

6 Sensory activities



ACTIVITY 1 SMELLY COCKTAILS

Using plastic cups, collect small pieces of different leaves, pieces of twig and soil, and mix together. You can now smell nature's whiffy perfume. To make the smell clearer and stronger, add a few delicate drops of elixir. Pass your different smells around to share.



ACTIVITY 2 LEAF SLIDES

Two pieces of card with a square hole cut in the centre makes an ideal way to study leaves.

Place a leaf between the two pieces of card so it is framed in the centre. Hold it up to the light, look closely at your leaf to see the patterns and holes where tiny creatures are living and nibbling away. This can be an art project to make a collage of different samples of leaves.



ACTIVITY 3 MIRRORS

Mirrors are a simple, excellent way of looking at the world in different perspectives. Hold a mirror on the bridge of your nose and walk from an open area to beneath a tree and imagine yourself an insect or bird flying from the light into the canopy. Or perhaps put insects on the mirrors to study more closely.



ACTIVITY 4 UNNATURE TRAIL

Lay out a trail with start and finish signs. Put out items you would not expect to find in nature, such as a paint brush, pencil, scissors, glove and so forth. Hide them in the grass and higher up in shrubs. The group must walk round and observe (but not touch) how many unnatural things they can find. Excellent to encourage observation. Some items may stand out brightly while others blend in with their surroundings.

Discuss the ways camouflage helps animals. Follow with a search for small camouflaged animals. This can also be a chance to discuss the importance of always picking up things you have left behind and to point out that the difficult to find objects may not be seen and stay hidden for a while and how littering is bad for park wildlife. Helps students become aware of their impact on the environment.



ACTIVITY 5 FEELY TRAIL

Tie a number of objects onto a length of rope. Each person is blindfolded and follows the rope. Using touch only, each person must try and guess what the objects are.



ACTIVITY 6 SILENT SHARING WALK

Walk slowly in silence along a path, count on your hands all the different sounds you hear. Who or what made the sounds and where did they come from?



ACTIVITY 7 TOUCH CARDS

Give each person a card with an adjective written on it e.g. slimy, hairy, smooth etc. Collect three objects to fit the word. Others have to guess the word based on the items you found.



ACTIVITY 8 PYRAMID OF LIFE

Give everyone a card with the name of a plant, insect or animal written on it. Start with the Sun, where the Earth gets its energy

What form of life is the first to make use of that energy? It's the plants, so they form the first row of the pyramid.

The plant eaters or herbivores then form a line behind the plants. The meat eaters or carnivores stand in another line behind the herbivores. The higher up the food chain, the fewer animals there are.

Put a hankie on the heads of the plants. They have been sprayed with insecticide, which is eaten by the insects. Pass the hankies back along the pyramid. This shows how things are concentrated along the food chain as the single top predator receives all the hankies and dies! This also demonstrates the importance of plants.



ACTIVITY 9 OWLS AND CROWS

Divide the group into two teams, the owls and the crows. Line the teams up facing each other, about two feet apart. Draw a line approximately 20 feet behind each team to make a base. The leader makes a statement.

If it's true, the owls chase the crows, trying to catch them before they reach their base.

If it's false, the crows chase the owls to their base. Anyone caught must join the opposite team.

ACTIVITY 10 THE GERMINATION GAME

There are five tokens:

- Water
- Soil
- Air
- Light and
- Warmth

Scatter these tokens in a large area of grass. Everyone is a seed and has to collect one of each token so that the seed can land and germinate on the flower bed. However, there are two hungry birds chasing the seeds to eat. If caught by a bird, the seed has to go to the dead seed pile. Explain how some seeds want to be eaten so they can spread and germinate in new areas. However, every seed must have all the right conditions to be able to grow successfully. To make the game more complex, try increasing the number of birds and talk about how the more predators there are the less seeds will germinate.



ACTIVITY 11 BUILD A PEOPLE TREE

The tallest child is the heartwood. They call out '**standing tall and strong**'. Two children then form the taproot beside the heartwood and call out '**holding firm**'. Lateral roots lay spread out around the heartwood and slurp to bring up water.

Xylem vessels crouch around the heartwood and leap up calling '**whoosh**' as they transport water up to the leaves. Phloem vessels spread between the xylem vessels and move from standing to a crouching position calling out '**whheeeee**' as they transport the food.

Remaining children stand around the tree with their backs to the heartwood. They are the bark and their job is to protect the rest of the tree.

Look out tree! Here comes a wood-boring insect trying to penetrate the bark to lay its eggs. Can the tree defend itself?



ACTIVITY 12 IMAGERY

Walk along a path and look for something special, such as an old tree, a stream or bright flower. Find a favourite spot nearby and think of words or phrases to describe the place you are in or the thing you find special. You may like to imagine you are that tree or stone and think up words to describe its life. Join the group together and share your thoughts and words. Make a group poem from each person's reflections on their special place.



ACTIVITY 13 JOURNEY MAP

To make your own journey map, follow a route and collect things to show where you have been. Stick these onto a sketched map of your route and at each point where someone sees something, also add this onto your map. You should finish with a picture of natural things to show the story of your journey.

