Use data to explain different points of view (B.12.1)

Analyze primary & secondary sources about historical event (B.12.2)

Analyze historical periods and relationships (B.12.3)

Assess different interpretations of events (B.12.4)

Identify how art & literature reflects era (B.12.7)

Explain significance of important people (B.12.8)

Analyze effects of significant changes (B.12.9)

Discuss impact of changes on beliefs & values (B.12.10)

10. Choreograph a creative movement dance such as moving like the wind, plants growing, and insects flying.
11. Compose a poem as a class, team, or individual.
12. Perform a musical number with instruments.
13. Invite older students as mentors to help plant and celebrate.
14. Choose a mascot.
15. Design a hat, necklace, or corsage for the students to wear during the celebration.
16. Start a countdown before the celebration with daily clues about some aspect of the restoration, add a “puzzle piece” to a display on a bulletin board each day, or create posters to build up excitement for the big event.
17. Eat an historical lunch on the day of the celebration.
18. Prepare a cookout.
19. Order a birthday cake.
20. Have fun!

### **Helpful hints for planning a celebration:**

- Keep it simple.
- Plan a large celebration that runs for about 45 minutes and includes five to seven parts.
- Plan a classroom celebration that includes one presentation—created as a class—or two to three small parts.
- Include students in the planning.
- Prepare a list of equipment and supplies needed beforehand, such as a microphone, chairs for visitors, props for presentations, boom box and music, and video camera. Determine student seating, a route for a parade, and other people movement.
- Invite your community, school board members, administrators, and parents. Have the students design and write invitations or design a template for an invitation and have the students personalize each one.
- Videotape or photograph before, during, and after the planting and celebration.
- Invite the media.

### **Activity Description**

Plan and implement a planting celebration.

### **Extensions**

- Create a memory book of the event.
- Write an article for a school newsletter or local paper.

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## Planting Birthday Celebrations (cont.)

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### Additional Resources

Bouchard, David  
Brink, Carol Ryrie  
Bruchac, Joseph & London, Jonathan  
Bruchac, Joseph & Caduto, Michael J.

Bunting, Eve  
Carlstrom, Nancy White  
Conrad, Pam

Cooney, Barbara  
Cornell, Joseph  
Dvorak, David  
Fleischman, Paul  
Fleming, Denise  
Gruchow, Paul  
Harvey, Brett  
Hines, Anna Grossnickle  
Lawlor, Laurie

Leopold, Aldo  
Olson, Sigurd F.  
Van Matre, Steve and Wheeler, Bill  
Van Matre, Steve  
Wilder, Laura Ingalls

Wilder, Laura Ingalls & Lane, Rose W.

If You're Not from the Prairie  
Caddie Woodlawn  
Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back  
Keepers of the Animals  
Keepers of the Earth  
Keepers of Life  
Dandelions  
Wild, Wild Sunflower Child Anna  
Prairie Visions  
Prairie Songs  
Miss Rumphius  
Listening to Nature  
A Sea of Grass  
Joyful Noise - Poems for Two Voices  
In the Tall, Tall Grass  
Journal of a Prairie Year  
My Prairie Year  
Come to the Meadow  
Addie Across the Prairie  
Addie's Long Summer  
George on His Own  
Addie's Dakota Winter  
A Sand County Almanac  
The Singing Wilderness  
The Earth Speaks  
Sunship Earth  
By the Shores of Silver Lake  
Farmer Boy  
The First Four Years  
Going West  
Little House on the Prairie  
Little Town on the Prairie  
The Long Winter  
My First Little House Books -  
Going to Town  
On the Banks of Plum Creek  
On the Way Home  
Prairie Day  
A Little House Sampler

### Assessments

- Write about your experience at the celebration, describe what you personally did, why the planting was important, and two other activities during the event.
- Develop a schedule for the celebration including who, what, where, and when.