



A Glimpse Into History

by Sabrina Carlson

On November 21, 2016, 26 students from Ms. Ingols 4th grade class from Marshall Elementary School in Flagstaff traveled to visit Montezuma Castle National Monument as part of the *Every Kid in a Park* Program.

Before our outing, I had the chance to visit the classroom and do a little pre-teaching about the area and the history of the ruins we would visit. We did a reading that discussed the unique nature of the riparian area in a transition zone that made this home site so attractive and abundant for ancient people. With such biodiversity and access to water nearby, it was an ideal place to build a defensible home. Teaching about ancient and modern cultures always makes the most sense through the lens of the fundamental needs of humans. From the basics of food, clothing, and shelter, to more ephemeral needs like social acceptance, art, beauty and a system of beliefs; these needs are the thread that connects us all. At the end of the lesson we were able to practice being ethnobotanists by examining samples of plants that would have been important to these people and learning the traditional uses of them.



Getting a close up look at a huge walking stick bug!



Paying homage to the father of our National Parks!

On the day of our excursion the warm, dry fall days we had been experiencing turned suddenly chilly and extremely rainy. Not to be frightened off by a little rain, we turned garbage bags into rain ponchos and went out to see the castle anyway. During a short break in the rain, we lucked out by having a chance to view the big ruin and several of the plants we had studied the day before. As we viewed the house, we considered why the residents would have built it so high in the cliffs instead of next to the creek. We could almost picture the handmade ladders leaning against the side of the homes that would be quickly pulled up if wild animals or invading tribes approached.

When the rain began to pour heavily again, we retreated into the visitor center to view the displays and learn more about the technology the ancient people used to meet their needs. It is odd to modern children to think of arrowheads, grinding stones, and looms as technology, but indeed they are! All of our

tools and devices have been developed over time thanks to the scientific and engineering advances made by people long ago.

After lunch with a gorgeous view and a few moments to silently listen to the river, we boarded the bus to return back to school, a little more aware of the ways of the ancient people, and how their contributions to society helped shape the world we enjoy today.



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