

Arkansas Champion Trees: An Artist's Journey

Activities for Grades K-2

These activities are adapted from the Family Gallery Guide to facilitate groups of children.

I Spy

Choose 4 or 5 drawings for discussion.

Option one: Play the game "I spy with my little eye...the items in bold below" and let the children find the drawings and the items.

Option two: Introduce the drawings and items as indicated below, continuing the discussion as is appropriate for the age level.

- "In this drawing of a **White Ash** tree we see a **tire swing**. Raise your hand if you like to swing. (Describe how someone sits in a tire swing.) What do you like about swinging?"
- "In this drawing of a **Bald Cypress** tree we see a lot of sharp wooden spikes around the trunk. These are called "**knees**." Hold up fingers to show how many knees you have. How are your knees different from those of a Bald Cypress tree?"
- "In this drawing of a **Magnolia** tree we see what looks like **two eyes**. These round dark circles show where the tree lost two branches. Maybe the branches were cut off with a saw. Maybe the branches broke off in a storm. Raise your hand if you have seen a tree branch broken in a storm."
- "In this drawing of a **Cottonwood** tree we see, in the tree trunk, the shape of an animal: **an elephant**! It is stretching its trunk up into the branches. What part of the elephant is missing (tail)? The bark of this tree is gray and wrinkled like elephant skin."
- "In this drawing of a **Sugar Maple** or **Chinkapin** tree we see that something is missing: **no leaves**. What season did the artist choose for this drawing (winter)? What do we like to do in winter? In what season do leaves grow again (spring)?"

Turn, Turn, Turn into a Tree

Choose 5 or 6 drawings for the group to pantomime.

Gather the group in front of each drawing, look at the drawing, and talk about the branches, leaves and flowers before giving the signal for participants to turn in place three times and then pose like the tree in the drawing.

"All these drawings are of trees. But each of them is different, just like each of you is different. Like the trees, we have branches (arms), leaves (hands/fingers), trunks (bodies) and roots (feet). Let's look at some trees, and on my count, we'll turn three times and stand just like the trees in the drawings."

- The **Bur Oak** tree has lots of wide branches with leaves that sway in the breeze. 1) turn, 2) turn, 3) turn into the tree! Sway in the breeze!
- The **Holly** tree has lots of big branches and wide bumpy roots that spread out. Its leaves are sharp, prickly & pointed. 1) turn, 2) turn, 3) turn into the tree!
- The **Cherrybark Oak** tree has very high and very low branches, and its roots are thin & spread out. It is losing its leaves very slowly in the wind. 1) turn, 2) turn, 3) turn into the tree!
- The **Shortleaf Pine** tree stands very strong, straight and tall. It barely moves in the wind. Its branches are very high up, and it only has a few leaves. 1) turn, 2) turn, 3) turn into the tree!

Group Tree Pose (photo op)

- The **Bald Cypress** tree lives near a river. It is surrounded by small cypress "knees" that belong to it and help it breathe when the river floods. (Choose a group to stand together for the trunk and branches; direct others to pose as the knees.) 1) turn, 2) turn, 3) turn into the tree!