

Connecting Kids to Nature

Nature is a great teacher and getting kids outside to learn and play is good for their brains and their bodies. Try this outdoor activity from Project Learning Tree® - it's safe, fun, and educational!

The Forest of S.T. Shrew

Children take a “shrew’s-eye-view” of life in the woods to gain an appreciation for the many living things that make forests their homes, and for the variety of habitats within forests.

A habitat is a place where an animal or plant lives and gets all the things it needs to survive, including food, water, shelter, and space to grow, breed, and raise young. Within any habitat there are smaller microhabitats. For example, a decaying log is a microhabitat within a larger forest habitat. The decaying log provides all essential elements for the many small animals and microorganisms that make the log their home.

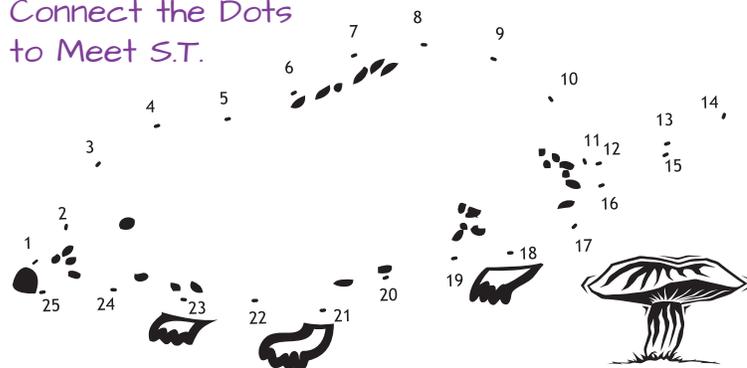
Try using Project Learning Tree’s story “In the Forest of S.T. Shrew” to take children on a journey to the forest floor from the viewpoint of a small, and often overlooked, forest creature. You can access the story for free at <http://bit.ly/LDAE5c>. Before reading “In the Forest of S.T. Shrew,” ask children:

- What is a forest?
- Have you ever visited a forest?
- If so, what did you see? If not, what might you expect to see?
- What do you enjoy most about forests?

Connect the dots below to uncover an image of the story’s main character, and then share images of other animals in the narrative. Have children seen them in nature before? If so, what were they doing? As you read the story, ask children to complete actions each time you reference a particular animal. For example, each time S.T. Shrew’s name is mentioned, have children wiggle their fingers by their faces to mimic a shrew’s whiskers. When the story is finished, invite children to draw pictures of events that took place or of their favorite character.

Finish the adventure by taking children on a walk through the woods. Look for microhabitats such as a fallen log, tree bark, or leaf litter. Ask: Are there other microhabitats near your school? Near your home? In your own backyard

Connect the Dots to Meet S.T.



Make Learning Fun!

Encourage your child’s school to incorporate learning outdoors.

For more activity ideas and materials:

- Attend a PLT workshop, www.plt.org/state-network/
- Visit shop.plt.org



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is an initiative of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

www.plt.org