

December 2021 Book of the Month

The Little Fir Tree

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For seven years, the little fir tree grows all alone. One winter, it is taken to a warm home to a disabled boy for a special celebration that is repeated for years to come. But one final year, the celebration comes to the woods to the little fir tree! This story is full of yearning for the special seasons of life. The reader will also learn about Christmas tree life cycles and the value of real Christmas trees.



Ag Facts

- The Fraser fir is named for the Scottish plantsman, John Fraser.¹
- 50 million Fraser fir trees are growing on 25,000 acres in North Carolina.¹
- The Fraser fir represents over 99.4% of all Christmas tree species grown in North Carolina.¹
- North Carolina ranks 2nd in the nation for Christmas tree production.¹
- North Carolina Christmas tree producers have provided more than 13 Fraser fir trees to the White House.¹

The Little Fir Tree Discussion Questions:

1. How did the fir tree start its life?
2. Why is the fir tree growing alone in a field?
3. What are some examples of wildlife that are interacting with the fir tree?
4. Why did the man dig the tree up in order to keep the roots attached?
5. What prevented the little boy from going with the man to get the fir tree? What types of technology have been invented to help people with disabilities interact with the world?
6. What happened to the little boy?
7. What happened on the last Christmas?
8. How did the last Christmas help the wildlife that lived around the fir tree?

Activity 1: Christmas Tree Advertisements²

1. Provide each student with a NC Christmas Tree Ag Mag (see **Links**). Ask students to read the Ag Mag and record five of their favorite facts from reading.
2. Place students into groups of no more than 5.
3. Instruct students to discuss each of their favorite facts to the group and tell why they thought their facts were interesting.
4. Tell the groups that they will be creating advertisements for their own Christmas tree farms. The advertisements will help their farm sell more Christmas trees.
5. After students have discussed and determined their farm names, pass out paper and art supplies for each group.

6. Next, have students use facts and images from the Ag Mag they like the best to create a hypothetical advertisement for their Christmas tree farm.
7. Explain to students that they must incorporate a minimum of three facts from the Ag Mag within their advertisement. Encourage students to use their creativity and talk amongst their groups about their ideas.
8. Next, tell the students that they will be selling their trees during the COVID-19 pandemic. They must consider what format they will use to display their sales flyer and how they will sell their trees without having in-person contact with the buyers.
9. Give student groups time to sketch and complete their sales flyer. Walk around the room and observe their work. Listen to their conversations to help guide them in the direction for making a good product and keeping them on task.
10. Once students have completed their sales flyer, ask them to present their artwork and include each member of the group to explain one portion of the advertisement. Items that must be included in the presentation:
 - a. What time of year will your flyer be available for viewing?
 - b. How will you make your flyer visible for your local community?
 - c. What format(s) will you use to display your flyer? Examples could include: social media, local newspaper, local businesses, etc. However, keep in mind the COVID-19 stipulation.
 - d. What are the prices of your trees?
 - e. What sizes of trees will you have available for purchase?
 - f. What will be the protocol for selling your trees without in-person contact?
 - g. How will the buyers receive their trees without in-person contact?
11. **Extension Activities:**
 - a. ELA: Use this lesson to discuss how specific word choices found within advertisements have an effect on consumers (use of exclamation points, use of phrases such as, 'limited time offer,' etc.). Then, encourage students to use these persuasive writing techniques with their advertisements.
 - b. Visual Art: Explore the ways in which other commodities have been used in advertising in the past, such as vintage supermarket ads. Use these older advertisements as inspiration for when students begin creating advertisements for Christmas trees.
 - c. Math: Have student groups determine the profits from their sales from selling 25%, 50%, 75% of the available trees.
 - i. Ex. $1000 \text{ trees sold} \times \$50.00 \text{ per tree} = \$50,000.00$
 - ii. Ex. $1000 \text{ available trees} \times 0.25 = 250 \text{ trees sold} \times \$50.00 \text{ per tree} = \$12,500.00$ profit before production costs are subtracted.

Activity 2: Christmas Tree Math

1. The fir tree in *The Little Fir Tree* grows seven years before the man harvests it. If this fir was planted when you were born, and one tree must be harvested before another tree is planted and you are 11-years-old, how many Christmas trees have been grown and harvested in your lifetime? Show your work.

2. In North Carolina, there are 1,300 growers producing Fraser firs. If each of those growers harvested 50 trees each year, how many homes could have real North Carolina Christmas trees for Christmas this year?
3. If one tree can be used to make 3 wreaths, how many trees would you need to make 540,000 wreaths?

Activity 3: Cultural Celebrations and Their Relationship to Agriculture³

1. Introduce the word “agriculture” to students by writing the word on the board in front of the class.
2. Instruct students to take 30 seconds to recall any information they know about agriculture.
 - a. Can prompt by asking, “What words come to mind when you hear the word “agriculture?” What is “agriculture?”
3. Pair share: after 30 seconds, have students share their definitions with the entire class. Capture words and phrases on the board.
4. Provide students with this definition of agriculture to bring all of their ideas together.
 - a. Agriculture refers to the production and delivery of food, fiber, and fuel that humans need to survive and thrive.
5. Create a flow chart or concept map exploring further the definition of food, fiber, and fuel. Pull examples from students for each category.
6. Ask students, “What category would Christmas trees fit into?” Explain that Christmas trees, while in the field, provide habitats for wildlife, and when harvested are important parts of certain cultural celebrations. They are also important to North Carolina’s economy. Allow students who do not celebrate Christmas to share their seasonal traditions and customs. While this is going on, ask students to identify the agricultural products (commodities) that are represented in other cultures’ seasonal traditions, and categorize those.
 - a. Example: Diwali is a Hindu tradition that has special foods associated with it. Barfi are white creamy squares made with condensed milk, sugar, and nuts (all agricultural products).

Links

- North Carolina Christmas Tree Ag Mag
https://www.ncfb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FINAL-ag-mag-christmas-tree-PRINT_compressed.pdf
- The Life Cycle of a North Carolina Fraser Fir – The Long Journey Home (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSuNwp9pldY>

Sources

1. <https://www.ncfb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FINAL-ag-mag-christmas-tree-WEB.pdf>
2. <https://www.ncfb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Christmas-Tree-Sales-Activity-Sheet.pdf>
3. <https://www.agfoundation.org/files/AFBFA-AgLit-MAF-191008-AgCareerRace.pdf>

K-5 Subject Areas

Reading, Visual Arts, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Math, Science, and Social Studies

NC Standard Course of Study

Reading

- **RL.K.1** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.K.3** With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

- **RL.K.4** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about words in a text that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- **RL.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RL.1.3** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- **RL.1.4** Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- **RL.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RL.2.2** Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.
- **RL.2.7** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
- **RL.3.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RL.3.3** Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- **RL.3.7** Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story.
- **RL.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RL.4.3** Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.
- **RL.5.1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.K.1** With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RI.K.2** With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- **RI.1.1** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- **RI.1.2** Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
- **RI.1.3** Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
- **RI.1.5** Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text.
- **RI.1.6** Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
- **RI.1.7** Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- **RI.2.1** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- **RI.2.2** Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text
- **RI.2.5** Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
- **RI.2.7** Explain how specific images contribute to and clarify a text.
- **RI.3.1** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- **RI.3.2** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- **RI.3.5** Use text features and search tools to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- **RI.3.7** Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text.
- **RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.4.2** Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- **RI.4.3** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- **RI.4.4** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.
- **RI.4.5** Describe the overall structure of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- **RI.4.7** Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- **RI.5.1** Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.5.2** Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
- **RI.5.4** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic of subject area
- **RI.5.7** Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question or to solve a problem efficiently.

Visual Arts

- **K.CX.1.2** Recognize that art can depict something from the past (long ago) or present (today).
- **K.CX.2.2** Identify relationships between art and concepts from other disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and other arts.
- **1.V.2.3** Create art from imaginary sources of inspiration.
- **1.CX.1.2** Identify images in art as depicting something old (historic) or new (contemporary).
- **1.CX.1.5** Understand that art is a reflection of the artist's ideas, environment, and/or resources.
- **1.CX.2.2** Identify connections between art and concepts from other disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and other arts.

- **2.V.2.3** Create art from real and imaginary sources of inspiration.
- **2.CX.2.2** Understand relationships between art and concepts from other disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and other arts.
- **3.V.2.1** Create art through a process that includes generating ideas, planning solutions, and producing original art.
- **3.V.2.2** Use personal point of view and experiences as sources for creating art.
- **3.V.2.3** Create art from realistic sources of inspiration.
- **3.CX.2.2** Understand how to use information learned in other disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and other arts in visual arts.
- **4.CX.2.3** Use appropriate collaborative skills to create a work of art.
- **4.V.1.2** Apply personal choices while creating art.
- **4.V.2.2** Use ideas and imagery from North Carolina as sources for creating art.
- **4.CX.1.1** Understanding how the visual arts have affected, and are reflected in the culture, traditions, and history of North Carolina.
- **4.CX.2.2** Apply skills and concepts learned in other disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and other arts, in the visual arts.
- **4.CR.1.1** Use visual clues to interpret the content of art.
- **5.V.1.2** Create art that reflects personal voice and choice.
- **5.V.2.2** Use ideas and imagery from the global environment as sources for creating art.
- **5.CX.2.1** Analyze the relationship between arts and daily life in product design, print, and digital media.
- **5.CX.2.2** Exemplify how information and skills learned in art can be applied in other disciplines.
- **5.CX.2.4** Interpret visual images from media sources and the immediate environment.

Writing

- **W.K.2** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- **W.1.2** Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide closure.
- **W.2.2** Write informative /explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section..
- **W.3.2** Write informative /explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **W.4.2** Write informative /explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **W.4.5** Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- **W. 4.6** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- **W.5.2** Write informative /explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **W.5.5** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- **W.5.6** Recall relevant information from experience or gather relevant information from print and digital resources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work and provide a list of sources.

Speaking and Listening

- **SL.K.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.K.2** Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
- **SL.K.3.** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.
- **SL.K.4.** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
- **SL.1.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.1.2** Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- **SL.2.1** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.2.2** Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- **SL.3.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.3.4** Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly in complete sentences at an understandable pace.
- **SL.4.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- **SL.4.4** Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; adjust speech as appropriate to formal and informal discourse.
- **SL.5.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly
- **SL.5.4** Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.

Math

- **C.1.OA.1** Represent and solve addition and subtraction word problems, within 20, with unknowns, by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem, when solving: • Add to/Take from-Change Unknown • Put together/Take Apart-Addend Unknown • Compare-Difference Unknown
- **NC.1.OA.2** Represent and solve word problems that call for addition of three whole numbers whose sum is less than or equal to 20, by using objects, drawings, and equations with a symbol for the unknown number.
- **NC.2.OA.1** Represent and solve addition and subtraction word problems, within 100, with unknowns in all positions, by using representations and equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem, when solving: • One-Step problems: o Add to/Take from-Start Unknown o Compare-Bigger Unknown o Compare-Smaller Unknown • Two-Step problems involving single digits: o Add to/Take from- Change Unknown o Add to/Take From- Result Unknown
- **NC.3.OA.3** Represent, interpret, and solve one-step problems involving multiplication and division. • Solve multiplication word problems with factors up to and including 10. Represent the problem using arrays, pictures, and/or equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem. • Solve division word problems with a divisor and quotient up to and including 10. Represent the problem using arrays, pictures, repeated subtraction and/or equations with a symbol for the unknown number to represent the problem

Science

- **1.L.1** Understand characteristics of various environments and behaviors of humans that enable plants and animals to survive.
- **1.L.2** Summarize the needs of living organisms for energy and growth.

Social Studies

- **K.B.1** Understand cultural practices in local communities and around the world.
- **K.G.2** Understand interactions between humans and the environment.
- **1.B.1** Understand how culture, values, and beliefs shape people, places, and environments.
- **1.G.2** Understand interactions between humans and the environment in different places and regions around the world.
- **4.E.1** Understand how economic decisions and resources affect the economy of North Carolina