

Beauty All Around You

Parent Guide, page 1 of 2

Read the “Directions” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

SUMMARY

In this activity, children and adults will take a trip to explore beautification in their landscapes and environment and think about the experience with suggested questions.

WHY

New experiences and places help children understand how ideas connect with the real world. Learning on field trips can spark curiosity and inspire children to ask better questions about the world around them. The people children meet on field trips can encourage children to think broadly about their own futures and help them to consider other possible jobs.

RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

This activity will work best for children in kindergarten through 4th grade.

TIME

- 30 minutes, plus travel

CHALLENGE WORDS

- **beautification:** to fight against ugliness and improve the looks of a place or thing
- **botanical garden:** a garden, often with greenhouses, for growing, studying, and exhibiting special plants
- **environment:** the conditions that surround someone or something; for people, this includes the weather, earth, plants, animals, and more
- **greenhouse:** a building or structure that is used to grow and protect plants

GET READY

- Read *Miss Lady Bird’s Wildflowers* together. *Miss Lady Bird’s Wildflowers* is a biography of Claudia “Lady Bird” Johnson, wife of President Lyndon Baines Johnson. For tips on reading this book together, check out the [Guided Reading Activity](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/firstlady/firstlady_reading.pdf) (http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/firstlady/firstlady_reading.pdf).
- Read the *Step Back in Time* sheets.

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>

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YOU NEED

- *Directions* sheets (*attached*)
- *ThinkAbout* sheet (*attached*)
- *Step Back in Time* sheets (*attached*)
- *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers* book (*optional*)

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>



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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>.

Part of a woman's traditional role in America has been to care for her family and help the needy in her community. Similarly, a wife of a U.S. president (called "the first lady") often supports charities and other social causes. Recent first ladies have supported and brought attention to literacy, health care, prevention of drug abuse, volunteer work, and taking care of historic places. Their examples have encouraged women to take action at many levels, and have provided role models for women and girls.



Illustration of Lady Bird Johnson and her daughters in their garden.

Illustration from *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers*



Lady Bird Johnson in her inaugural gown, 1965. Courtesy of Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum

Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson, the wife of President Lyndon Baines Johnson, was first lady from 1963 to 1969. She took her job as first lady seriously. She carefully chose and announced the project she would work on while her husband was president. In a 1994 interview, she told the *Washington Post*, "Once you are [first lady] and you want to serve whatever your husband's efforts are on behalf of the country, you choose those which make your heart sing."



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For more information, visit the National Museum of American History Web site <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>.

Because Lady Bird Johnson loved nature and the environment, she turned her interest into projects to support her husband's efforts to improve living conditions for all Americans. She called it **beautification**. Lady Bird Johnson worked hard to get Congress to pass laws that protected the **environment**. She encouraged Americans to plant gardens and clean up neighborhoods and parks.

After leaving the White House, she continued to work on **beautification** and helped to start the National Wildflower Center, now called the *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center* (www.wildflower.org/).

For more information on Lady Bird Johnson and other first ladies, visit the online exhibition *The First Ladies at the Smithsonian* (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/firstladies/>).



Lady Bird Johnson planting a cherry tree. [LBJ Library Photo by unknown]

beautification: to fight against ugliness and improve the looks of a place or thing

environment: the conditions that surround someone or something; for people, this includes the weather, earth, air, water, plants, animals, and more

Illustrations from *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers* used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

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For adults and kids to follow together.

1. Decide on your best opportunity to search for **beautification** in the **environment** near you.
 - In the city, in the country, or anywhere in between, there are boundless opportunities to explore the outdoors. Take a nature walk around your neighborhood to and find examples of beautification.
 - **Botanical gardens** exist in parks and universities across America. Many of these have **greenhouses** that have blooming plants throughout the year.
 - [Gardenvisit.com](http://www.gardenvisit.com/gardens/in/usa) includes lists and maps of **botanical gardens**, sorted by state (<http://www.gardenvisit.com/gardens/in/usa>).
 - [Wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_botanical_gardens_in_the_United_States) also includes lists of **botanical gardens**, sorted by state (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_botanical_gardens_in_the_United_States). This list could be a good starting point for finding the name of a nearby **botanical garden**.
 - Do an Internet or [GoogleMaps](https://www.google.com/maps) ([maps.google.com](https://www.google.com/maps)) search for your state and “public greenhouse” or “botanical garden.” For example, use Google to search for “botanical garden” and “Maryland” and you might find [Annmarie Garden in Solomon’s, Maryland](#), a Smithsonian-Affiliate institution.
 2. Pick the best [ThinkAbout sheet](#) for your adventure.
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3. If you are going away from home to look for beautification, travel to your destination.

Tip While you’re traveling, keep an eye out for “Adopt-A-Highway” signs. These signs represent companies or individuals who pay to keep the highway clear of litter.

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Tip

While you're traveling, sing or listen to songs related to the environment, like Miley Cyrus's "Wake Up America" or Joni Mitchell's "Big Yellow Taxi."

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4. If you still have questions about flowers and the environment, after your trip, or just want to learn more, check out the Web site for the *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center* (<http://www.wildflower.org>).
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For more activities and information about *Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers* and Lady Bird Johnson, visit (<http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>).



Beauty All Around You

ThinkAbout: Tips for exploring a botanical garden

Before Your Trip:

1. Check to see if the **botanical garden** you are visiting has a Web site. If it does, take a look at the pictures on the site. What season do you think it is in the pictures? If you visit today, will the garden look the same as in the picture or different?
2. Do a quick search of the *Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Web site* to find out what kinds of wildflowers are native to your area (<http://www.wildflower.org/collections/>). Do any of those flowers have names that sound familiar? Have you seen any of those flowers before? During your trip, keep an eye out for those native flowers.

Tip

You can also use the search filter on the right of the page to ask the site to show flowers that should be in bloom during the month of your trip.

During your trip:

- You may not be allowed to pick flowers at the garden. Consider taking pictures instead of picking and collecting plants. If you collect the plant, no one else will be able to enjoy its beauty and all or part of the plant might die.
- Draw a map of the area you are exploring. Each time you find an interesting plant, mark its location on the map and write three words to describe its color, shape, or size.

Tip

If you enjoy this trip, think about taking another one next season, and compare the maps from different seasons.

- Find someone who works at the garden and ask him or her about the jobs at the garden. Do the jobs change during the different seasons? What does that person like about his or her job? How does that person help **beautify** the gardens?
- Find out if the garden organizes classes or activities. Some gardens organize litter clean-up trips where you can help beautify your area.

After your trip:

- Did you see any beautiful things at the garden that you could do in your own yard, window box, or home?

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>



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ThinkAbout: Tips for exploring your neighborhood

Before Your Trip:

1. What season is it? Depending on where you live, the seasons may influence what plants in your area look like. Brainstorm for different things in your neighborhood that are beautiful during each season and why.
2. Do a quick search of the [Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Web site](http://www.wildflower.org/collections/) to find out what kinds of wildflowers are native to your area (<http://www.wildflower.org/collections/>). Do any of those flowers have names that sound familiar? Have you seen any of those flowers before? During your trip, keep an eye out for those native flowers.

Tip You can also use the search filter on the right of the page to ask the site to show flowers that should be in bloom during the month of your trip.

During your trip:

- Consider taking pictures instead of picking and collecting plants. If you collect the plant, no one else will be able to enjoy its beauty and all or part of the plant might die.
- Draw a map of the area you are exploring. Each time you find an interesting plant, mark its location on the map and write 3 words to describe its color, shape, or size.

Tip If you enjoy this trip, think about taking another one next season, and compare the maps from different seasons.

- Has anyone in your neighborhood done something to beautify the area? Look for beautiful yards, windows, and mailboxes to see how others have worked to enhance the appearance of their homes and outdoor areas.
- If you meet someone working on a beautification project, ask him or her about the project. What is the goal? Will someone have to work to keep it beautiful?

After your trip:

- How could you beautify your home or neighborhood?
- Some states and towns have volunteer litter clean-ups, where you can work with others to help beautify your neighborhood. Search the Internet or call your local Department of Transportation to find a clean-up near you.

More information at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/ourstory/activities/firstlady/>

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Teacher Guide, page 1 of 1

Read the “Directions” and “Parent Guide” sheets for step-by-step instructions.

OBJECTIVES

The students will be better able to:

- Describe and site examples of beautification.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

- Student can cite examples of and opportunities for beautification.
- (optional) Map includes pertinent landmarks and accurate descriptions.

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