

Learning Outside the Classroom

Can science answer all the world's questions?

Using an open space to stimulate questions about the relationship of science and religion.

School field / any outdoor area

What were we trying to achieve?

- to enable children to consider where to look for some of life's 'big questions'
- to sense the world around us
- to stimulate discussion into whether science is always right

Cost: None

Who went? How many?

Activity completed by 20 children between the ages of 9-11. This activity can be accessed by all pupils.

Preparation:

Fair weather, writing materials and clipboards. Ideally the activity should take place in an area of natural beauty to help children appreciate nature.

How did we organise the learning?

Introduction

The activity began by asking the children why we do science in school, what *is* science and why do we do it? The children then discuss their senses and how they rely on them. How we can use our senses to tell us about the world around us?

Main Activity

The children were then taken onto the school field. They had to lie in a relaxed way so that they could see the sky. They were asked to record answers to the following questions:

- What is the sky like? What colours, shapes of clouds?
- Do you feel the wind?
- Be silent – what do you hear?
- Touch the grass and the ground. How does it feel? Dry or damp? How can you tell?
- Are any living creatures out and about?
- Breathe in and out consciously, while looking at the sky. What are you thinking? Is it an important thought for you? If so, keep hold of it for later.

Once back in the classroom the children were asked to discuss which senses they had used and what this had told them and further questions were asked about how scientists reach conclusions.

What was the impact of the experience?

Having moved the furniture and using a technique of sitting as an executive board, the class considered some shared questions from religion and science including creation. The children discussed their opinions and questions such as: 'can science be wrong?' or 'can physics explain why a bumble bee flies?' were considered. Different theories about how an aircraft flies were investigated. The children came to the conclusion that while science was rooted in proving theories, sometimes this was not always possible. They thought that religion was the opposite of this being based on a belief system. Their concluding statement was, "it is important to think 'deep inside' ourselves and use our own senses before accepting things as being truthful".

Follow up:

This activity was followed up by looking at what we can learn from our senses scientifically and spiritually.

Contacts and links:

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