



"Corny" Plant Parts



Grades: Pre-K- 2nd Grade

GPS Standard:

SD 2. Children will acquire scientific knowledge related to life science (Pre K)

SKL1. Students will sort living organisms and non-living materials into groups by observable physical attributes (K)

S1L1. Students will investigate the characteristics and basic needs of plants and animals (Grade 1)

S2L1. Investigate the life cycle of a plant by growing a plant from a seed and by recording changes over a period of time (Grade 2)

Materials: 1 corn stalk, about 10 handfuls of roots, about 10 stems, and about 10 handfuls of leaves (all from a corn stalk)

Introduction/Hook (4 min): Tell students, "Today we're going to talk about plants! Can anyone name some different kinds of plants (trees, flowers, bushes, strawberry vines, etc...)? What kind of plant is this (show a corn stalk)? Farmers grow corn for two reasons. One kind of corn is grown to feed people. It is called sweet corn. Another kind of corn is grown to feed animals. This is called field corn and that is the kind of corn we grow here at the maze. Both kinds of corn, just like all plants have some basic parts they need to live and grow. We're going to talk about these parts today!"

Lesson (4 min): Lift up the corn stalk and point to the bottom of the stalk. Explain to students that this is where the roots of the plant live. Say, "The roots have two jobs. They keep the plant in the soil and they suck up nutrients and water from the soil. They are like little straws! The roots of a corn stalk are neat because they look like spiders!" Point to the stem and say, "This is the stem. The stem is like a highway. It allows the water and nutrients to travel from the roots up to the leaves (point to show the motion from the roots and up the stem). These are the leaves. They use the sun, water and nutrients to make food for the plant. The leaves are like little factories! Some plants produce fruits, vegetables, and flowers, but *all* plants have roots, leaves, and a stem."

Activity (5 min): Say, "Now you get to pretend to be part of a plant!" Have the kids stand side by side in a long line. Tell the first few kids they are the roots (hand them some roots to hold). Have the next few kids hold a few leaves, and finally hand the last few kids a stem. As the kids hold their prop, tell them all to squat down and when you call out their part, they stand and wave their prop and pretend to do the "job" of that plant part.

For example, say, "The roots are sucking up water and nutrients from the soil!" The children with the roots should begin to make sucking noises and touch the roots to the ground. Next, say, "The water and nutrients are traveling up the stem!" The next group of children should hold up their stems and use their body as an elevator to show the water and nutrients moving up. Finally, say, "The water and nutrients have made it to the leaves and they are making food!" The children with the leaves should stand and lift the leaves up to the sun (while the "roots" and "stems" squat back down). If there is time, let the children switch parts.

Closure/ Real World Connection (2 min): Ask, "Could a plant live without one of these parts? What do you think would happen if a plant didn't have a stem? Leaves? Roots?" Let a few volunteers

answer, then explain that these parts all depend on one another to help the plant live and grow. The plant needs all of its parts!