

Signs of spring: 5 senses & dance

ACTIVITIES



What to expect

Ages: Ideal for kids in Kindergarten to Grade 2

Objective: Learn about the signs of spring through sensory exploration and dance

Materials needed

- An outdoor space
- Speakers for music
- A device to watch videos on



INTRODUCTION

What is spring?

Spring is one of four seasons, happening between winter and summer. In spring we move from cold winter's short days and long, dark nights to warmer, longer days. This season is marked by the melting of snow, leaves growing again, and flowers blooming.

When does spring happen?

Spring begins on Vernal Equinox, when the length of light daytime and dark nighttime is equal. Each day in spring gets longer, and each night gets shorter, until the first day of summer: the summer solstice. The summer solstice is the longest day and shortest night of the year.

We experience seasons because of how the earth is tilted and how it circles (also known as orbiting) around the sun, giving us different amounts of light and warmth over the year. Because of the earth's tilt, spring happens at different times of the year depending on where you live. In the northern hemisphere, the first day of spring occurs between March 19-21 (Vernal Equinox). In the southern hemisphere, spring begins between September 19-21. The exact day the seasons change shifts slightly from year to year.

What happens during spring?

While the calendar tells us when it's spring, we can also get many clues from nature about the changing season. We can use all of our five senses — hearing, taste, smell, touch, and sight — to seek out the clues.

For example, in the spring, the winter snows melt and rivers begin to rush. Most of the autumn leaves have now decomposed. The soil is wet and fertile, encouraging seeds to sprout and bushes to bud with new leaves and flowers. Hibernating animals and insects wake up, and migrating birds return. There is lots of food to be found with all the new plants, insects and animals. Some animals may be mating, and others may be preparing to nest or give birth.

ACTIVITY 1

Observing spring with our 5 senses



Overview

Explore spring through the five senses. Go outside and mindfully choose a spot where you'll begin observation.

Warm up outside

First, let's wake up our bodies so that we can really pay attention. Can you:

- Run really fast on your spot. Even faster!
- Now try shaking really fast. Try it high and low.
- Now twist and turn on your spot any way you like. Freeze!
- Try stretching into a big, wide shape on your spot, and then curl into a small shape. Try this a few times in different ways. Each time you get small, give yourself a big squeeze or hug. Shake your last shape off. Take 3 big, slow breaths to calm your body down.

Hear

Now that your body is calm and quiet, we are going to listen. Sometimes it's easier to listen if we lower or close our eyes. Try listening quietly for one minute. *What do you hear? Do you hear any clues telling us that it is spring?*

Taste

Take a deep breath through your mouth. *What does the air taste like? Do you think spring air tastes different from winter air?*

Smell

Take a breath through your nose. *What does the air smell like? Does it smell different closer to the ground? Do you think different plants have different smells? Do any of the buds and flowers have a scent? Let's smell them together and see. Why do you think flowers have scents?*

Touch

Our sense of touch can explore other clues of spring. We can touch through the soles of our feet, our cheeks and our hands. *How can we touch in a way that respects nature? What textures can we feel in: The new leaves, buds and flowers? The fresh moss or lichen? The soil? Different kinds of bark?*

Sight

What signs of spring can you see? What colours do you see? What animals or insects do you see, and what are they doing? What do you see in the bushes and trees? What do you see down low on the ground?

Using all five senses

Focus on one sign of spring for one minute. Use all of your senses to observe it. *What words can you use to describe it? Can you choose a movement in your body to represent what you observe? Try that movement in just one body part. Try it in your whole body.*

ACTIVITY 2

Making a spring dance

Overview

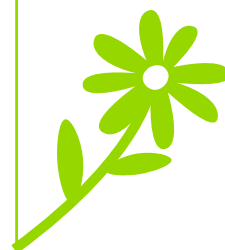
Let's make a Spring Dance inspired by the budding leaves and blooming flowers! This activity will allow you to bring movement into the outdoors. **Follow the prompts below and then choreograph your own dance.**

What do blooming and budding look like in your body?

First, check out these [timelapse videos of flowers blooming](#) and a [fern unfurling](#) for inspiration (or use the QR code on the next page).

- *For older kids:* What other words can we use to describe blooming and budding?
- *For younger kids:* When you are blooming and budding, your bodies are bursting, growing, opening and unfurling!

We can try these movements in lots of different ways to get ideas for our dance.
Note: In the examples below, we used burst, grow and shrink, open and close, curl and unfurl as the words to explore, but you can use other ideas from the kids.



Try in different body parts, or in your whole body.

Burst in just your hand, in your hips, in 1 leg, in your mouth!
Burst in your whole body!
Grow and shrink in 1 finger, 2 shoulders, 1 arm!
Grow and shrink in your whole body!
Open and close your belly button, your hands, your upper body!
Open and close your whole body!
Curl and unfurl your arm, your spine, your tongue!
Curl and unfurl your whole body!
Try it again in a different way!



Try at different tempos, fast, slow and frozen.

Slow-motion bursts!
Opening fast and closing slow! Try again in a different way!
Growing and shrinking as slow as you can! Even slower! Even slower!
Freeze in an open shape!
Unfurl as fast as you can! Freeze in your most stretched out shape!





Try combining with different movements, like turns, jumps, gallops, tiptoes.

Bursting turns!

Bursting gallops!

Jumps that open and close!

Tiptoes that grow and shrink!

Turns that curl and unfurl!

Try different rhythmical patterns. Repeat several times.

Tiptoe tiptoe tiptoe BURST! Tiptoe tiptoe tiptoe BURST!

Run and open, run and open, run and open and FREEZE!

Gallop and gallop and grow really tall! Gallop and gallop and grow really tall!

Turn in a small shape, turn in a small shape, unfurl one body part!

Make up your own!

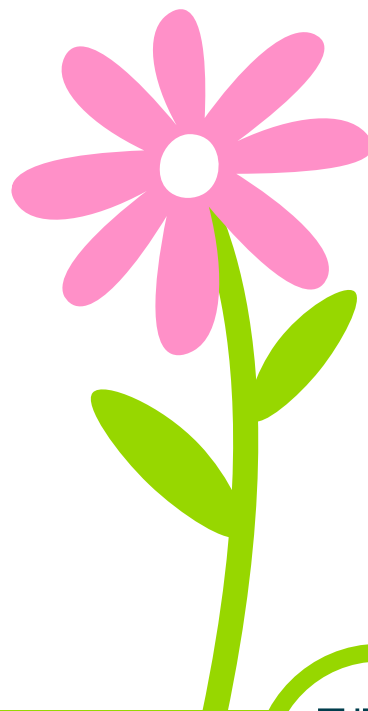
Now bring it all together to create your own spring dance!

You can use any of the movements you tried, or new ones. Start and finish your dance in a frozen shape.

Play with different soundscapes for your dances! You can try:

- Silence
- Pacific Northwest bird songs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUMI4yO8g88>
- World music playlists for kids (scroll down to find the playlists): <https://www.putumayo.com/kids-corner>
- Music of your choice!

Reflection questions: *Did you discover some movements that you loved doing, or that really express spring to you? What did you do? How did the soundscapes change your movements?*



To access the links in this spring dance activity, [please visit sierraclub.bc.ca/signs-of-spring-5-senses-and-dance-activity](https://sierraclub.bc.ca/signs-of-spring-5-senses-and-dance-activity)

