

Geography Curriculum Overview

While not impossible, it is difficult to extricate geography from the overall elementary Montessori cultural curriculum. At the beginning of each year, we explore and dramatize creation stories from ancient people. These stories are rooted in time and place. They allow students to imagine these long ago worlds. For example, people of the far north talk of ice giants; those from other environments mold their stories to their everyday life. The scientific story of creation leads to lessons about chemical elements, electromagnetism and other fundamental forces, star evolution (nucleosynthesis), our solar system, and the story of earth history.

Beginning with the creation of earth's atmosphere and layers, earth history is interspersed with studies of physical geography – volcanism, plate tectonics, land and water forms, the rise and fall of mountains (orogenesis), geology, and the water cycle.

Earth's life history is explored with timelines: earth eras and the evolution of life with a detailed look at early human history. Political geography focuses on the human creation of boundaries, the rise of cities and government, the way in which humans meet their basic needs. Children are fascinated with the notion of time and change.

These stories combining geography with natural and early human history inspire the child's sense of wonder and curiosity.

Children's Work in Geography in Classroom 5

Basic work in geography begins with physical and political mapmaking. We examine the climate, biomes, and plant and animal life as a precursor to how humans in that time and place met their basic needs. We look at how this changed over time, for example how hunter/gatherer societies turned to agriculture. The study of civilizations is timeline, artifact, and project driven. For example, the study of science and mathematics might lead a student to build an abacus.

Because of the depth and breadth of this work, we engage in a three year cycle – exploring two to three continents each year. Our rotation is generally

Europe and Africa

Asia and Australia

North America, South America, and Antarctica

We are currently working on Asia, dividing the continent into regions and civilizations. Each child designs and executes an Earth Day project in the spring as a culmination of their cultural studies that year.