

SOME OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

SENSORY AWARENESS

By focusing the use of one or more of our senses, we become more aware of the world around us.

Rainbow Color Chips - Hand out a variety of paint chips. Have buddies look for the matching color in nature.

Back to Back Awareness - Seat participants in pairs back to back. Give one an object to describe to the other without naming the object. The other draws the object. Can use a "20 Questions" format if desired.

Frame It - Make a picture frame out of a 3 x 5 card. Frame a scene either near or far away and share it with others.

Hug a Tree - Have one of a pair blindfold the other and carefully guide them to a tree. Allow the blindfolded person to explore the tree thoroughly. Lead them away, remove the blindfold and ask them to find their tree.

Hi-Low Hunts - Animals and plants need a variety of things to survive. Use a thermometer to find the coldest and hottest spot in an area or look for the dampest and driest place.

Micro-Trails - Give everyone two meters of string, 7-8 meat skewers and perhaps a hand lens and a bug box. Ask them to lay out a micro-trail for the group to follow. The skewers are interpretive points.

Sock Walk - Pull on an unmatched sock over a shoe and go for a walk through a field. Count the varieties of seeds collected, look at how they attach to the sock and decide which method is most efficient. You can plant the seeds and sock as one, or pick off the seeds to plant if you want.

Poetry - Spend some quiet time to write poetry. Write a group poem with every girl sharing a word or phrase to describe a theme; arrange the thoughts in some order. Haiku are three lines of five, seven and five syllables, respectively. Cinquains are five lines long: the first line is one word to name, the second line is two words to describe action, the third line is a three-word phrase, the fourth line is a four word descriptive phrase and the fifth line is one word to summarize.

One of a kind - Give each girl a particular kind of leaf or cone. Tell them to examine it so carefully they would be able to pick it out of a whole pile. During the next five minutes, have the girls look at their leaf, feel it, hold it at different angles, etc. The put all the objects together - with a few others no one has explored - and have them find theirs. It's one of a kind! Afterward, ask the girls in the unit to share with the others what makes each of them unique.

Body Acting - With the girls using their entire body, have them act out a tree in a windstorm, a seed growing a leaf falling, a flower opening and a snowflake melting.

Sound Maps - Sit quietly in a circle with eyes closed. Use blindfolds if girls are young to increase concentration. Focus on the sounds around you. What sound is farthest away? The closest? What sound was the most pleasant? The most irritating? The softest? The loudest?

Mystery Bag - Have nature items in boxes or bags into which the girls cannot see, have each person feel the items in the bag and write down what they think is hidden.

GREAT GAMES FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Tightrope walk - Walk along rope on floor looking through wrong end of binoculars.

Alphabet Scavenger Hunt - Teams must find and write down one item beginning with each letter of the alphabet.

Amoeba - Teams in big bunches tied by a rope around waists race to a given point and back.

People Categories - Group sorts itself according to given categories, e.g. birth date, pet owner, shoe size.

My Bonnie - Sing "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean" going down or up on words beginning with "B." This is a great warm-up.

Rock, Bridge, Tree - Relay - go over rock, under bridge, around tree, under bridge, over rock.

Shoe Zoo - Draw around your shoe on paper. Make an animal out of the shape.

Submarines - Person guides blindfolded person verbally through newspaper maze on the floor.

Waddle to the Bottle - Relay - walk to the can with poker chip or ball between knees and drop it in.

Blind Eagle - Night stalking game. Blindfolded eagle listens for stalkers, and zaps them with flashlight.

People Machines - Charades - groups of 5-7 must depict machines, like egg beater, soda machine, typewriter.

Donkey Ears - One who is "it" asks questions of others - they must answer "donkey ears" without laughing.

Horse and Rider - Like musical chairs - have girls form two circles, one inside the other and walk in opposite directions. When music stops they must match up with person on the other circle.

This is My _____ - Person who is "it" points (for example) to her ear, says "This is my leg" and counts to 10. The other person must point to leg and say "this is my ear" before the first says "10," otherwise she's it.

Toothpick Barnyard Bedlam - You need 100 toothpicks - 25 each of four different colors (blue, yellow, green, red); a paper bag for each group. Scatter the toothpicks in a designated area, such as a large meadow or a playing field.

How to play: This is a game about camouflage. It is a noisy game for large groups of people. Divide the group into two teams. Each group represents an animal, and must practice making its animal's noise. Each team must select a captain, who carries the team's paper bag.

Explain the boundaries of the search. Caution the group to beware of sharp toothpicks in the grass.

At a signal, the total group rushes out to the area seeded with toothpicks. When a toothpick is discovered, a player must stand and point at it while making her team's animal noise. The team captain is the only one who can pick up the toothpicks. Have the group gather toothpicks for five minutes.

Have each team total up their toothpicks by individual color. Total the toothpicks by color and have the group search again. Play until all the toothpicks are gathered.

Debrief the group. Consider such things as which colors of toothpicks were found first, and why, and what kind of behavior was displayed by individuals when toothpick supplies were limited. Ask the girls (participants) for some examples of camouflage and competition in the natural world.

Alphabet Hike - Materials: Paper and pencil for each team.

How to play: Divide hikers into teams, each with a captain. Any player from either team who sees something beginning with the letter "a" that pertains to nature names it, and then her team captain writes it down. Members of that team then look for something beginning with "b." The team wins that gets furthest through the alphabet before the hike ends, or time is up.

Variations: Have teams or individuals search for things beginning with letters in any order. Have teams or individuals search for plants only, animals only, or combinations.

DIRECTIONS FOR NATURE'S WEB AN OUTDOOR ACTIVITY

Materials Needed:

- ★ A piece of paper or a picture of one component of the food web for each girl.
- ★ A ball of string.
- ★ Questions below written on cards.

Here's how:

- ★ The food web game should be played with at least eight girls (participants) in a circle. Each girl has a picture of one of the components of a food web or holds a piece of paper on which to write a plant or animal so she can “become” a living component of the food web.

The outdoor setting should inspire girls to think of different organisms. The components of a wetland (a suggested list is on the next page), will yield a different type of food web than a forest or a mountain meadow.

- ★ After the girls have chosen their organism, the game can begin. One player holds a ball of string. She holds onto the end of the string and tosses the ball to one of the other members of the group who, in the food chain, interacts with her. This continues until a web-like pattern is produced, connecting and interconnecting all the plants and animals.
 - When the game reaches the point where the food web is created, ask the following questions:
 - What would happen if a fire raged through this community of plants and animals?
 - What would happen if a pesticide were sprayed over the food web?
 - If a natural disaster, like a flood, drought or earthquake occurred, how would this affect the food web?
- ★ The girls can then trace the path of the string to find out which community members would be affected.

WETLANDS PLANTS AND ANIMALS

For a small group, use the starred items first.

Osprey: Large hawk-like bird. Eats fish. Is the bird used for the Seattle Seahawks.

***Great Blue Heron:** Tall wading bird. Eats frogs, small fish and salamanders.

Kingfisher: Medium sized diving bird. Eats insects, little fish, frogs, and insects.

Crayfish: Small, lobster-like crustacean. Eats insect larvae, dead fish and frogs.

Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly: Eats nectar and pollen.

Sundew: Carnivorous pond plant. Eats insects.

***Sedges:** Grass-like pond plant that grows on pond edges, stems have edges and are not round like grass. Provides food and nesting material for birds and some insects.

Wood Duck: Colorful duck that feeds on plant materials, e.g. duckweed, sedges and cattails, and some insects. Nests in hollows in dead snags.

Pond Snail: Eats algae and other pond plants.

Muskrat: Small mammal, swims in ponds, digs home in banks. Eats plants.

Bufflehead duck: Diving duck. Eats snails, freshwater clams, etc.

Marsh Wren: Small bird with upturned tail. Nests in cattails, sedges, grass. Eats insects.

***Mosquito:** Blood-sucking insect.

Diving Beetle: Eats other insects and larvae.

Raccoon: Eats insects, frogs, fish, crustaceans, fruit, berries and seeds.

Cattails: Edge pond plant. Provides food and shelter for small birds and animals.

Hardhack Spirea: Woody, deciduous 3-6 foot shrub. Has a pink plume of small flowers in a cone shape.

Skunk Cabbage: Aromatic, yellow flowered plant. Pollen eaten by insects; rhizomes by muskrats and raccoons.

Dragon Fly: Large insect that eats smaller insects. Eaten by fish, raccoons and frogs.

May Fly: Larvae eat algae, microscopic pond plants and animals.

Yellow Iris: Similar to garden iris, but grows in water. Muskrats eat its rhizomes, insects its pollen.

Duckweed: Small, surface-floating pond plant. Eaten by ducks, small pond animals and insect larvae.

***Elodea:** Rooted leafy water plant that grows underwater. Often used in aquariums; eaten by snails, crustaceans, frogs and fish.

***Red-Legged Frog:** Eats algae, pond plants and insects.

Three-Spined Stickleback: Small fish. Eats insects and plants. Food for fish-eating birds.

Waterflea: Food for ducks, fish and other insects. Eats algae and microscopic algae.

***Green Algae:** The green slime that coats rocks in ponds or forms sheets, etc. that float freely in the water.