



# Read & STEAM

## My Family's Christmas Tree Farm



### Lesson Summary

Students will learn about growing Christmas trees through the book *My Family's Christmas Tree Farm* and a tree planting activity

### Grade Level

K-5

### Length of Lesson

45 minutes

### Materials

- Three pine, spruce, or fir branches for cuttings to be cut off from. There need to be enough cuttings for every student to get one
- Pruning shears (adult use only)
- Exacto knife (adult use only)
- Rooting hormone
- Plastic cups (one cup per student)
- Potting soil (one cup per student)
- Permanent marker
- Plastic grocery bags
- Bamboo skewers

### Reading Guide

#### 1. Introduce the story using these questions (2 min)

- a. Have you ever cut down a Christmas tree before?
- b. What does a Christmas tree look like?
- c. How long do you think it takes for a Christmas tree to grow?
- d. "Today we will learn about how Christmas trees are grown!"

#### 2. Read *My Family's Christmas Tree Farm* by Lisa L. Amstutz (10 min)

#### 3. Reflect on the story with these questions (3 min)

- a. What are three steps the family in the book took to grow the Christmas trees on their farm?
- b. How long did the Christmas tree need to grow for before it was ready?
- c. What did the girl do at the end of the story for her little brother, Henry?
- d. "Today, we will plant our very own Christmas trees, just like the girl in the story!"

## Vocabulary

**Evergreen:** a plant that retains green leaves throughout the year

**Cutting:** a method of plant propagation where a part of a plant, usually a stem, leaf, or root, is cut off and placed in soil or water to grow a new plant

**Propagation:** the process of growing new plants from a variety of sources such as cuttings or other plant parts

## Additional Lesson Links

- Matrix Lessons
  - [Discover Christmas Trees](#)
- Other Resources
  - [Christmas Tree – How Does it Grow? Video](#)
  - [Wisconsin Grown + Raised Christmas Tree Poster](#)

## Standards

NALO:

T1.K-2.a

T1.3-5.a

T2.3-5.e

Lesson adapted from “How to Grow a Christmas Tree From a Twig” in *My Family’s Christmas Tree Farm*

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## Christmas Tree Planting Activity

1. Begin Christmas Tree Planting activity **(25 min)**
  - a. Distribute a plastic cup to each student, and have them write their name on it with permanent marker
  - b. Fill each cup with one cup of potting soil
  - c. \*Cut a cutting for each student from the tree branches using pruning shears. Each cutting should have needles on it, be 6–10 inches long, and be as thick as a pencil.
  - d. \*Remove the needles from the bottom of the cutting
  - e. \*Cut a few slits in the bottom of a cutting with the Exacto knife
  - f. Give students cuttings and rooting hormone to complete the activity
  - g. Dip the bottom of the cuttings in rooting hormone
  - h. Plant the cutting a couple inches into the potting soil
  - i. Stick two bamboo skewers into the soil on either side of the cutting, cover with the plastic bag, and secure with a piece of string
  - j. Put the cuttings in indirect sunlight
  - k. Mist them with water each day, and water them if the soil feels dry. It will take a few months to develop roots.
  - l. Once roots have developed, students should take home the cuttings and plant them in the ground. The best time to plant it is in the spring or fall.
2. Review the activity with these questions **(5 min)**
  - a. What steps did you take to plant your Christmas Tree?
  - b. What are three other steps Christmas tree farmers take to care for their trees?
  - c. Final message: “Christmas trees take a long time to grow, and Christmas tree farmers have to put in a lot of work to keep them healthy before we can cut them down!”

\*These steps should be done by an adult