

# ROBERSON MUSEUM AND SCIENCE CENTER

## Pre-Visit Homegrown: The Giving Tree

**Grade Level:** K through 2

**New York State Learning Standards:** ELA 1-4; MS&T 7

**Pennsylvania Learning Standards:** RWS&L 1.2, 1.5, 1.6; S&T 3.3, 3.5, 3.8; E&E 4.2, 4.3, 4.8

**Objectives:** This activity increases students' awareness about how trees are present in their everyday lives. Students will be able to identify objects made from tree materials. Students will also learn how trees are living beings and that we must replant new trees to replace what we use. Students will be able to think critically and propose new ideas about a story.

### Materials:

- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
- Large Paper
- Marker

### Procedure:

1. Begin by explaining to the students that they will be learning about trees and how we use their wood every day.
2. Read the book *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein to the class.
  - a. Allow the students to look closely at the pictures in the book in order to see how the tree is being used.
  - b. Reinforce the idea that the man kept using the tree's wood for the many different things he needed.
3. Ask the students to help make a list on a piece of large paper of anything that is made with wood. With Kindergarten, you may wish to draw pictures of these things listed instead of writing words. **Note: This list will be used in the post-visit activity.**
  - a. The list may include things like books, paper, furniture, houses, pencils, etc.
  - b. You may want to provide hints for things like heat (the burning of wood), instruments, and sports equipment.
4. Emphasize the point that we need trees and their wood for all of these things.
5. Ask students what they think will happen if we keep chopping down trees for their wood but we do not plant any new ones.
6. Mention that trees are living beings and we need to care for them. If we use the trees, then we must replace the ones we chop down so that others can use them also. Ask the students to brainstorm who the "others" might be. Answers may include people, animals, etc.
7. Continue the discussion by asking the students to imagine themselves as the tree from the book. Ask them if they would have reacted in the same way. Some questions may include:  
Would you give away all of your wood?

What would you have said to the boy that kept using your parts to make things for himself?

Do you think you would have explained to the boy how trees need to be replanted? Why or why not?

**Note: For older students, you may decide to assign this as a take-home writing component.**

**Conclusion:** Students will have a greater understanding of the role trees play in our everyday lives and how we must take care of them.

**Additional topics:** To extend the activity further, teach the students about caring for a plant or a tree. Reinforce the idea that trees are living beings and that they eat and sleep just like we do. Explain how they need water and that they drink it through their roots. Also, tell the students that trees get their food from the sun's light shining onto their leaves. Explain how trees rest at night, when the sun goes down. You may also decide to begin growing a plant in the classroom and designate one student each day to water it, make sure it gets sunlight, and report to the class how it is growing.

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