

Earth Passages Interpretation Trails
a joint project between Acadia University
and Environment Canada

Introduction

Earth Passages consists of six interpretation trails designed for students or youth groups at the elementary grade level. They aim to develop an increased awareness about the environment and humankind's relationship to it. The Earth Passage trails employ a self-guided walk format aided by a comprehensive activity brochure.

Each trail incorporates four activity stations, based on one central theme. Participants are led through the activities using a brochure which supplements information provided for teacher/leaders prior to a trip to the trails.

The trail themes have been chosen to enhance the science, social studies, and language arts public school program. The six trail themes are: **N.E.E.T Street; Connections; Insect Boulevard; Growing, Growing, Gone?; Exploration Inc.; and Tell It Like It Is.** Students will experience a variety of environmental concepts first hand through a selection of activities involving such things as sensory awareness, communication exercises, and investigation.

Pre-Visit Information

Before the actual experience at Earth Passages, the theme of the particular trail should be discussed and focused on by the group and the group leader. The leader may need to go over some of the terminology used in order for the participants to understand the instructions and information while on the trails. Some of the trails have pre-trip activities. You will find the instructions for these activities enclosed if the trail that you plan to use requires it.

*** Please note that it is your responsibility to photocopy enough brochures for all of the participants.**

Post-Visit Information

The Earth Passages Interpretation trails are not an end in themselves. It is important that the experience be summarized with an activity and any activity sheets finished when the group comes together again. A summary of the experience and a discussion about it is necessary in order for the participants to get a complete understanding about the activities. The theme behind the experience can be transferred into the participants everyday lives with the proper facilitation. Some of the trails provide a follow up activity and some do not. Those that do are as follows:

Connections - natural web

- "Creature Feature" activity sheet and poem

Tell It Like It Is - task force session

Other trails - complete and discuss activity sheets

The various trail themes, as mentioned before, have been developed to compliment the grade level specific to the public school curriculum. This does not mean, however, that the other trails are not conducive for a learning experience for your age group. Try Another Trail!

Safety Considerations

- pack a small first aid kit
- organize the class into four smaller groups, five smaller groups for the "Tell It Like It Is" trail (parental supervision would be beneficial)
- keep the group together when walking to the trails (be careful when crossing University Avenue and Skyway Drive - watch for traffic)
- be sure to have the participants dress in proper clothing
- have insect repellent on hand

Role of the Group Leader/Teacher during implementation of the trail

The role of the teacher is to supervise the operations of the activities at the trail, to rotate the groups at the appropriate time (approximately 20-30 minutes for each activity on trails 1-5), and to answer any questions that the students might have during their experience on the trails. The participants may also need some guidance in understanding the themes of the trails. This guidance is best suited in the form of probing questions.

Equipment and Supplies

- clipboards
- pencils/crayons
- paper
- support materials specific to the trails

The teacher is responsible for photocopying the brochures and the support materials for the students. A master copy will be sent to the teacher.

Recommendations

- Growing...Growing...Gone? and Tell It Like It Is will not be operating at the same time
- volunteers are recommended
- organize the groups prior to the visit
- clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather
- there are no washroom facilities at the site
- field/nature guide books would be helpful for the Tell It Like It Is trail (i.e. Trees of Nova Scotia)
- plan adequate supervision for the participants at all times