

# Interactive Literacy Lesson Plan for *A Tree for Me!*

**Name of Activity:** Scavenger Hunt

**Students Participating; size of group:** Any size group of children and their families.

**Lesson Goal:** Children and their families will participate in a nature walk that involves integrating various literacy skills with scientific exploration, observation, and discussion.

**Learning Objectives/Skills:** The learners will be able to:

- a) Listen attentively and responsively as their children locate and identify scavenger hunt items as well as other items of interest during the activity.
- b) Direct children's eyes to meaningful print while reading the [scavenger hunt list](#) and the [counting out rhymes](#).
- c) Print letters and words for their children during the scavenger hunt, so that the children can read them back at the end of the hunt.
- d) Engage in meaningful, pleasant conversations with children in a group setting, as a follow up to the nature walk and scavenger hunt.

**Environmental Adaptations, Time & Materials Needed:** The following activities can be adapted to different situations. This activity is best suited to a park, yard, woods, or other [local nature setting](#). If necessary, however, it can be conducted indoors in a [simulated nature setting](#).

The activities will take approximately **40 to 75 minutes** depending on students and setting. The following materials will be needed:

- Paper bags for gathering items, with family names printed on them—one for each family.
- Pre-made [Nature Notebooks](#) containing [scavenger hunt list](#), [note taking page](#), and [counting out rhymes](#)—one for each family.
- Pens or pencils for writing.
- Large chart with [Scavenger Hunt List](#) printed on it.
- Large charts with [Counting Out Rhymes](#) printed on them.
- Three man-made items that the leader has pre-hidden in the setting. Some suggested man-made items are: empty food containers, bottle caps, small toys like a ball, jack or small vehicle, paper items such as a band-aid cover, notepaper or candy wrapper, and plastic items like empty bottles or six pack holders.
- Optional: Crayons.

**Procedure/Description of the Activity:**

1. Gather families together near the location of your scavenger hunt and explain that they will be taking a walk in the woods, just like the characters in the book you read (*A Tree for Me* or *In the Woods: Who's Been Here?*). Ask if anyone has participated in a scavenger hunt, and invite them to describe the experience.
2. Tell the participants that everyone will need to be a good observer during this walk, because there are some specific things to look for. Show them the large [Scavenger Hunt List](#), and read the items together.
3. Pass out the [Nature Notebooks](#) and ask children to find the page with the [Scavenger Hunt List](#). Read the items together one more time, asking children to point to each item and join in as you read.
4. Ask participants to look at the next page, the [note-taking page](#). Explain that this is a special challenge page! If they are careful observers, they will find some things that **don't** belong in nature—you know because you have hidden three of them along the way. Tell participants to look for them, but to keep it a secret by just writing down what they found and where they found it. Their parents will help them do the writing.

5. Pass out the pre-labeled bags and pencils, and ask families to turn to the last page in the [Nature Notebook](#). Explain that these rhymes are a good way to take turns or choose who will be “it” in a game. Ask if families notice that one of them is from the story, *A Tree For Me*. These rhymes are also lots of fun to say. Dismiss the first two or three family groups for the hunt by saying the counting out rhymes while pointing to the family groups. After dismissing these families, dismiss the rest all together. This will save time, and no one will be sad about being last.
6. Accompany families during the hunt, prompting and reinforcing families as they engage their children in the various objectives. Also, be certain to encourage children and families to investigate, explore and enjoy the nature setting.
7. After an appropriate amount of time (usually 15 –20 minutes), call families together in a circle in order to share their findings:
  - a. Read each item on the [Scavenger Hunt List](#), asking children to hold up what they’ve found. Respond to, compare, and briefly discuss their findings. Make certain that you single out each family at least once. For example, say, “The Smiths found a leaf with a long needle; and the Marvins found one with a short needle.”
  - b. Ask the whole group to identify the hidden items that did not belong in nature. If your hunt took place in a natural setting, participants may have found additional items, too. Ask some of the participants or a helper to gather and dispose of those items, emphasizing the importance of taking care of nature.
8. Wrap-up. Engage families in discussion by asking some open-ended questions such as, “How might that tin can have got into the woods?” “Why should we pick up the litter we find in the woods?” “What was your favorite tree? What did you like about it?” “What would happen if we cut down all those trees?” Congratulate children on their good reading and writing, and encourage them to continue to enjoy nature and trees. Remind them to use the [Counting Out Rhymes](#) as they play. Optional: Pass out crayons so that children can color pictures on the [Counting-Out Rhymes](#) page or decorate the cover of the [Nature Notebook](#) while they participate in the discussion.

**Assessment:**

**For Informal Assessment**

Objective	Participant's Names										Comments	
a) Listens attentively and responsively to children during the activity.	/ / / / / / / / / / / /											
b) Directs children's eyes to meaningful print in Nature Notebooks.												
c) Prints letters and words for children to read.												
d) Engages children in meaningful, pleasant conversations throughout activities.												

**Reflect on the Activity:**

1. What worked well?
  
2. What didn't work?
  
3. What might have made the activity more successful?
  
4. Did you notice any potential for follow-up activities based on what the students said or did?

**Transfer Home/Extension Ideas:** Suggest nature walks at home and at other near-by locations. Gather nature guides for families to borrow for those excursions. Remind families to use the counting-out rhymes for turn-taking and choosing "it" for other games. For a follow-up activity, try a different kind of nature hunt, such as a sensory hunt where families focus on what they hear or smell rather than what they see. Invite families to share and write down rhymes and chants from their childhood such as those for jumping rope and bouncing balls. Then they can teach those rhymes for their children. Finally, make a nature scrapbook together so that children can keep a record of their nature finds, such as pressed leaves or flowers they have identified, drawings of bugs, daily weather and temperature.

**Literacy Area(s)\* Addressed (check all that apply):**

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|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Power and Pleasure of Literacy</i>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>The Literate Environment</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Language Development</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Phonological Awareness</i>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Phonemic Awareness</i>                  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Types of Text</i>                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Letters and Words</i>                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Vocabulary</i>               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Knowledge of Print</i>   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Building Knowledge &amp; Comprehension</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Reading Comprehension</i>    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Motivation</i>           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Fluency</i>                                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Multiple Literacy</i>        |   |

\* from National Center for Family Literacy's *Building Strong Readers and Learning to Read and Write*