

# Outdoor Education Worksheets

## EXPLORING SENSES



### You will need:

- First Aid Kit
- Appropriate clothing for whole group (sunny/wet weather)
- Charged mobile phones and appropriate numbers of adult helpers in case of group splitting up
- Bin bag and gloves for clearing any unforeseen litter from your working area

### Meet a Tree

- Bag of blindfolds

### Woodland Orchestra

- Collecting bags
- Tarpaulin

### Smelly Cocktails

- Cups
- Water and container

### Rainbow Chips and Colour Palettes

- Colour chips
- Glue sticks
- Card bookmarks

### General

- Cleaning wipes
- Clipboards
- Scissors

### Keep it safe:

- When handling natural materials warn children about splinters. Examine a piece of wood from the floor together to see how the grain lies and explain what a splinter is. If someone gets a splinter it's not a disaster! You should have tweezers in your first aid kit for really big ones. Small ones will work their own way out.
- There may be litter in the woodland in spite of our best efforts so warn children and staff to look at what they are picking up and to let you know if they come across a big piece of rubbish. We can supply gloves and bin bags for you to take out with you in case you need to dispose of some rubbish.
- Explain the boundaries of your working area to the group before you begin. Sometimes it helps to do a boundary walk all together so everyone is clear about where they are allowed to go. Once everyone is clear the children can enjoy a great deal of freedom in exploring their site for the day.
- Trips, slips and tumbles! The outdoors is a bumpy place. You should expect at least a few tumbles each session. This is part of the exploration and children learning to manoeuvre on uneven ground, leap across ditches and pick themselves up after a tree root jumps out on them. Give a general warning to watch where they're walking and then let them roam.

In case of emergencies you can also contact our main office on: 01423 541000 for assistance.

The OS grid reference for our grounds in case of calling emergency services is: SE 32909 54249

## MEET A TREE- Approx 30-45 minutes

### Materials

- Bag of blindfolds

1. Put the children into pairs. Ask each pair to nominate an 'A' and a 'B'. Now using one child as a volunteer 'A', give a demonstration of what they need to do.

2. Put the blindfold on A. Stretch your right arm out towards the side. Help A to place their hands on to your right forearm. One hand should be near your wrist and one near your elbow, as if they were holding on to the handlebars of a bike.

3. Using this hold you can now lead A towards a tree of your choosing (making it fairly close for demonstration purposes). A is very secure in this hold as they can lean on to your arm if they stumble. They will also meet any obstacles after you- thus lessening the risk of them colliding with something which you hadn't already warned them about.

4. Once at the tree you will place A's hands on to the bark and give them a minute to explore the tree and get to know it. Encourage them to hug the tree to get an idea of its girth. They should feel all the way around the tree, go up and down the bark with their hands and also take notice of the feel of the ground underfoot as they walk around the trunk. Lastly, suggest they smell the tree. It sounds like a strange thing to do but believe it or not, many trees do smell quite different from their neighbours, especially those of a different species!

5. Help A to find their handlebar hold again and lead them back towards the group, taking a slightly different route. Once there turn them a few times and then remove the blindfold. Ask A to tell you, after a little investigation, which tree is the one they just met.

**TIP:** A should have only 2 guesses but they can go and touch, smell and hug as many trees as they like before making the guesses- to make sure. This avoids the tendency of children to stand still and guess 'that one', 'that one', 'that one' in a process of inevitable elimination. It also encourages them to use what they learnt with their senses to solve the mystery.

6. Once A has correctly identified their tree (likely to be fairly easy after the demo) ask all of the pairs to have a go. When A has had a turn it is B's go. When they have both had a turn they can swap partners with another pair. The children will self-manage very well during this activity but you will need to keep an eye on the leading techniques. A bit of giddiness can quickly lead to the 'one armed drag from the front' technique which is much more likely to result in trips and falls!



## WOODLAND ORCHESTRA- Approx 30 minutes

### Materials

- Collecting bags
- Tarpaulin

### SOUND FIST

1. Start this activity, about sounds- both making them and listening to them, by doing a sound fist. Ask the children to stand in a circle. Now each person holds out both arms straight in front of them, hands in fists, palms facing up.
2. Ask the children to be completely silent- you can enforce this by drawing an imaginary 'veil of silence' over your own face and demonstrating how it works. When you start the activity you can do this and you can lift the veil when the activity has ended. It is a surprisingly effective tool!
3. Now, each time anyone hears a new sound they open one of their fingers out of a fist. You should keep doing this activity until most people have at least 5 fingers opened up. Take care that the children aren't just watching you and lifting a finger every time you lift one. If you think this is happening ask everyone to close their eyes and listen like this instead.
4. When you stop the listening and lift the veil of silence, ask for children to tell you the kinds of sounds they heard. Some will be birds and insects, others will be vehicles and alarms. Have a short discussion about how different sounds made them feel and which were their favourites.

### ORCHESTRA

5. Now, with those sounds in mind, the children are going to make their very own orchestra and write a piece of music. Each child should choose one item from the forest floor and bring it back to the circle.
6. Ask the children to look carefully at their item and to imagine: If their item had a voice- what noise would it make? If it was an instrument- how would you play it and what would the sound be like?
7. One at a time the children will lay their item down- one next to the other- in a straight line in the middle of the circle on the tarpaulin. As they lay the item down ask them to tell everyone what it 'sounds' like. Everyone else in the circle repeats the sound. If the child is shy they can ask a friend to help with the noise or see if anyone else in the circle wants to offer an idea.
8. As you build the line up keep reviewing the previous sounds to avoid forgetting them. It will be like playing 'I went to the market and I bought an apple, a bicycle, a clock..' but with sounds.
9. When the line is complete the group's challenge is to successfully sound out the 'music' they have written from one end of the sound line to the other.

**10.** Now divide the circle of children and the line into 5 or 6 equal groups and give each group of children the woodland items from the line which correspond to them. Ask them to come up with a short composition using their items to show the rest of the group. If they can't remember the sound a particular item makes they can come up with a new one.

**11.** Finally have a concert to show each group's composition. They should lay their instruments out in the correct order and then give a presentation of the composition- as a final challenge, ask the rest of the group to repeat the composition all together.



## **SMELLY COCKTAILS- Approx 20-30 minutes.**

### **Materials**

- Cups
- Water and container

**1.** Prior to starting this activity find two different leaves, one which has a strong smell and one which doesn't.

**2.** Standing in a circle pass the leaves around (you may want to tear them into smaller pieces) and ask the children to smell each one. When they have come back to you ask them what they thought. Did the leaves smell the same? Was one nicer/ nastier than the other?

**3.** Give each child a plastic cup. Tell them that their task is to create the smelliest cocktail possible within the next ten minutes. They should look for smelly leaves, smelly soil, smelly petals and smelly stalks to put in their cups. Set a rule for only using one petal or leaf per cocktail to try to avoid too much damage to the plants and trees. If someone only wants half a leaf they should still take the whole leaf from the plant and share the rest with someone else. If they leave torn leaves and stems the plant or tree can get infected.

4. When the children have gathered all the smelly items they want to, bring them back to the circle. Go around the circle and pour a small amount of water into each cup. Then ask each person to find a spoon sized stick on the floor and use it to stir the water and their ingredients up together in the cup. This should release even more scent.
5. Finally ask the children to give their cocktail a special, stinky, cocktail name and call them out one at a time. Pass the cocktails around the circle one at a time and get children to vote on the smelliest of all.
6. When everyone has their own cocktail back you can have a toast. After a resounding 1,2,3 everybody shouts “cheers!” and throws the contents of their cup over their shoulder- keeping hold of the cup and making sure there is nobody walking around outside the circle at the same time!



## **RAINBOW CHIPS and COLOUR PALETTES- Approx 10-20 minutes.**

### **Materials**

- Colour chips
- Glue sticks
- Cardboard bookmarks

This is a good activity to use on your way to or from a site or as a short filler in between other activities.

1. Ask the children what colours are in the woodlands. You are bound to get ‘brown’, and ‘green’ back as replies. You may get some greys and blacks but probably won’t get many other offers.
2. Next give each child a cardboard bookmark.

3. Now ask each child to reach in to the bag of colour chips and pull one out. They have to find something in the wood that matches the shade on their chip as closely as possible. When they have found something to match they should show you. If possible they should then take a small piece of the item they found (the same rules apply as above for tearing off leaves, petals etc- try to only take whole leaves and share them between a number of children).
4. Using the glue sticks, help the children to stick their item to their bookmark.
5. Each child repeats the activity for as many times as appropriate but until they have at least 5 different colours stuck to their bookmark.
6. When you have finished call the children together once more, tell them to hold up their bookmarks and ask the question you asked at the beginning. What colours are in the woodland?

