The Seedlings Forest Adventure

Inspired by the spirit of observation and care for the natural world

We are going on a **Seedlings exploration mission**.

Just like scientists and nature observers, we will enter the woods quietly, look closely, and collect small pieces of the forest to build a **tiny living ecosystem in a jar**.

Our goal is not to take from nature, but to **learn from it**.

Jane Goodall often reminds us that the most important tool a scientist has is **observation**.

So today we will move slowly, look carefully, and notice things most people walk right past.

Seedlings Explorer Rules

Before we begin our adventure, every Seedling follows three rules.

1. Take a little, leave a lot.
Nature needs to stay healthy. Because it is still winter, only a few seedlings may be starting to grow. We collect only very small amounts so the forest can keep growing when spring arrives.

2. Observe before touching.
We look closely first. We pause and notice where something grows, what surrounds it, and what might live nearby before we pick it up.

3. Respect every living thing.
We are visitors in the forest. Many creatures live under leaves, logs, and rocks. We walk gently and return things to their places so the forest stays healthy.

The Seedlings Reflection

Before leaving the woods, every Seedling asks one final question. **Did we leave the forest as healthy or healthier than we found it?**

Sometimes that means picking up a piece of trash, returning a rock we moved, or simply walking gently through the space. Seedlings are not just explorers. We are **caretakers of the natural world**.

A Thought from Dr. Jane Goodall: *The greatest danger to our future is apathy. The greatest hope is the actions of young people.*

Every time we notice something in nature, care for it, or protect it, we make the world a little better.

And that is exactly what **Seedlings do**.

Seedlings Field Missions

Every explorer has missions. Today we have three.

Mission 1: The Quiet Observation

Find a place to sit in the woods for a few minutes.

Stay very still.

Listen and look carefully.

What do you notice?

You might see birds moving through branches, insects crawling across leaves, or sunlight shifting through the trees. At first the forest may seem quiet, but if you wait long enough it begins to feel full of life.

This is how many scientists begin their discoveries.

Mission 2: The Tiny World Search

Imagine you are the size of an ant.

Look closely at the forest floor and search for a tiny world.

Can you find moss that looks like a miniature forest? A pebble that could be a mountain? A small stick that looks like a fallen tree?

Choose one tiny scene and study it carefully.

The smallest places in nature often hold the biggest surprises.

Mission 3: The Curiosity Question

Jane Goodall says that every discovery begins with curiosity.

While we explore, ask at least one question about the forest.

Why does moss grow in certain places? Why do some trees grow close together while others stand alone? Why do birds suddenly go quiet?

There are no wrong questions. Seedlings scientists are always wondering.

What We Are Searching For

Today we are looking for the **ingredients of a tiny forest floor** to build our terrarium.

Imagine shrinking yourself down to the size of an ant. What would the world look like?

That is the world we are building in our terrarium.

Moss — The Forest Carpet

Moss is like the soft green carpet of the forest.

Look for moss growing on:

- fallen logs
- rocks
- shady ground

Gently take a **small patch**, leaving plenty behind.

Bark and Twigs — The Fallen Trees

The forest floor is full of fallen branches.

Collect:

- tiny sticks
- bark pieces
- small twigs

These will become **logs and trees** in our terrarium.

Tiny Plants — The Forest Garden

Look for very small woodland plants such as:

- baby ferns
- tiny seedlings
- small ground plants

These will become the **plants in our mini forest**.

Choose plants that are very small and growing in groups.

Forest Soil — The Living Earth

Forest soil is full of tiny organisms we cannot see.

Take **one small handful** from where moss or plants are growing.

This soil will help our terrarium stay alive.

Pebbles — The Forest River Stones

Small stones help water move through the soil.

Look for:

- tiny pebbles
- smooth stones
- small gravel

Imagine them as the **river rocks** of our tiny world.

Leaf Litter — The Forest Blanket

Look for:

- small leaves
- pine needles
- seed pods
- tiny acorns

These are the **blanket of the forest floor**.

Things Seedlings Leave in the Forest

We never collect: insects, animals, mushrooms, large plants, or anything rare or special. Those belong to the forest.

Building Our Tiny Forest

When we return from our expedition, we will build our terrarium in layers.

Layer 1 — River Stones

Place pebbles at the bottom of the jar.

This helps water drain.

Layer 2 — Living Soil

Add 1–2 inches of forest soil.

This is where plants will grow.

Layer 3 — Moss and Plants

Place moss and tiny plants on top of the soil.

Press gently so the roots touch the dirt.

Layer 4 — Forest Details

Add twigs, bark, stones, and leaves.

Make the terrarium look like a **real woodland floor**.

Layer 5 — Rain

Lightly mist the terrarium so everything is damp.

Layer 6 — The Sky

Place the lid on the jar.

Inside the terrarium, water will evaporate, collect on the glass, and fall back down like **tiny rain**.

Your jar will now have its own **mini water cycle**.

Seedlings Observation Mission - Terrarium Watch Log

Congratulations, Seedling Explorer.

You built a **tiny forest ecosystem**. Over the next week your job is to watch it carefully and notice what happens.

Scientists learn by observing small changes over time.
Look at your terrarium once a day and see what you discover.

Things to Watch For

See if you notice:
• water droplets forming on the glass
• moss adjusting to its new home
• plants growing or changing
• leaves or sticks shifting slightly
• the soil staying damp

Nature moves slowly, so sometimes the changes are tiny.

Your Observations

What changes?

What stays the same?

What surprises you?

Seedlings Curiosity Question

Every scientist asks questions. Write down one question you have about your terrarium or the forest.