

CREATIVE ARTS learning springboards



Wild dancing and celebrations

Physically active learning through outdoor dance, with props made from natural materials

Aim: Create dance sequences to be developed and performed outdoors, inspired by the cycle of seasons, plants or natural phenomena.

Activity 1: celebratory 'mask' dance

Many festivals include dance as part of the celebration – for example Maypole dancing, or to tell a story. Outside offers space, light, and scale for large movements without constraint. In small groups, devise a celebratory dance using natural materials to create masked characters - see the Green Man Leaf Masks Springboard for ideas. Discuss the feelings and emotions of the characters and express these through dance.

Activity 2: plant life cycle dance

Dance can also represent a story, so here is an idea to use dance to tell the story of a plant life cycle. In groups, devise a dance that expresses the life of a plant, from growth to decay. Starting low, seed in the ground, making roots, moving through mid and high levels as the plant germinates, the seedling grows, flowers, fruits, matures and then dies back and returns to the earth. Dancers could also represent sunlight and rain, essential for growth. Ask pupils to think about descriptive language as they move (e.g. stretch, sway, flutter, crumple).

Activity 3: pollination dance

Divide the group into two - half the class are plants and the other half of the class are allocated (or choose) pollinating species – discuss what these are and why they are important – e.g. bee, butterfly, bird, moth, beetle. Are all plants pollinated by insects?

- The 'Plants' devise a dance, as above.
- The 'Pollinators' devise dances appropriate for their species.
- The 'Pollinators' move between the 'Plants', touching elbows to indicate the collection of nectar and distribution of pollen. Only when the plants have been pollinated do they progress through their life cycle dance to fruiting and decay and new seeds being planted.
- Include a discussion of bees doing the 'waggle dance" – how would that be interpreted through dance or movement?

Include wind pollination in this dance to complete the story. Wind pollinated plants, such as sweet corn, must cluster together when they are growing, so introduce a group of pupils as the 'wind' and ask them to create a dance sequence that can integrate into the insect pollinators' movements.

Resources:

Use leaves and other natural plant-based materials as props as well as inspiration for movement and sound, for example

- Large horse chestnut, ash or sycamore leaves can be used as natural 'pom poms' for cheer leading dances.
- Tall stems of willow or robust grasses can be used to add movement and scale to any dance.

More springboards:

- Green Man Leaf Mask

Key vocabulary:

Representation
Expression
Characteristics
Emotion

Success criteria:

- ✓ I can design my own movement phrases to celebrate something and to represent the life cycle of plants & pollination.
- ✓ I can link and combine movement phrases and patterns.
- ✓ I can respond to stimuli, creating movement phrases using specific skills.
- ✓ I can use a range of dance techniques to create a movement sequence.

