

Program goal:

To encourage our participants to utilize different senses in nature (touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste) to create a better understanding of the natural world. We want to encourage participants to look deeper, listen and feel more, smell, and taste (within reason) to gain a different perspective of the natural environment.

BIN CONTENTS:

10 blindfolds

1 highlighter

2 bags of paint chips

20 small Dixie cups

PRE-PROGRAM SET UP:

① 10 minutes

② 30 minutes*

(*Optional, if doing blind geocaching)

- > Grab the program bin.
- > Decide on a good location for a nature walk based on the needs, fitness and abilities of your group.





































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Nature perfume:

Each participant gets a Dixie cup and is instructed to go into the forest and find things that smell good (encourage them to try smelling different things). The goal is to create a "nature perfume." Water can be added if near a creek or lake but is not necessary in creating the perfume. Encourage participants to create a name for their perfume. Ask participants to circle up and share the names of their creations while passing the perfumes around for others to smell.

TIPS:

> Plants tend to smell stronger when crushed. Encourage participants to crush the plants in their fingers.

- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Establish a time frame for exploring and searching for plants (5-10 minutes).
- Do a sweep of the area before sending participants out to look for plants. Make sure there aren't any poisonous plants or mushrooms in the area and adjust the rules accordingly.

































Hug a tree:

Divide the group into pairs. One participant gets blindfolded and the other becomes the guide. The guide gently steers the blindfolded participant around the forest and towards a tree. The blindfolded participant is instructed to feel the tree and try to remember distinctive features of the tree using their sense of touch. The guide then gently brings the blindfolded participant back to the starting point (they can use a convoluted route to distract the participant of the exact location of the tree). Once back at the starting point, the participant can remove their blindfold and be instructed to go find the tree they had felt.

TIPS:

Participants can also be instructed to use their other senses such as smell and hearing to try and identify the tree.

- Ensure that at least one staff is not blindfolded and is able to supervise for the safety of the group.
- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Do a sweep of the area to make sure there aren't any poisonous plants.

































Highlighter hide:

While exploring, stop on the path and instruct the group to turn around to face away from you. While they are facing away, hide a highlighter or brightly coloured object in an obvious place in the forest. Direct the group to turn around and try to visually spot the object without saying anything. Ask participants to place their hand on their head when they spot the object. Once everyone has found it, have the group turn around again and hide the highlighter in a harder location. Keep doing this for two to three rounds. On the last round, hide it on yourself (e.g. behind your ear). Have them walk into the forest if they cannot find it easily, encouraging them to become more comfortable with looking intently at the natural world.

TIPS:

- Encourage participants to step off the path and move around if they are having a hard time finding the highlighter.
- When hiding the object, try hiding it in a different place each time to encourage the participant to keep moving around and discovering new things.
- A great way to debrief is asking what people have noticed during the activity. Have they noticed anything in nature that they hadn't before?

- > Encourage participants to take their time when looking around to see what else they find. This will prevent rushing to find the object first.
- > Remind participants that this is not a race or a contest.
- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.





























Picture frame:

Have participants collect four sticks of similar length (between 15-20 centimetres). These sticks will be used as frames. After establishing boundaries for the activity, instruct participants that they will have five to 10 minutes to explore within the area established to find a piece of nature (without moving things). Encourage them to find something that they relate to or that speaks to them. It could be the way some rocks are piled, it could be a plant, etc. Have the participants use their sticks to frame the section of nature they chose. Once everyone has finished, have the group come back together and go on a gallery nature walk to share the "pictures" they have framed.

TIPS:

> Participants could also share a story to go along with their picture or explain to the group why they picked this certain area.

- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Do a sweep of the area to make sure there aren't any poisonous plants.
- > Establish a time frame for exploring and searching for nature to frame.































Paint chips:

Using the bag of paint chips provided in the program bin, hand out one coloured paint chip per person and instruct the participants to try and find this exact colour in nature (not on clothing or their backpacks). They can either bring that object back to the group or bring the group to it. Once they have tried one paint chip, repeat the activity as many times as you like with different colours.

TIPS:

Don't be afraid to give out a colour that may not be found in nature. You might be surprised by what participants come up with.

- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Establish a time frame for exploring and searching for nature to frame.
- > Do a sweep of the area to make sure there aren't any poisonous plants.

































Hand lines:

Have participants hold their hand out, palm facing up. Using a washable marker, trace a few of the lines on the participant's palm. Have the participants hold their hand up and try to find the same pattern of the lines on their palm in nature.

TIPS:

- Ask participants if they are okay with having marker on their hands first and reassure them that it is washable if they are worried.
- This is great to be done while walking along a trail.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:

> Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.































Ninja sticks:

Ask all participants to find two small sticks in the forest. Have one participant volunteer to be the "ninja." This person will sit in a location about 100 metres away from where the rest of the group is beginning the game. This person will be blindfolded and all the sticks collected by the other participants will be placed in a pile in front of them. The ninja must use their hearing to detect whether others are getting close to them or moving around. The rest of the group begins at the designated starting point and their goal is to retrieve all the sticks without being caught by the ninja. If the ninja hears someone in the forest. they will point at that person and that person must return to the starting point before trying to collect a stick. The game ends when all sticks have been collected. At this point, someone new can become the ninja.

TIPS:

- It can be helpful to have one staff not playing who can help to enforce who the ninja is pointing at if participants don't see it.
- > This game is best played in the forest where participants have space to sneak around.

- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Do a sweep of the area to ensure there are no poisonous plants.































Moment of mindfulness:

Have the participants sit in a circle and close their eyes and take a moment of quiet. Have the group take a few deep, grounding breaths and explore what they can smell and taste in these breaths. Next have the group try to listen for the farthest sounds away that they can hear. Pause. Have them try to hear something a little bit closer, maybe in the trees or on the forest floor. Pause. Now see if they can hear anything right beside them. Pause. Have participants focus on sounds inside themselves, maybe their breath, maybe their blood pumping. Pause. Have them think about which direction. the sun is coming from, and the wind, etc. When they are ready, participants can open their eyes and share with the group things they noticed (sounds, feelings, thoughts, etc.)

TIPS:

- > This can be a great activity for the end of the Exploring Our Senses In Nature program.
- > Some participants may not feel comfortable closing their eyes. Let the group know that closing your eyes is optional and that no one needs to do this if they don't feel comfortable with their eyes closed. If participants choose to keep their eyes closed or not participate, ask them to kindly stay quiet to allow the other group members to participate.

- > Establish clear boundaries and programming area with participants.
- > Do a sweep of the area to ensure there are no poisonous plants.
- > Consider having one staff member or volunteer keep their eyes open to supervise the group.





























