

# Parent Outline: K – 2

# Winter Trees

**Welcome/** Staff/volunteer names  
**Introduction:** **Today's Topic-Winter Trees**  
**Question: What is happening in the woods in winter?**

**Icebreaker:** Pass the Person

**Background/** **What is a tree?** Show the basic parts-crown, trunk, roots  
**Exploration:** **Parts of a tree-What is it made of inside?**  
Water cells/sapwood, food cells, heartwood, outer bark, rings  
How do trees change from fall to winter? Trees are dormant/sleeping now.

**Activity:** **Build a tree-**Students act out tree parts to make a tree as a group.

**Tree Rings-** Each one is from one year's growth.  
Thicker rings mean more moisture that year.  
Breaks in the rings or unevenness may mean fire, damage, or insects.

**What is a forest?** A large area of trees close together.  
A forest has levels, each with different plants and animals.  
What animals live in Iowa forests? Deer, turkey, raccoon, fox, squirrel, owl, bat...

**Importance of a forest-**Homes for plants and animals that live in & under trees, ground.  
Trees make oxygen for people and animals to breathe.  
Trees and plants are food for animals and people.  
Kinds of forests include evergreen, oak, upland, & floodplain.

**Forest animals-**Look at animal mounts and discuss what helps them live in the woods.  
Which animals are active, dormant, or hibernating this time of year?

**OUTDOOR** Hike to a nearby patch of evergreens.  
**EXPLORATION:** Some trees are evergreen, they have needles and cones. We call them **conifers**.  
The trees that lost their leaves last fall are the broad leaved or **deciduous** trees.  
Discuss conifer needle adaptations. Explain why deciduous trees drop their leaves.  
Even though it is winter, we can identify the deciduous trees by looking at the clues they give us, like their silhouettes and bark.  
Do a scavenger hunt. Look for animal signs-tracks, chewed twigs, scat.  
Look for eagles at the creek mouth.

**Game:** Chipmunk and Squirrel. Hide and seek for pine cones.

## References

*Iowa Wildlife*. 1998. Iowa Association of Naturalists. ISU Press, Ames, IA. (IAN-601--606)  
*Iowa Mammals, Iowa Nesting Birds, Iowa Winter Birds* (IAN-601, 602, 603)  
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/wi.htm>