Pre-K 4 – Nature: Tree Trunks

| Key Concepts & Ideas: | • Understand the function of a tree trunk.  
|                      | • Articulate the parts of the trunk.  
|                      | • Practice critical thinking and communication skills through careful looking of artwork.  
|                      | • Observe and feel a variety of tree trunks and describe their various similarities and differences.  

| Tree Trunk Anatomy: | • Look out a window. Can you see a tree? What parts of the tree can you name? Can you find the trunk?  
|                    | • A tree trunk is the part of the tree that comes up from the ground and supports the branches and leaves. Although we only see the bark, a tree trunk has many parts:  
|                    | o Bark: The bark is on the outside of the tree trunk and protects the trunk from insects, moisture, heat, and cold.  
|                    | o Cambium: This thin layer is just inside the bark and produces new cells to allow the trunk to grow wider.  
|                    | o Sapwood: This layer brings water up from the roots to the leaves.  
|                    | o Heartwood: The layer of dead sapwood that is hard

![Tree Trunk Anatomy Diagram]
and strong to support the tree.

- **Growth Rings:** To find the age of a tree, you can count the rings in the center of the trunk. The number of rings equals the number of years the tree was alive.

| Bark Rubbings: | Go out into your yard if you have one, or take a walk in your neighborhood. Feel a couple of tree trunks. What do they feel like? Do they all have the same texture?  
Create bark rubbings by placing a piece of paper against the trunk and then coloring on the paper with a crayon or colored pencil.  
How do the rubbings look different? How do they look the same?  
What types of lines or shapes were created on your paper by smooth bark? By rough or bumpy bark? |
| --- | --- |

| Bark Art: | Some artists use natural materials to create their artworks. For example, Andy Goldsworthy uses only things he finds in nature to make his sculptures. See the following article to look at some of his pieces: [https://usaartnews.com/photo-video/natural-sculptures-by-andy-goldsworthy](https://usaartnews.com/photo-video/natural-sculptures-by-andy-goldsworthy)  
do you see any artworks that used bark or other parts of a tree?  
How do you think he made these artworks?  
Create your own natural artwork inspired by Andy Goldsworthy!  
Collect fallen bark from trees around your home. |

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| Tree Sensory Bin: | Gather bark, leaves, and sticks from an outdoor area.  
| | Bring inside and place in a bin of some sort. Storage bins work well.  
| | Encourage your child to explore the items in the bin. |
| Online Books | General Sherman by Holly Hartman provides information about the giant sequoia trees in California, specifically the biggest one called General Sherman.  
| Tree Trunk Comparison: | All trees have trunks, but every tree’s trunk is unique and looks different. Take some time to look closely at the paintings below. If you follow the link and click on the painting you can zoom in on the image to look even more closely. Consider the following questions:  
| | Have you ever seen any of these types of trees? If so, where?  
| | What words would you use to describe each tree trunk? |
- What colors do you see?
- What do you think each trunk would feel like if you could touch it?
- What do all three tree trunks have in common?

*The Lovers Oak near Delville Castle*
Sarah Broome
Smithsonian American Art Museum
https://www.si.edu/object/lovers-oak-near-delville-castle-zaam_1978.10.1

*Palm Tree, Jamaica*
Frederic Edwin Church
Cooper Hewitt
https://www.si.edu/object/palm-tree-jamaica-chndm_1917.4.374-a

*Birch Trees*
Francis Hopkinson Smith
Cooper Hewitt
https://www.si.edu/object/birch-trees-chndm_1923.41.05

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