



**RAINFOREST THEME DAY ACTIVITIES**  
**Rafael Cordero School**  
**Jersey City, NJ**

**PARTNERSHIP SUMMARY**

Kindergarten through eighth grade students will spend the 2 hours working together on rainforest activities. Each team of grades (Pre-K & 4; K & 5; 1 & 6; 2 & 7; 3 & 8) will learn about a specific rainforest site in Latin America and how the local people are protecting their natural resources with education resources from the Rainforest Alliance Learning Site. Each team will hold a fundraiser to raise support for the conservation initiatives they study through the Rainforest Alliance Adopt-A-Rainforest program. The Rainforest Alliance will help provide activities and supporting materials, help publicize the day with local press, and provide certificates for each grade's involvement in the Adopt-A-Rainforest program.

**ACTIVITIES**

**Pre-K and Fourth Grade**

Read **Here is the Tropical Rain Forest** by Madeleine Dunphy. This story has cumulative text, taking the reader on a journey through the rainforest -- from the mossy forest floor up to the emergent layer at the top. Afterwards, discuss the different layers of the rainforest and the characteristics of each: the emergent layer, canopy, understory and forest floor. The students team up to make rainforest flip booklets, labeling each page with a layer of the rainforest. They can draw and color pictures of animals that inhabit each layer. After discussing the layers and the animals located in each, make a Venn diagram (sample available on Rainforest Alliance Learning Site) comparing and contrasting an animal from the rainforest (jaguar or howler monkey) with a native animal from your state.

## **Kindergarten and Fifth Grade**

Read **Here is the Tropical Rain Forest** by Madeleine Dunphy. Discuss some of the animals that live in the rainforest. (Use species profiles: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/colombia/species-profiles/spectacled-bear.html>, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/colombia/species-profiles/nine-banded-armadillo.html>, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/colombia/species-profiles/cock-of-rock.html>, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/colombia/species-profiles/leafcutter-ant.html>)

Read the book **The Salamander Room** by Anne Mazer. Discuss the reasons that the salamander couldn't live with the boy, including their different needs for food, climate and habitat. Have the children compare these reasons with the reasons the armadillo (and other rainforest animals) need to live in Cachalú. Point out the similarities between the armadillo/salamander and the child (both eat food to survive, both need shelter).

Use art/craft supplies and make a rainforest animal (spectacled bear, armadillo, bird, etc.). Have the pre-k students dictate a story to the fourth grade students about why the animal needs the rainforest, and why people should help protect rainforest animals.

## **First Grade and Sixth Grade**

Students team up to perform a “bioblitz” in the school yard. Each group surveys a piece of the school yard and records every living object – insects, weeds, birds, squirrels, spiders, etc. Return to the classroom and all the information is transferred to a large chart that is prominently displayed in the classroom as the “Bio Profile for the Schoolyard.”

Read Lynne Cherry’s book the Great Kapok Tree. Discuss the inhabitants that are mentioned in the book. Students prepare a chart of the rainforest to hang next to their “Bio Profile for the Schoolyard” that lists animals that might be found if you did a similar bioblitz in the rainforest called “Bio Profile for the Rainforest.”

Students compare and contrast the two charts picking the one that has the most diversity and complexity.

Talk with students about how the different animals depend on one another to survive. Take one of the animals that were mentioned in the local bioblitz (squirrel, spider). Discuss the shelter, food sources, water, safety/protection, the way they move and their range of movement, animals they get along with, animals who prey on them, etc. Discuss with children what would happen to a squirrel (or other local animal) if one source of food was taken away or if the source of materials for their shelter disappeared.

Repeat activity with one of the rainforest animals mentioned in The Great Kapok Tree. (Can use species profiles from Rainforest Alliance Web site: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/brazil/species-profiles/tapir.html>, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/brazil/species-profiles/kapok-tree.html>, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/brazil/species-profiles/leafcutter-ant.html>,

[profiles/ocelot.html](http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/belize/species-profiles/scarlet-macaw.html), <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/belize/species-profiles/scarlet-macaw.html>.) List all of the things that each animal needs to survive; food, shelter, safety/protection, animals or plants they depend on, where they live in the Rainforest (floor, canopy), water, the way they move.

Student pairs (older with younger) team up to draw a picture that begins with a rainforest species in the middle of the page. Students fill out the page with all of the plants and animals that are important to that animal for shelter, food, water, safety, friendship, survival, health.

Children will display pictures in a gallery and make observations about how other pictures are the same or different than their own. Which animals are repeated in different pictures, which only appear once, etc.

### **Second Grade and Seventh Grade**

On a map, point out Brazil. Point out its rainforests. Explain that a story called **The Great Kapok Tree** (Cherry, 1990) takes place in Brazilian Amazon. Relay facts about the kapok tree that are listed in the teacher background information. Then read the **The Great Kapok Tree** aloud and discuss the story with the children. On chart paper, list all the rainforest inhabitants that are mentioned in the book. Discuss how the survival of rainforest plants and animals are interdependent.

Write the name of each inhabitant from the story on a separate sticker or piece of paper, so that each student in the class can wear a sticker or hold up the paper when acting out a part. Inhabitants mentioned in the story include the following: boa constrictor, bee, flower, tree, monkey, soil, toucan, macaw, cock-of-the-rock, tree frog, jaguar, birds, four tree porcupines, several anteaters, three-toed sloth and a Yanomami child. Distribute the paper to pairs of students (seventh grader with second grader) who then team up to draw the animal or plant listed on the paper.

The child who is play-acting the role of the kapok tree will stand in the middle of a circle holding one piece of yarn for each child in class. Each piece should be about 6 feet long. Reread the story aloud. Whenever a creature in the book's name is mentioned, have the seventh graders help the kapok tree child toss one end of a length of yarn to the animal mentioned, while the kapok tree continues to hold onto the other end of each piece of yarn. (The yarn symbolizes the tie that these two inhabitants have and how they depend on each other for survival.) At the end of the story, take time to look at the web of interdependence that was created. Have the kapok tree lightly tug on his collection of yarn. Ask the other children to give a thumbs-up if they feel a tug on the yarn. Those that did (which would be everyone) can say thank you to the kapok tree for helping them to survive. Discuss the interdependence of the species of the rainforest.

List the events from the story on a large sheet of chart paper. Next, divide the class into small groups of about four students. Each group will create a storyboard. The members of the group pick out about eight events that they think are important from the list on the chart. Then, on smaller pieces of tag board, each member of the group illustrates two of the parts of the story. Those who finish first can work on decorating the tag board with

trees, vines and leaves as a background. Together, glue the storyboard pieces onto the tag board creating a snaking path to tell the story.

### **Third Grade and Eighth Grade**

Read the Rainforest Alliance slide show to the students: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/education/ecuador/slideshow/index.html>

Read: Romel's Rainforest Home a Rainforest Alliance original story about a Chachi boy who lives in the northwest corner of Ecuador. Romel guides his reader through everyday life in his village, San Salvador. Use the pictures in the story to compare and contrast students' communities with Romel's community. Use the Teacher's Summary on the Rainforest Alliance Learning Site for Ecuador to share information with students about the Chachi and the social and environmental benefits of growing cocoa in the shade.

The third graders and eighth graders team up to make a skit advertising shade-grown cocoa beans. Include in the "commercial" a jingle and several facts about the rainforest and how shade-grown cocoa protects the forest.