



CHILDREN IN
PERMACULTURE

Session Plan

TREASURE MAP

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Children in Permaculture (CiP) is an Erasmus+ project in which seven European organisations are working together to improve the education of children in formal, informal and non-formal settings through the development of resources such as case studies, curricula, session plans, films and other resources. These resources will enable kindergarten and school teachers, permaculture practitioners, parents and other educators to engage in holistic, sustainable education with children based on permaculture ethics and principles.



Erasmus+

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Content

1. Short description	3
2. Objectives (eyes, head, heart, hands)	3
3. Preparation of materials and resources	4
4. Content of Session	5
5. Permaculture ethics and principles	7
6. School theme.....	8
7. Setting.....	9
8. References	9
9. Inspiration	9
10. Ideas for extending the learning and experiences	9



Picture 1 - Drawing a map. Copyright Lusi Alderslowe.

1. Short description

Children explore a sense of direction, maps, and how to make them. The overview is:

Sowing:

- Discussing how we will behave today in terms of the permaculture ethics
- The adult tells a story

Growing:

- Drawing a map as a group on paper.
- Children looking for treasure in groups based on map

Harvesting:

- Discussing our learning.

It could be done all in one session, or it could link over a series of weeks together as children build their knowledge and understanding of maps and mapping.

Duration: 2 hours plus free play.

Age: 7 -11 years

Group size: 4 - 12 children

With at least 2 adults, 12 children is maximum (if you have more you will need to split into sub-groups)

2. Objectives (eyes, head, heart, hands)

EYES

- observe a biodiverse native woodland
- see a map being created

HANDS

- play in a biodiverse native woodland
- use a map

HEART

- spend time connecting to the woodland, awakening the sense of mystery and adventure.

HEAD

- learn the basics of a map - bird's eye view, scale, North, title, key
- share what they know about mapping

3. Preparation of materials and resources

Required Materials and Tools:

Treasure in different coloured bags (e.g. red, yellow, blue, purple). The number of bags depends on number of children and group size, 2-6 children per bag. Best if each bag has the same contents with natural items, e.g. 6 spiral shells, 2 mollusc shells, 4 shiny pebbles, and 6 larch cones.

Hide the treasure bags in various parts of the site, and keep a note of where you hid each one (by drawing a quick sketch map of the site for yourself). "Hide" the treasure in a very obvious place within your boundaries which you can easily give instructions to find, for example "Go to the corner of the paths, then go 10 paces North and 5 paces East." Note down the location of each bag (including the number of paces) on the sketch map, as a reminder to yourself. For younger children, use larger bags, and 'hide' them in a very obvious place directly at large landscape features (rather than a number of paces away). See picture 1.

1 big piece of paper (e.g. size A2) with board, pencil, coloured flipchart pens.

3 ethics wood cookies (wood cookies with drawn and written on them the 3 permaculture ethics). For example "Earth care" could have a picture of a tree, and on the other side is a different way of saying the same ethic e.g. "Look after nature". "People care" could have a picture of dancing people with "Look after others and self" on the other side. Fair share could have a picture of a pie with a slice taken out and "Give away the surplus" written on the other side.

Safety equipment as required in your situation, such as: a charged mobile phone, risk-benefit assessments, emergency procedure, medical forms, first aid kit and whistle.

How to prepare space and/or people:

A biodiverse native woodland with a clear area or two for seating and for drawing the wheel map. Check the area in advance to remove dangerous litter (e.g. syringes) and do a risk-benefit assessment. You can find example risk-benefit assessments here... Participants to bring water and healthy food to eat. Make sure that the children are clear on the boundaries of the site before this session starts, by walking the boundaries and/or playing the game "1,2,3 where are you?" (probably in a previous session). There is a description of how to play this game here.

4. Content of Session

Sowing (20min)

- Start the session with a short welcome and appreciation of the beautiful place and wonderful people we are with.
- Permaculture ethics: Once you are sitting in a circle, bring out the 3 ethics wood cookies (as shown in picture 1).
- Take each ethic in turn and ask the children what this might mean in terms of how we will behave together today. For example, Earth care could be “not to hurt living plants or animals”, People care could be “we won’t hurt each other, and will respect how others feel” and Fair share could be “we will share fairly the things we find, and the air time (so no one person talks much more than everyone else)”.
- Story (10min).

It is good, if possible, to use a personal story (from the leader’s own childhood) as this will add relevance and connection. If you can’t think of a relevant story of your own, you could use or adapt this one, which is a true story from Lusi Alderslowe’s childhood.

When I was about your age (8-12), I went to an orienteering event. My Dad and brother went on a long course, and my stepmum and I went on a short course of about 3-4 miles which should have taken about an hour. My stepmum held the map and tried to guide us to each of the different markers. She would look for a long time at the map and then say ‘OK, I think we are here, so that means we have to go ...that way.’ I remember looking in the direction she was pointing at a thicket of brambles and nettles. Do you know how jaggy brambles and nettles are? Well my stepmum thought because that was the way we had to go straight through the middle of them, rather than going around the thicket. Well, I learnt later that you can go around a thicket to a fixed point and keep going in the correct direction from there. Well, it took a long time! But we managed to do the course and made it back to the base camp after several hours, just as it was getting dark! My Dad and brother had been back for hours and there was a search party out looking for us!

At that moment I decided that I would learn how to read a map so I would never be lost like that again! It was a good resolution as only a few years later I won the first girls in an orienteering competition.

- Ask “Have any of you been lost?” Listen to some of their stories about being lost.
- Ask “How could we stop ourselves from getting lost?” Welcome any suggestions which can help, it will be useful if they mention “maps” and “being clear of boundaries”. Do ask children to clarify why their suggestions are useful (e.g. “Why is a map useful?”). Be aware that the conversation may move in a different direction to expectations and you can note any ideas that come up for future sessions (please see the “growing” section of the Pedagogical Guidelines for more information).

Growing

Treasure hunt (Activity, 40min)

- Children get into the same number of groups as there are treasure bags and each group has a colour-name to match the colour of one of the bags (e.g. blue group will look for the blue bag). Explain that the next activity is for the children to find the treasure in the bag of their colour.
- Ask the children to explain what a map is and how it might be useful to help them find the treasure. You may wish to show the children a large scale map of the area (e.g. 1:25,000) to use as a teaching aid for demonstrating the different features of a map (key, scale, features, colours).
- Get a large flipchart paper on a board. Add a North arrow (and talk about North, East, South and West (e.g. Never Eat Smelly Wellies - you could think of a funny mnemonic in your own language). Draw an outline map of the site with all the children watching (or the children can take turns to draw it). Ask children what are the main features of the site and where they are on the map. Then (you or the children) add each feature onto the map and create a key in a corner as you do this (e.g. the blue line is a river). Write the title and date (e.g. 'Badger footprint site, May 2016'). Put a cross on the map to represent where each treasure is hidden, use the relevant colour e.g. for the blue bag mark a cross with a blue pen.
- Each group should work as a team to find their treasure.



Picture 2 - Children with treasure hunt bags. Copyright Lusi Alderslowe.



Picture 3 - Children draw a map of the site together. Copyright Lusi Alderslowe.

Harvesting (10min)

- When all the groups have found their treasure ask them how it was for them to find the treasure, and how it could have been even better.
- Discuss with the children the importance of close observation.

You could ask children some specific questions about their day as a way to review it, such as:

- What can we do to make sure we don't get lost?
- What makes a good map?
- What treasure did you get?

Or you could ask each child to say something they enjoyed today. You may wish to all say 'Thank you' for something you are grateful for.

Participants may go away with their treasure, or you could use it for another activity if you have more time.

5. Permaculture ethics and principles

How this session relates to the ethics.

Earth care - appreciating what is in the woodlands, and learning not to hurt living things.

People care - through using appropriate pedagogy. Good group size, listening carefully to children. Learning how not to get lost. Learning to work together as a team to search for the treasure.

Fair share - harvesting for our own education, not taking more than we need, leaving the place as we found it or a little better.

To which principles does it relate:

Holmgren principles:

- Observe and interact
- Obtain a yield
- Use and value renewable resources and services
- Produce no waste
- Design from patterns to details
- Use and value diversity

Explain how this session uses /explains permaculture principles:

Observation is the key principle used and explained in this session plan. Mapping is a wonderful way to get to know the landscape better. The process of looking for different resources found within the site, helps participants to realise what is already there, which they might otherwise have missed.

The main yield is education, as children learn more in different ways, as well as physical education (there is lots of movement involved). Another yield is fun and excitement in the woods, and connecting to nature.

Renewable resources were used in the treasure hunt where possible.

Children were careful not to leave litter in the forest - produce no waste.

The treasure map is created from pattern to details (the overall site, to where is the

6. School theme

Gatehouse School has a part of the school rationale 'using maps' for which this session was designed.

Relates to:

- Mathematics
- Language
- Science
- Social sciences (geography, politics etc)
- Physical Education

Explain how this session relates to different learning styles, multiple intelligences etc.

Using a variety of different ways of engaging with maps will help individuals to understand in the best way for them. For example, physically walking about a site to pick up an item and place it onto the wheel map in the correct place is more tactile. It would be much harder to understand maps in an indoor setting, so the use of the outdoors enables children to learn in a more physical way.

7. Setting

Season: Any

Place: Forest or Garden

8. References

Holland, C. (2009) I love my World: The playful, hands-on, nature connection guidebook. Otterton, England, Wholeland Press.

9. Inspiration

It is interesting to note which children are very familiar with maps, and which struggle. In our group it was the oldest (12 year old) girl who struggled the most with maps. There are many more 'finding my way activities' which can be used to develop the spatial awareness in a playful way.

10. Ideas for extending the learning and experiences

In advance, it is suggested that the children are already familiar with the boundaries. You can look up the game called "1,2,3 where are you?" as a means to get children familiar with the boundaries.

Based on the items the children found in the treasure (or a particular item that raised most enthusiasm) you may start building on a new project or explore a theme based on their interests that came up during the discussions on the item(s).

If you have more time you could do another activity, such as creating blobsters (using the treasure they found), or Wheel mapping see Holland (2009). Once the children have a basic understanding of maps in future sessions you can ask them to make their own map. One method for doing this is described in "find my magic sit spot".