

# Previsit Activities: The Pine and the Maple: A Tale of Two Trees

*From sea to tea; from craft work to syrup*

## Description

Grades K-3. The white pine and maple are important to our history. Discover their uses in the past and now – from Native Americans and the Colonial era to common building and furnishing uses today. Learn how to tell the age of a tree. Observe, touch, and smell pine and maple wood. Steep and drink pine needle tea!

## What's Going to Happen With My Students?

We will go outside to identify and compare pine trees and maple trees, learning some about their physiology. Once inside, we'll examine a large cross section of a pine tree, feel and smell the difference between pine wood and maple wood, and compare the taste of pine needle tea to maple sap. We'll also have a general discussion of the (historic) uses of these trees and why they are still so important to us today.

*In addition to this main program, which you have selected, students will also participate in other activities, as time allows, such as visiting the animal barns, playing old-fashioned games, and viewing the Farm Life Exhibits, among others.*

## What Do the Students Need to Know Before Coming to this Program?

Students should have a general awareness that, while they are both trees, pines and maples are quite different. Pines do not lose their needles and are called conifers or evergreens, while maple leaves turn colors in the autumn and fall off. Also, we boil the sap from maple trees down to get maple syrup.

## Try This...

- 1.) Show different tree leaves (real or pictures) to show that different types of trees have different shaped leaves, and that trees can be identified by the shape of their leaves.
- 2.) Brainstorm and write on the board all the uses for wood.
- 3.) Look around the classroom for items made with wood. Are there many? What other materials do we use to make things? Before plastic was invented, what would people have used instead (wood)?
- 4.) Make pancakes in the classroom and serve with (real) maple syrup!
- 5.) Read a tree-themed children's story. Have the kids draw a picture afterwards. Some books for younger kids include:
  - a. *The Stories Trees Tell*, Susan Coolidge
  - b. *Giants in the Land*, Diana Appelbaum
  - c. *The Tree Book for Kids and Their Grown Ups*, Gina Ingoglia
  - d. *Sugaring Time*, Kathryn Lasky