



A Guided Imagery for Your BC Parks Camping Trip

LESSON

GRADE LEVEL:

1-4

CATEGORY:

Field trips and Outdoors

TIME:

20 minutes

MATERIALS:

Journals and Pens

SETTING:

Indoors/outdoors

GROUP SIZE:

Whole class

SKILLS:

Visualizing, creating, listening, writing
and considering

SUBJECT AREAS:

Language Arts

KEYWORDS:

Values, imagination, experiences, perspectives

Overview

This guided imagery of planning a camping trip to a BC Park is designed to identify the values that we have for material and non-material things in our lives. Discussion of the experience leads us to learn more about how we make decisions based on these values. Values identification is an important part of conservation planning and sharing our values helps us to expand our perspectives.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe objects that have personal meaning for them;
- Recognize that other students may value different objects; and
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the impact of decisions that they have made.

Background

Guided imagery can create vivid experiences for students through their mind's eye of the imagination. The active visualization with eyes closed allows a part of the brain to be active when it is not taking in and processing visual information. Although it is imaginary, the images and their meaning are no less real and even if it is unexpected, should be considered as new perspectives of the narrative. Neuroscientists have shown that guided imagery improves writing skills by enriching reading and listening experiences. When listening to a story or other descriptive text, students produce visual images and become more relaxed. The images created may be a story about an experience they have had or completely new images.

The discussion that follows guided imagery can be for different purposes; in this activity it is used to help students identify that their values inform their choices and behaviours. The sharing of these values with one another helps us to learn more about ourselves and others. This broadens our perspectives and helps us build empathy for others. Values identification is also a key aspect of conservation planning and research. The case for

protecting a place is strengthened when environmental, cultural-historical or spiritual values are identified.

Procedure

1. Create a space that is free from distraction by asking students to put away or lay down pencils, paper or books.
2. Ask students to sit in a comfortable position with their feet flat on the floor and their hands on their laps or desks. If comfortable they may put their heads down on their desks. With their eyes closed take slow quiet deep breaths. Breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth. Ask the students to notice their toes and wiggle them a little bit to relax. Follow up by asking the students to think about their breathing and notice the rise and fall of their chest and shoulders. Continue to ask the students to breathe slowly until you see a general state of relaxation. Students should now continue to breathe in and out slowly through their nose with their eyes and mouth closed.
3. Begin reading the narrative. Use a steady and paced reading/speaking style that is slow enough to allow students to create visual images. This should be equal to about the same time as it takes to observe something with your eyes open or to complete an action as if you were asking them to do something like walk around their house. The longer we look the more we will see.
4. When you have finished reading, invite students to keep their eyes closed, but ask them to review all the images that they saw in their minds. Try to allow enough time to take in every image (about 1 or 2 minutes) before asking them to open their eyes.

Narrative to read:

This weekend you are going on a camping trip to a BC Park. Maybe you have been camping before, but this time you can help with the packing by selecting things you want to take with you. You are excited for this vacation because you will be outside and going for walks in the forest and having campfires at night. You think your parents have packed s'mores and you can't wait to find the perfect fire stick to roast the marshmallows. Everyone has been looking forward to the nice weather for this trip because it has rained the last few weekends. You know that there isn't very much space in your family's car for a lot of stuff, but your parents said you could find 3 things to show them that you would like

to take with you. There is no electricity at the campsite so the computer or TV will not work. All the cooking will be on the fire. You saw your sleeping bag being rolled up so you know you will be sleeping in a tent in a cozy soft warm sleeping bag. Although this will be different from being home, you are looking forward to this experience and sleeping outside. You might even be able to see stars and the moon at night or hear frogs in the wetland near by. You might even see a bat!

You decide that maybe walking through the different rooms of your house will help you decide what to bring with you. As you walk through different rooms like the kitchen..., the family room..., and your bedroom, look around... notice the things in each of these rooms that you can not take with you, but you use everyday. Now sit down in one of those rooms for a moment. Notice what surrounds you. What is in the room? Does something make you smile? Is it something that you can take with you? Maybe it is a picture of your family or your best friend. What do they look like? If it is an object imagine holding it in your hand. Pick it up and take it with you to another room or continue looking in the same room. Pick up another object and continue to go into each room, until you have a few things chosen. Take all the things you picked up and put them on your bed of your bedroom. Look at them and silently name and describe things you have chosen. Do any of them need power or batteries? Can they fit in the car with the camping equipment? If it's your best friend, is that something you could ask for, for them to come with you? Or maybe next time?

Now that your choices have been made, you walk out to where mom or dad is loading the car. You can see they are almost finished packing the car with everyone's three choices plus all the camping gear and food your family will need for the three days. Uh-oh. The car looks full. In fact the trunk won't close, and you don't know if everyone will fit in the car seats. Everyone realizes that everyone must give up one or two things that they had decided to bring. Your family starts to unpack the car a little bit while you go back to your room to look at the items you picked out. What are you going to pick now that you can only bring one or possibly two things if they are small? Pick up the item(s) and take them out to the car.

Before opening your eyes, take a few moments to think about the images that you saw. Did you see the full car with the trunk that won't close? What do you recall about the things in the house that you wish you could take but couldn't? What made you excited about the trip? Now remember the things that you selected, what was your final choice or choices?

When you are ready, you may open your eyes and write down what items you decided to take with you.

5. Ask students to write in their journal and to answer or elaborate on the following sentence:
"I am bringing my _____ because _____."

Ask students:

- What are some of the reasons for your choices?
- In what ways was it difficult to choose?
- What do your choices tell you about yourself?
- How do you feel about what you couldn't choose?

The reasons for what they did and didn't pick shows what they value. Ask them to think about this and come up with a reason why they value something they picked. Maybe it makes them smile or laugh, maybe it comforts them, maybe the person is just fun to have around. These are all valid reasons to select something. Ask them to think about it and write down the reason for (the value of) the person or object that they picked.

We value material and non-material things because they are important and have value. This value is usually based on a relationship we have built with the object or person and involves memories of experiences we have had. Students should be able to reflect on how values affect their choices.

Let the students know what you picked, and if they are willing have them share what they picked and why. Everything that students share is important and valuable. Sharing out in a positive way removes some of the nervousness of being vulnerable and helps us realize that we all have different values and things that we like. Respecting this diversity and even coming to appreciate another's values helps students understand perspectives and values that are different from their own. This broadens our experiences and expands our thinking while increasing empathy and acceptance of one another and our differences.

Assessment

Allowing for safe exploration and acceptance of different values and perspectives will increase collaboration, empathy and advance social-emotional levels for students which can be measured in a variety of ways, such as:

- Discussion and identification of their values
- Comparison of their values and those of others
- Evaluate what they learned about their classmates' values and how it may have changed their relationship with others

Extensions

Use other descriptive stories about locations or places, like a space trip, or a story about being a water droplet in the water cycle. Students will be able to access knowledge from prior experiences to understand and experience new and even imaginary ones.

References

Project Wild, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Guidelines for Guided Imagery, p. 437.