

Middle School

Purlieu Lesson Plans

Created by DeeGee Lester, Education Director

The Parthenon

Purlieu Exhibit

Sharon Charney & Anne Williams

West Gallery: November 12, 2011-April 28, 2012



Maple Leaf

By Sharon Charney

Photos used with permission from the West Meade Conservancy

Curriculum Standards

Visual Art:

1.3.1 (Communication of ideas); 2.2(Critical thinking skills in visual arts); 3.3 (Analyze the subject matter and ideas of another’s artwork); 3.1 (Describe the subject matter and ideas of a student’s own artwork)

Language Arts: 1.3.1 (Write in a variety of modes for different audiences and purposes, including descriptive, narrative); 1.3.2 (Employ various prewriting strategies); 1.3.3 (Organize ideas into an essay with an introduction, developing paragraphs, conclusion, and appropriate transitions); 1.3.4 (Refine strategies for editing and revising).

This lesson plan can be used in conjunction with the introductory Power Point, *Exploring Art and Nature*, listed under Educational Resources on the Parthenon Web site.

Purlieu



Pronounced: purl-yu

What is that word?



It means “a piece of land on the edge of a forest.” It also means “a frequently visited place.”

To the people who live in Nashville's West Meade, it is a beautiful area of forest and wildlife that they love and are trying to protect through the **West Meade Conservancy**.



Conservancy

Pronounced kun-ser-vunsee

What is *that* word?



It means the protection, preservation, management, or restoration of wildlife or natural resources such as forests, soil, or water.



The West Meade Conservancy is a non-profit dedicated to preserving the woodlands and wildlife of West Meade as a link to Nashville's ecological corridor.



Lessons from a boy named Noah

Noah Charney grew up in the area of Nashville called West Meade. He loved nature and enjoyed spending his time exploring the woods and hills and creeks.



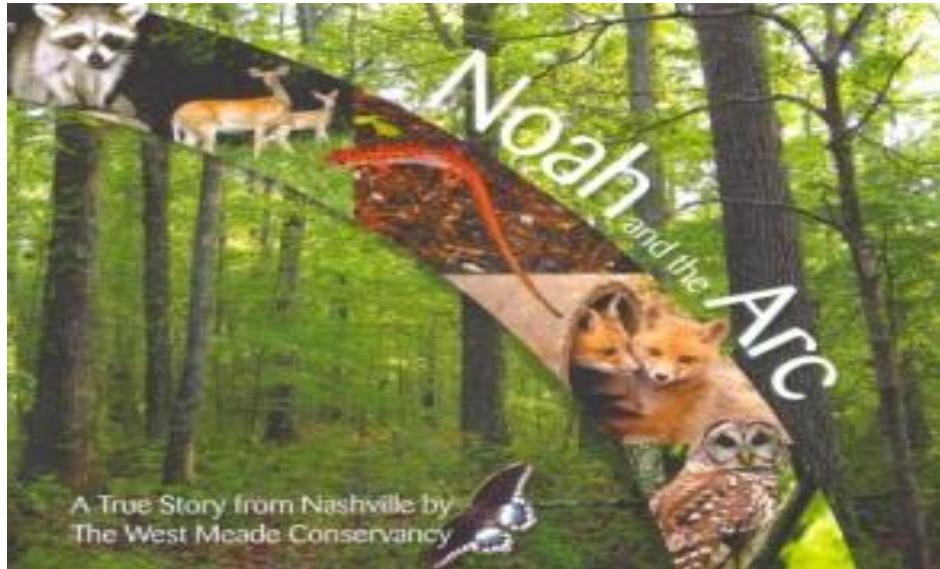
He noticed creatures and plants that most people miss. He peeked under leaves to discover curious insects. He listened to bird song. He took photos of plants and animals.

When he grew up, he built upon his boyhood love of nature and became a biologist, a person who studies living things. He founded the West Meade Conservancy to preserve the woods and wildlife for future generations.



And...

Noah's story became a delightful and informative book



What can we learn from Noah?

- **An area of interest today can lead to opportunities tomorrow.**
- **A curious mind has no boundaries.**
- **A focus on developing powers of observation opens a world that most people miss.**
- **Everyone has a *voice* that can be used to help and to influence others.**

Let's Explore and Interpret Nature through a Variety of Activities

Observation of Nature:

How can we know, understand, or interpret nature if we don't experience and observe nature?

Activity: *Nature Journal*

The best device for learning about nature through observation is creating a Nature Journal. Through the journal, individual students can focus on specific areas of interest (plants, animals, environmental issues, etc.) through notation, sketches and poetry.

- Three web sites provide excellent guidance for teachers assisting students in developing personal nature journals. Each site offers background, tips and examples, as well as steps in journal development, sketching and photographing, and even video. Check the Smithsonian in Your Classroom: Introduction to the Nature Journal at www.SmithsonianEducation.org. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Prairie Wetlands Learning Center offers K-6 Lesson Plans for nature journaling at www.fws.gov/midwest/pwlc/documents/NatureJournal.pdf. Another great source by David Welzel (*Creating a Science Nature Journal*) www.david-welzel.suite101.com/creating-a-science-nature-journal.

Activity: *Nature Writing*

- Using description and sketches developed through personal nature journals, students write a descriptive or narrative piece about nature or their experience with nature.
- The student may choose to use their journal writings, sketches and findings in a scientific way showing, for example, the results of experiments that track the level of pollutants in streams, or mapping the varieties of plants and animals within a certain natural area.

Activity: *Nature Art*

- Students select a sketch from their Nature Journal and turn that initial quick sketch into a more in-depth nature study.

Activity: *Art from Natural Objects*

Students may create 3-dimensional nature studies in a variety of interesting ways:

- On school grounds, students stack rocks, twigs, and other natural objects to create a temporary sculpture.
- Students use a variety of natural objects glued onto plywood or heavy cardboard to create a nature collage.
- Students press natural objects into self-hardening clay to create a bas-relief.

A French term from the Italian *basso-relievo* ("low relief"), bas relief is a sculpture technique in which figures and/or other design elements are just barely more prominent than the (overall flat) background.

Bas relief is created either by carving away material (wood, stone, ivory, jade, etc.) or adding material to the top of an otherwise smooth surface (say, strips of clay to stone). This is a technique as old as humankind's artistic explorations, and is closely related to high relief.

Activity: *Nature Photography*

- Students discover and photograph nature on their school grounds. Students may create individual photographs or work together to create a collage. By photographing a familiar setting, such as the school ground or neighborhood, students may observe a variety of plants, birds, insects and trees which they had never before noticed. A school vegetable garden is another great place to photograph.

Activity: *Create a “Jackson Pollock” Nature Scene*

Jackson Pollock is considered a master of action painting – a style of abstract expressionism that uses techniques such as splashing, splattering, and dripping paint onto the canvas. In the case of Pollock, this was not a *painter standing*; this was a *painter moving*. With his canvas sprawled on the floor, Pollock scurried around tossing and drizzling paint colors, creating an energetic, spontaneous scene – a visual record of his movements that day. Pollock spoke both enthusiastically and mystically about being “*in*” the painting, of “*feeling more a part of the painting*,” and about how the painting “*has a life of its own*.”

Pollock was fascinated by the methods used by Native American Navajo sand painters as they stood and drizzled handfuls of colored sand, creating exquisite works of art. He employed many of their techniques in creating what he calls the *rhythmic energy of nature*.

www.jackson-pollock.com/uniquestyle.html



Look at the bushes and forest undergrowth and mimic the *rhythmic energy of nature* by creating your own Pollock style action painting:

Students select paint colors they would find in nature and put the paints in bowls, one color per bowl. Take marbles and roll them in a paint color until covered. Have a reserved bowl of water for marbles after they are used. To assure easy clean-up, do not let the paint dry on the marbles. With a spoon lift the various colored marbles from their bowls and let them roll around on a large sheet of paper that has been placed inside a large sided cookie sheet (to prevent them from rolling off). Students can sequence their colors as they please. The spoon can also be used to drip paint onto the paper. The effect resembles forest shrubbery or undergrowth. To see full instructions and examples of student art look at the following web site:

<http://www.storyboardtoys.com/gallery/Jackson-Pollock-lesson-plan.htm>