



Orientation to the Cardinal Directions

You Will Need

A compass, globe, cardinal points (or labels for directions), a compass rose on paper.

Purpose

To become aware of the four directions and how to orient oneself in relation to them.

Lesson

Bring out the globe.

Guide: Where is the North Pole?

Explain that north is a direction that you can move in on the surface of the Earth.

Guide: If you walked in the direction of north, you would, eventually, reach the North Pole.

Take out the compass. Explain that north is magnetic and the needle of the compass points to that magnet. Show the children how the compass is pointing. Walk with the children in that direction and place the label when you reach the wall.

Guide: If we walk in the opposite direction, that is south.

Walk south and place that label. Turn and face north again.

Guide: If you are facing north, east is to your right.

Turn to the right, facing east, and walk in that direction to a wall to place the label.

Guide: The opposite direction from east is west.

Turn around, facing west and walk to place that label. Give the children commands to go to each direction from the center of the room. Give them two or three step commands.

Guide: Walk two steps north and four steps east.

Place an object across the room. Have the children direct one another with directional commands until they reach the object. Talk about how the Sun first appears in the east at sunrise and disappears in the west at sunset. Show the compass rose and have the children orient it so that the north arrow is pointing north. Explain how it is used on maps to show direction and orientation. Begin the practice of orienting all maps by aligning the top with the north label in the room.