



Common Threads Farm and School Garden Collective

FARM FIELD TRIPS 101

Planning and program design

- Identify a point person at the farm and at the school
- Choose several convenient dates and times (be sure to identify a back-up rain date if weather is a concern)
- Decide how long the program will last (how much time do the farmers/educators have? how does this fit into the school day?)
- Consider transportation needs and costs (walking, bus, etc.)
- Send field trip permission slips / liability waivers home at least two weeks in advance (be sure to get language approved by the school administration)
- Recruit volunteers/chaperones (aiming for 5:1 ratio, ideally, so students may work and explore in small groups)
- Design program with consideration to:
 - What BIG IDEAS do teachers want to address (consider offering teachers a menu of themes to choose from: interdependence within ecosystems, life cycles in action, etc. so that the field trip can be oriented to best support the teachers' work in the classroom)
 - How many students are being served- it is helpful to break down into smaller group rotations with 3-5 short activities that students can engage in either independently or with support from a prepared volunteer
 - Seasonality - What is happening on the farm right now? The best way to teach students about cycles and the natural world is to engage them with seasonally appropriate tasks/questions/activities
- Confirm date and plan
- Provide teachers with a list of what to bring - pencils, paper, journals, clipboards, pens, etc. (for clothing list, see safety section below)
- Provide teachers with a reminder note to send home with students a day or two in advance reminding them to wear appropriate clothing and giving any other special instructions - this is also an opportunity to promote any commerce (farm store sales)

Safety and Insurance

- Check with insurance provider to make sure insurance covers planned activities - some insurance companies will want an additional rider for "agri-tourism"
- Provide schools with liability release form
- Make sure to identify any serious allergies or health concerns ahead of time
- Have a plan in case of emergencies - know who has medical training, who will be in charge of crowd control
- Student equipment list should include: water bottles (or make sure they have access to water at the farm site), sunscreen, raingear, close-toed shoes, layers for weather changes
- Establish clear expectations for handling/visiting with animals

- Have hand-washing station accessible if students will be handling animals
- Know where students will use the bathroom
- Check for any dangerous/exposed equipment in the programming area that could present a hazard for students

Set a Cost that works for Everyone

- What does the farmer need to make it worth while? (This may be a good investment in future customers for the farm!)
- What are participants/schools willing and able to pay?
- Visitors may be invited to bring money for the farm shop, or teachers may collect money as a class to buy produce to use in the classroom or cafeteria
- Think about planning a fundraiser to support programming costs, soliciting donor support, or applying for grant funds funding
- Reduce transportation costs by walking, taking public transportation, or enlisting parent volunteers to drive

Create an Outdoor Learning Space

- Farm Staff should establish clear expectations for all visitors and review them with participants when they arrive. These may include:
- Staying in set areas with clearly identifiable boundaries
- Walking - not running
- Listening (you may introduce a special way of getting students' attention while they are on the farm - call and response like "straw-" and "berry", or ask what method teachers use to get attention in their classroom)
- Staying on paths - work with students to identify the best places to keep their feet (help students identify pathways versus beds).
- Being respectful (of plants, animals, tools, each other, etc.)
- Having fun!
- Be prepared with some energizers or quick games to regroup student energy as needed
- Have name tags for all students and adults.

Programming

Sample Schedule:

AHEAD OF TIME	<p>Make sure students and adults have name tags</p> <p>Organize students into small groups and assign 1 adult to each group</p> <p>Have activities and materials ready to go</p> <p>Identify a storage area for any unwanted coats/backpacks</p>
9:30-10:00am	<p>Arrive at Farm - Opening Circle & Introductions</p> <p>Circle up</p> <p>Introduce the farmer/educator and the farm, including any notes about the site</p>

	<p>(where is the bathroom? Where can students leave jackets/bags?)</p> <p>Review expectations</p> <p>Talk about the plan for the day</p> <p>Divide into groups</p>
10:00-11:30am	<p>Station Rotations</p> <p>Each station should have 1 adult and 5-10 students.</p> <p>Students will rotate between 3-5 stations of 15-30 minutes each</p> <p>Adults should agree ahead of time on how students will transition between stations (will adults rotate with students or not, in what order will the rotation take place, will there be a signal when it is time to rotate and who will watch the time to make sure rotations are on track).</p> <p><i>Examples of stations:</i> farm tour, scavenger hunt, farm chore, craft project, food tasting, animal observation, story/game/song, demonstration, etc.</p>
11:30-11:45AM	<p>Closing Circle</p> <p>Circle up</p> <p>Debrief (review what was learned and share favorite memories)</p> <p>Thank the farmers/educators</p> <p>Take a group photo</p>
11:45AM	<p>Head Back to school or have lunch on the farm</p>
	<p>Connect learning to a follow-up lesson in the classroom</p> <p>Make a recipe with a farm product</p> <p>Make a thank you card for the farmer/educator</p>

Examples of Rotating Stations

Station A: Animal Visiting

- Students will visit and observe different animals on the farm
- Students will discuss what they see and ask questions (What explanations can we find for a particular animal behavior? How can we tell male from female? Adult from juvenile?)
- Students will fill out an observation sheet for animal behaviors. (Ex: Tally chicken behaviors you see in a 2 minute time-frame. Scratching, pecking, dirt bath, etc.)

Station B: Farm Chore

Students will engage in a seasonally relevant task to assist with work happening on the farm.

- Planting
- Transplanting
- Weeding

- Harvesting
- Weighing and bundling produce
- Moving compost onto garden beds
- Spreading mulch
- Watering

Station C: Plant Needs Activity

- Seed Role Play
- Fab 5 Super Heroes (water, air, sun, nutrients, soil, space)
- Observe plants growing outside and in a greenhouse – talk about differences and how needs are being met in each space

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