FOR PARENTS and GUARDIANS

Welcome to the online version of The Great Circle Artist-in-Residence program, a unique collaboration between The Rockwell Museum and the Elmira and Bath school districts. There are two key educational concepts for young children you can use at home. The first is conversation; the second is comparison.

In conversation, each person takes turns speaking and listening. We begin to practice this as infants with nonverbal communication games such as peekaboo. Young children are learning the give and take of communication. You can help your child develop by taking time to listen attentively and to have conversations with six turns to speak for each of you. You know your own child, and can give them what they need to improve communication skills whether they are a quiet child who needs to learn confidence in talking, or an extrovert who needs help slowing down to listen. Speak to them in complete sentences and ask them to do the same. Ask some questions that require an explanation rather than a yes or no answer.

Comparison is a good topic for conversation. It builds your child’s ability to remember and think. Ask them to consider how two or more things have something in common and how they are each distinct. Many cultures tell stories that are variations on a theme. In The Great Circle Artist-in-Residence program, we will have several Native American coyote legends from different tribes.

You can help with conversations, reading, printing and how to use links. Words in **bold purple** have links to an icon that speaks the word. In this lesson, your child will be learning about plants and forests and how they fit into the Great Circle.

HERE are some outdoor places to visit that may not be as crowded as popular parks and playgrounds. Look on this website under **Local Birding > Local Sites** for more options.

District wide implementation for all first grade students in the Elmira City School District has been made possible in part with the support from The Anderson Foundation, Inc., Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc., M&T Bank and The Tripp Foundation.

District implementation for all first grade students in the Bath Central School District has been made possible by the generous support from the Edith Saxton Fund for Steuben County Youth Services. The Saxton Fund is administered and managed by the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, Inc.
SOMETHING ROUND: Plants!

Do you remember Black Elk’s idea about the Great Circle? He said, “The power of the world always works in circles, and everything tries to be round.” Plants try to be round. They live on planet Earth and need the power of the sun to live. In the winter, we see trees with no leaves. We see many branches going here and there. They do not look round, but look again. When you look at the shape of the treetop, you will see it is rounded. In the summer time, it is easy to see the round shape of a tree. Tree trunks and tree branches are round too. They are not round like a ball or sphere. They are round like a cylinder. A cylinder is a circle on the bottom and looks like a rectangle on the side. When a tree has been cut down, you can see the roundness of the trunk.

cylinder
Some trees are round like a cone.

Many plants grow round. Many plants have round parts. Be on the lookout for round shapes in plants.
SONG

HERE is a happy song about growing up to be a tree called *Branching Out*. John Gorka plays and sings it. The words are HERE if you want to listen and sing along. In the song, it says he wants to “get real green.” Many trees have green leaves. He wants to be green like a tree. Being “green” also means making a wise choice for the living and growing things on Earth. Being “green” means being a Great Circle helper. National Geographic Kids can teach you more about being green HERE.

THANK THE TREES

No wonder Mr. Gorka wants to be a tree. Trees are super!

- Trees give out **oxygen**. People and other animals need oxygen to **breathe**. 
  *Thank you trees!*
- Trees make summer shade. In hot summer, the forest, where there are many trees, is cooler than the city. 
  *Thank you trees!*
- Trees are good shelter. Animals, birds and insects live in trees. Trees keep them high, away from **predators** who want to eat them. 
  *Thank you trees!*
  *Thank you trees!*
- Trees are beautiful. Joyce Kilmer wrote, “I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree.”
  *Thank you trees!*

Why do you think trees are super? What will you thank a tree for today?
STORY

Do you remember the Great Circle story last time? HERE is another Native American story about Coyote. This time the story starts in a forest. After watching it, talk with someone about how the two stories are the same and how they are each one of a kind.

Who was in both? Who was only in one story?

Sometimes Coyote is called the Trickster because he is clever and tricky. Was Coyote tricky in the first story? Was he tricky this time?

GAME: I SPY

As you walk in the forest, choose one thing you see, but do not tell. Say, “I spy with my little eye something that is….” and give the first clue. Let each person guess what they think you chose. If no one has guessed the right answer yet, give another clue. Keep giving clues and guessing until someone is correct. The winner gets to spy next round.

If you cannot walk in the forest, you can use your memory to play at home. Choose one thing you know is in a forest and say, “I find in my little mind something that is…” The rest of the game is the same.

Below are some pictures to get you started.
MAKE ART: FOREST HOME

Make a forest **habitat** from a box. Ask an adult for items you may reuse. You will need a box, paper scraps, kids’ scissors, glue and some help.

*[Parent]: You can make homemade paste with flour and water. Place in a bowl 1 part flour and 2 parts water. Stir with a fork until smooth and thick. If you want it thicker, put it in the microwave for 30 seconds and stir. If you want it thinner, drizzle in a little water and stir. Make it fresh each use and then discard.*

- To make the background of a forest habitat, cut the flaps off a cereal box. Cut a line down the middle of one large side. Cut doors that open. See below.

- Find bits of colored paper in junk mail to cut. Make trunks, leaves, water and other things in a forest. If you begin with a rectangle, you can make any shape. Here is the green part of a photo cut into many shapes.

- Glue the shapes on the inside and outside of box to make a forest.
- You can fringe a strip of paper, roll and tape it to make a 3-D bush.
- Save the box flaps for next time. We will use them to make animals.
BE THE CIRCLE

Every time you protect living and growing things on Earth, you are part of the Great Circle. It is easy to help by planting something. Your plant will use the power of Earth’s soil and the power of the sun to make a super plant! You can grow food for yourself or food for other beings. What would you like to grow and eat? Potatoes? Strawberries? Corn? You could grow sunflowers for birds. **HERE** is a list of good plants to grow in New York State. They are good food for birds, butterflies and insects that live here. If you have nowhere outdoors to plant, maybe you have room for a pot outdoors or indoors. An indoor garden brings joy.

You can make food for a tree or other plant. It is called **compost**. Find an empty jar with a lid. If you can, paint the jar black. Put in food scraps like apple cores and torn up stale bread. You can also put in torn bits of brown paper or dry leaves. Do NOT put in milk, cheese or meat! Fill the jar half full. Put it in the sun. Every day shake it up. In a month or so, you will have wonderful brown compost. Dig a little hole near a tree or plant. Say, “**Thank you, tree!**” Put the compost in the hole. The tree will love it!

Thank you for being a Great Circle helper!