

Field Trip Activity Cards
Lena Meijer Children's Garden
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

Welcome to the Lena Meijer Children's Garden!

- The Children's Garden has 10 different areas—use these cards to help explore each area.
- We suggest you allow enough time to visit each. Another trip may be needed to fully explore all of the areas!
- Each card has 3 challenge levels. Choose the one appropriate for your group.
 - ◆ = Easy
 - ◆◆ = Medium
 - ◆◆◆ = Difficult
- Each group should begin in a different area. Select an Activity Card and go to that area. When you are through, turn to the next card and go to that area.

Kid-Sense Garden

In this garden, children will explore plants using their senses.

Find the nose (sense of smell)

Did you know that the leaves of some plants smell?

- ◆ Gently rub a leaf and smell your fingers. Describe the smell—what does it smell like?
 - ◆ Point to your own nose. What do we do with our noses? (smell, breathe)
 - ◆◆ Besides the leaves, what other part of a plant smells? (flowers)
Find a flower that smells nice.
 - ◆◆◆ Find your favorite "smelly" plant. What is the name of the plant? (find the label). Does this smell remind you of anything? Does it bring back a special memory?
 - ◆◆◆ Can you find a plant whose fragrant leaves are used in cooking?
These plants are called "herbs."
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Find the eye (sense of sight)

Did you know that plants come in all different colors?

- ◆ How many different colors of flowers do you see? How many different colors of leaves do you see?
 - ◆◆ Look for a plant with a pattern on the leaf. Describe a pattern and see if the other children can find your plant.
 - ◆◆◆ Describe ways in which plants look different. How are they similar?
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Find the ear (sense of hearing)

Did you know that some plants make sounds?

- ◆ Point to your ears. How many ears do you have?
 - ◆◆ Can you name an instrument that is made from a plant? Hint: trees are plants. (guitar, violin, piano, etc.)
 - ◆◆ Find the wooden xylophone. Take turns playing it and listening to it at the giant ear.
 - ◆◆ Close your eyes and listen carefully. Have each child name something they heard (chimes, voices, water, etc.)
 - ◆◆◆ Look at the plant labels and find a plant whose name describes a sound, a type of music, etc.
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Find the hand (sense of touch)

Did you know that plants have many different textures?

Touch the plants in this area gently, by "petting them" with your finger.

- ◆ Have every child touch a different plant. Describe how it feels (bumpy, rough, soft, smooth, etc.)
- ◆◆ Every child should have a partner. Ask one child to close her eyes and ask her partner to lead her to a plant. With her eyes still closed, touch a plant. Then have the partner lead her away from it. Now, open her eyes and try to guess the plant she just touched.
- ◆◆◆ Plants have different textures to help them survive. Why do you think a plant might be fuzzy (hint: think about a fuzzy coat)? Waxy (hint: think about chap stick)?

Find the tongue (sense of taste)

Did you know that some plants are good to eat? Did you know that some plants are poisonous and can make you very sick? Always check with an adult before eating any plant.

- ◆ Look carefully at the tongue. Do you know what the bumps are called? (taste buds)
 - ◆ Stick out your tongue and move it up and down, back and forth.
 - ◆◆ Name your favorite food. Is it sweet, sour, salty or bitter? Can you find the taste bud that describes it on the tongue?
 - ◆◆◆ We eat many different parts of a plant. Can you name a root that we eat (carrot, radish), a leaf (lettuce), and a flower (broccoli)?
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Great Lakes Garden

There are many areas to explore in the Great Lakes Garden. Start out at the raised water tables, pretend you're sailing in the sailboat, visit the "Explore the Lakeshore" panel and take the path to the top of the overlook where you will find a giant sundial.

Great Lakes Water Table

- ◆ Who can count to 5? Let's try it. The Great Lakes are actually 5 really BIG lakes put together.
- ◆ Can you find the fish that live in the lakes?
- ◆◆ Did you know that fish live together in groups called "schools?"
- ◆◆ The different shades of blue show the different depths—the light blue is shallow water and the dark blue is deeper water. Find the darkest shade of blue. Where is it? Do you think the deepest water is colder or warmer?
- ◆◆◆ Can you name all 5 Great Lakes (hint: the first letter of each lake, when put together, spells "HOMES")? Find each of the Great Lakes.
- ◆◆◆ Find your favorite fact (these are painted on the wall surrounding the lakes). Read the fact out loud.

Sailboat

- ◆ Find the sailboat and sit in it. Pretend you are sailing. Where are you going?
- ◆◆ What causes a sailboat to move? (the wind)
- ◆◆ How do you steer a sailboat? (find the rudder)
- ◆◆◆ Name other ways boats move (paddles, motors, etc.)

Explore the Lakeshore Panel

- ◆ Name an animal that lives along the lakeshore. Where does it live (in a tree, in the sand, in the water, etc.) Put the animal magnet where it belongs.
 - ◆◆ Many animals eat the plants that grow along the lakeshore. Find an animal that eats plants (deer, caterpillar).
 - ◆◆◆ Did you know that in Grand Rapids we get our drinking water from Lake Michigan? What other animals depend on the water in Lake Michigan?
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Storytelling Garden

Long before there were newspapers, radio, or television people told stories to entertain and teach. Let's create a story as a group by using a story starter!

Read this story starter out loud and pause at the blanks. (The narrator can act out the beginning to capture the children's interest.) Call on a child to help. Ask younger children to add a word; older children to finish the sentence, add more descriptive words, action words, etc.

"As I was I walked by the old hut, I thought I saw a quick movement of something or somebody scurrying around the corner. I smelled something like lunch so I thought I'd better look for clues. When I stuck my head into the hut I heard _____. So I ran outside and saw _____. He wasn't going to distract me again. I walked back into the hut and there was a _____ and _____ and _____. Someone lives in here! Now what food did I smell? There on tiny little plates I saw _____. Maybe I could make friends and find out more about this tiny creature. I went back outside and there stood _____. "(continue the story as long as they kids stay interested)

Wooded Wetlands

Find the giant beaver. You are now standing in our wooded wetland! Wetlands are special places where the ground is very wet and squishy. That is why you are standing on the boardwalk!

- ◆ Wetlands are home to many animals. Can you guess what animals might live in wetlands?(beavers, birds, turtles, dragonflies, butterflies, muskrats, frogs, etc.)
- ◆ Close your eyes and listen carefully (30 seconds). What do you hear? Did you hear any animal sounds?
- ◆◆ Did you know that some wetlands, like this, can dry up in the summer? Which plants live in our wooded wetland (trees, shrubs, grasses, etc.)
- ◆◆◆ In addition to providing homes for animals, wetlands are valuable for other reasons. Hint: wetlands soak up extra water just like a sponge. Why is this important? (prevents flooding). Hint: wetlands act like a giant water filter. Why is this important? (wetlands "clean" the water by removing soil and pollutants).

Rock Quarry

This area has a raised sand table for making sand sculptures, a cave with Michigan rocks and minerals, fossils buried underneath the sand, and a bunch of really neat rocks.

- ◆ Go to the sand table. Scoop sand up in one container and carefully pour it into another container.
- ◆ Get a handful of sand and look at it really carefully. Did you know that sand is actually tiny rocks? Does it feel hard, like rocks?
- ◆◆ Did you know that we make things out of rocks?
 - ❖ Find the gray rock that sparkles. This is iron ore and it is used to make bridges, cars, and even bicycles!
 - ❖ Find the chunk of copper in the cave. This is used to make pennies and copper wire.
 - ❖ The large rock near the sand table is being carved into a sculpture. Use your imagination...what do you think it will become?
- ◆◆◆ Find the "fossil rock" which is made up of shells. Look closely—can you find fossils that look like clams? These are called "brachiopods" (pronounced brākiopāds) and they lived here a long time ago when Michigan was covered by a giant saltwater ocean!

Log Cabin

The first settlers that came to Michigan built their homes out of logs.

- ◆ Where do the logs come from? (trees)
 - ◆◆ Why do you think this home has only one room (easier to heat). How do you think they heated this home? (fireplace) Where did they cook? (in the fireplace)
 - ◆◆ How old were the trees when they were cut down? (Go to the porch and look at the cut end of the log. Can you find the rings? Each ring shows one year's growth. Count all of the rings to learn how old the tree was!)
 - ◆◆◆ This log cabin was built out of White Pine trees. Go to the lawn and find a white pine tree. Do you know what a pine tree's leaves are called? ("needles") Carefully touch the needles—do they feel soft?
 - ◆◆◆ White Pine trees were used because the logs lasted a long time and White Pines grew abundantly in Michigan. What could people use to build homes where there aren't trees (Arctic—igloos are made from ice; desert—homes are made from "adobe" or sun-dried bricks; Great plains—Native Americans lived in tepees, made from animal skins).
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Treehouse Village

There are 5 different tree houses in Treehouse Village. Let's explore the Treehouse of Birds. Come back to explore the rest!

- ◆ Can you find the giant nest?
 - ◆ How many eggs are in the nest?
 - ◆ What color are the eggs?
 - ◆◆ What do you think will hatch from the eggs? (birds).
 - ◆◆ What other kinds of animals lay eggs? (turtles, frogs, insects)
 - ◆◆ Look through the viewers. Find the bird that makes a loud "screee." Can you make this sound?
 - ◆◆◆ Look through the viewers. Can you find the bright red bird? This is a male cardinal; the female cardinal is a dull green-brown. Why would the male and female be different colors? (The female cardinal is well hidden when she sits on the nest.) Do you know what they call animals whose colors and patterns make them well hidden? (camouflage)
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Labyrinth

Can you find the labyrinth (the large circle made out of bricks)?

- ◆ Follow the brick path to the center of the circle. Now follow the path all of the way back.
 - ◆◆ Walk like a (specify a kind of animal, such as a bunny, bird, frog, etc.) as you walk to the center of the labyrinth. Become a different animal as you walk back out.
 - ◆◆ Find the pictures in the center. Can you name the four seasons?
 - ◆◆◆ A labyrinth is designed to help you find the answer to a question or solve a problem. Think of a question or problem (such as "Should I try out for a sport?" "What is friendship?") While you have various thoughts about these questions, walk slowly and follow the path to the center of the labyrinth. Has this helped you solve your problem or answer your question?
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Butterfly Maze

This maze is in the shape of a butterfly!

- ◆ Pretend you are a butterfly and "flutter" through the maze.
 - ◆◆ Find the drums. Play a simple rhythm and then challenge a friend to play the same rhythm.
 - ◆◆◆ Each panel in the maze has a different picture on it. Pick three and make up a short story that includes all three. Tell this story to a friend.
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Sculpture Walk

Find the "Family of Wolves" sculpture.

- ◆ How many wolves are in this family? How many colors can you find?
- ◆◆ This sculpture is made from found objects (things you can find right around your home). What different things can you find (parts of a bicycle, shovel, golf balls, handles to a kettle, etc.)?
- ◆◆◆ Which wolf do you think is the mom; the dad? Which one are you? Why?
- ◆◆◆ There are many other really special sculptures located along this walkway. Find the viewports (located in the Butterfly Maze overlook) and look through each. Try to answer the questions written on the side of the viewports.