

Groundhog Day: Fact or Fiction? Snow & Shadows
Langston Hughes' Birthday: Shadows Poem
2016 Ms. Cretera's Garden Parents
Outdoor Lesson #15- 2.1.2017
Liz Kelly, Maggie Overfelt-Valentine, Lara Shihab-Eldin

Objective: Use Groundhog Day Tradition to think about the following concepts: Fact or Fiction? Learn About the Astronomical basis of Groundhog day (marking the imolc equinox mid-way between winter and spring (vernal equinox's).

Time/location: The entire lesson can be done in 30-40 min.

Materials: Large popsicle or craft sticks/ marked for snow gauges/ chalk for groundhog game / Diagram of Earth's Rotation/Celtic Calendar

Poems: Shadows by Langston Hughes, Is it True? by Margaret Hillert

Before The Lesson/ And Anytime we need to re-group (also Ms. Cretara's method, 3,2,1,shh....kids love to recite it:

-Deep Breath Pause: Breathe in the air just the way the roots absorb in the water, feel it go to all parts of your body, (feel the water going up your trunk, into your branches, out to the leaves, make food, and evaporate) and breath out.

Part 1 / Snow Gauge Measuring (Mud Dependant)

Ask the kids to Measure in two locations: planting bed vs. ground. Tally on a chart. Talk about deepest vs. shallowest.

Part 2/ Groundhog Day: Fact or Fiction: Read the Poem, talk about the tradition. Since 1887, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania (German Only tradition), based in other old European traditions where instead of the groundhog, they talked about a Badger, Bear or Serpent. Can it be sunny or cloudy everywhere? Really it marks the midway point between winter and spring equinox. Show charts of Earth's Rotation and old Celtic calendar (tied to harvests)

Is It True?

by Margaret Hillert

The groundhog plays a little game.

(Woodchuck is his other name.)

If he finds no shadow here,

Spring is very, very near.

But if he sees his shadow small,

Winter isn't done at all,

And back into his hole he'll creep

For six more weeks of winter sleep.

<http://earthsky.org/human-world/everything-you-need-to-know-about-groundhog-day#phil>

Part 3/Groundhog Game

Give each kid some chalk to draw their Groundhog Hole. Start in your hole.

We find that the groundhog cannot find his shadow as is likely due to overcast weather I read about a game where Groundhogs are in their hole and they move around SLOWLY like groundhogs and when we call out 'sun' the have to crawl back to a hole (chalk drawn?) we can have them each draw a groundhog 'hole' to start, maybe? When we call out CLOUDS, they keep milling about..

Part 4/ Langston Hughes' Birthday: Excerpt from 'Shadows' Poem (adapted for Kindergarten)

Shadows by [Langston Hughes](#)

'We run,

We run,

We cannot stand these shadows!

Give us the sun.

We were not made

For shade,

For heavy shade,'

.....

'We run,

Oh, God,

We run!

We must break through these shadows,

We must find the sun.'