

# Fall Session 1 “Home”

Stage 1 | Desired Results

## Established Goals

Children participating in Boots and Roots engage with the flora and fauna in their local ecosystem. Active exploration and interaction with the natural world is interwoven with literature, literacy, science, music, art, and Biblical content. Social, artistic, academic, relational, spiritual and physical learning is offered via a strongly “delight-driven” emergent curriculum based both on teacher-initiated and child-initiated goals and activities. God as Creator is highlighted throughout the adventures!



EST 2018

# BOOTS & ROOTS

Center for Redemptive  
Education

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## Enduring Understandings

*Students understand that...*

- God is the creator of our world and all that is in it.
- God created the earth as a home for us and for a wide variety of plants and animals.
- God made unique homes for each of his creatures that care for their needs at different times of year.

## Essential Questions

- What is a home? What makes up your home?
- What different kinds of homes did God make for His creatures and why?
- How do you share a home with others? ...with other creatures?

*Students will know...*

- A home is the place we live with our family or household.
- God’s Creation is also our home and home to the plants and animals.
- God is creative (seen in the diversity of His creation and their **habitats**).

*Students will be able to...*

- Explore a local natural area with confidence and safety.
- Discover and employ natural materials (i.e. leaves, mud, sticks) as artistic and practical tools.
- Care for animal and plant habitats by interacting respectfully with them.

## *Stage 2 | Assessment Evidence*

### **Performance Tasks**

- Floor books, as form of narration, will be used at the end of each session as a way to assess student recall as well as serve as a review and reporting method
- Observation of individual students' correct use of hand tools and instruments

## *Stage 3 | Learning Plan*

### **Teacher Preparation**

Know your space long before the children arrive! Take a walk through the area chosen for the B & R program and consider your daily schedule. Take note of what there is to discover (Bird nests? Creek? Meadow? Grassy lawn with a wooded border?), climb on (fallen trees? Standing trees? Large rocks?), and roam through. Consider the raw materials you have to work with and the space you'll be inviting the children into! If you realize the area you're considering is lacking space within children can roam freely or safely (construction or a road nearby?) consider looking for a new area. However, if you are limited in options, be mindful of how to develop healthy boundaries that are clearly communicated with the children.

Also consider the location of restrooms and how far away they'll be at any given time during the day. Consider if there is a general meeting place at which you can drop activity supplies before children arrive (usually the destination of your walk - where you will have snack, sometimes sit spots, and your activity). This location may and should change over the course of the session to provide interest and new locations to observe. Be open to children's suggestions for sit spots or new areas to explore!

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## Week 1

**Book:** *All Things Bright and Beautiful*, illustrated by Jean Claude

Greet and welcome students! Icebreaker: use the Web of Life Activity from *Play the Forest School Way* book if your students are 5 yrs + in order to learn names and introduce the concept of ecology. With younger students, you can use a soft ball or a ball of twine to toss from student to student as they say their name and share something about themselves. Perhaps have them tell you if they have a pet or a favorite animal that lives near their house. Introduce the session's theme of "Home," and present the Enduring Understandings "A home is the place we live with our family or household" and "God's Creation is our home and also home to plants and animals."

Take time to introduce your routine to students in this first week. If it is helpful, depending on the needs or personalities of your students, use a visual or pictorial timeline to introduce the routine of your B & R gatherings.

This week's book will help introduce the **song** "All Creatures Great and Small." Have students repeat back to you the lines from the chorus after you read the book together. Demonstrate the tune (do you play an instrument? Can you intro the song using a guitar, flute, or simple percussion?) and practice singing just the chorus today. Ask students if they can make any connections between the verses in the song and the Web of Life activity.

*(refrain)*

*"All things bright and beautiful,*

*All creatures great and small,*

*All things wise and wonderful,*

*The Lord God made them all."*

Introduce students to the area you'll be exploring over the course of your session together by taking a walk. Ask students what they notice from the song (Any creatures? Big ones? Small ones? Birds? Trees?) in the area you walk through. As you walk, ask them where they think good boundaries would be if they were to explore the area on their own. Come to an agreement about the area in which students will be allowed to freely roam (of course, you will already have explored the area and have in mind some parameters, but allowing the students to consider their own comfort levels as well as suggest ideas helps them both learn healthy boundaries

and how to develop them for themselves). Find a place to sit together, have their snack, and ask students what they're curious about in the area they saw and what they would like to explore more before allowing them to do so.

Introduce and conduct **Sit Spots!** Start small - just a couple of minutes for the first day, and take your time asking them to narrate back to you the process and expectations. *Sit spots are a simple way to practice quiet, still, and solitary observation time. Have students find a comfortable solitary place nearby where they can observe the general area. Sit silently as a group until you call the back to hear what they observed. Encourage them to use a variety of senses to observe. This will be a challenging activity for some students at first, but with practice they will be able to build up the time that they can sit quietly. You may need to sit with particularly active students in order to help them focus at first. When you come back together, take turns sharing what they heard, smelled, saw or felt..*

At this point in the routine, you'll be ready to normally start an activity that accompanies the story or that will stimulate free play ideas. The students will have been taking in a lot of new information and surroundings on this first day, so keep it simple by combining your **Activity** with **Exploration** time. Introduce the time as "an opportunity to get to know our 'B & R home'" by discovering the area you will be visiting each week. Warm up the students by having them sing the chorus to "All Creatures Great and Small" and tell them to see if they can find a Great creature or a Small creature, something Bright, or something Beautiful to share with the group when they're called back.

Before releasing them, do teach them your "call back" routine. Will you use a whistle? A bell? Practice your preferred method to get students attention while in the outdoors (one whistle blow to "look at me" and two to "come to me"). *Role play: this is a very important safety protocol when working with students in the outdoors. Practice it more than once, including at an unexpected moment, to make sure they would be responsive in an emergency.* It may also be helpful to have the students narrate back to you where they agreed the exploration boundaries were. Continue to consider language that does not make the outdoors the "other" or intimidating, but remember that we're trying to cultivate temperance and awareness.

If students seem to need some guidance or help comfortably learning how to explore the area, ask the group if anyone had a place they wanted to explore first. Allow any volunteers to lead the way and encourage tentative students to follow along with you. As they begin to investigate the area and grow in confidence, you can slowly fade back and allow them to explore independently while you observe and explore as well.

This first day together will be a great opportunity to observe personalities and growth stages. Take note of individual student characteristics while they play and any significant interactions between students (i.e. any natural observers in the

group? Any dominant/shy personalities? Who will need drawing out? Any natural problem solving taking place?). Use a journal to take notes on observations.

When it is time, call students back and ask them to share with the group their Great, Small, Bright, or Beautiful discoveries! Look for more on your way back to the pick up location where you can record their observations and narration about the day in your **Floor Book** (*Use a XL art paper pad with the students to record the day's story. Use a two-page spread, have the students title your day together, and have students draw events or discoveries while they tell you what occurred. You can provide written notes around the page while they draw, or an older student can assist with the writing. Perhaps have students find natural "ink" materials to draw with sometimes - berries? mud? ). Be sure to have students come up with a title for the day and practice writing the date with them. Ask if any of them know how to write the date and have them teach the group. End your time together with a group picture that you can send to the parents (if you have photo release forms for everyone)!*

**Follow Up** Send a summary email to parents about your time together! Keep it simple with observations, activity summaries, or what book you read together and include your group picture. These follow up emails will be a great time to remind parents of any supplies they should remember for next time or reminders about your calendar/schedule.