

## Some Nature Fun & Learning Activities for possible use on BICO Outings

Using all of one's senses to explore nature, with heavy reliance on Joseph Comell's *Sharing Nature with Children & Sharing the Joy of Nature with Children* and on Bryan MacKay and Kris Pena.

Sounds for silence) of Nature: The kids sit quietly (prefer, eyes closed), listen intently, describe and record the sounds or silence of the woods or meadow. How do these sounds differ from those of their neighborhoods? Have them map on paper the locations of origin of the sounds relative to themselves.

The "Unnature Trail": Have the kids find/observe things of human origin rather than "of nature" e.g. the trail itself, litter, nails, initials carved in trees, sounds of civilization. A variation on this theme is to place 10-15 man-made objects along a 50 ft. stretch of trail and challenge the kids to identify as many as possible.

Micro Hike: Each kid is given a magnifying glass to explore and describe what they observe along 3-5 ft. of trail or field while lying on their bellies.

Camera: Each kid plays the role of a photographer who guides a camera (another kid or leader with eyes closed) to something in nature that he/she thinks is beautiful. The "camera" is positioned and its ear lobe is pushed to open the shutter (eyes). The camera then describes the thing or scene of beauty.

Sightless Description of Nature: The kid is blindfolded and asked to describe and, possibly, identify something using touch, smell and even sound. It could be a tree trunk, leaf, feather, beetle, interesting rock, etc. Lead the blindfolded kid to a tree within view of the start point. He/she must describe it using touch only. Lead back by a different route, unblind and ask the kid to visually find the tree that he/she just described manually.

Finding Things in Nature: Each kid is given something to find in nature (e.g. a plant, something edible, an animal's house). They can help one another as a team. Not all things should be removed from their natural site. The kid then describes and draws it, reads about it in our field guides, and shares the findings.

5 Senses Hike: Requires a good naturalist who has pre-hiked the trail and identified things of interest to see, touch/feel, taste (with care), smell, and hear.

Everything is Connected to Everything Else: Each kid is given a picture placard that identifies hinder as a component of an ecosystem (e.g. an oak tree, a squirrel, a river, soil, fish, a hawk). Each then talks about the role it plays (e.g. the oak provides a nest site for the hawk, acorns for the squirrel, roots to keep the soil from entering the river, oxygen for life). What happens when the oak is cut down or when toxic chemicals are dumped on soil or in the river? etc.

Animal Parts: Each kid plays the role of one part of an animal (e.g. legs, tail, mouth, body). Assemble the "animal" from several kids and ask the animal to do things.

Animal Guessing Game: Hang a placard depicting an animal on the back of each kid. He or she must determine the identification of the animal by asking other kids questions with yes or no answers .

Noah's Ark: Write the name of each animal on 2 cards. There should be as many cards as there are players (if an odd #, you may need 3 cards for one animal). Shuffle and distribute the cards. The "animals" keep their identities secret. At a signal, each animal acts out the shapes, sounds and movements that characterize it. Each must attract the "mate" of that species. Or.

What Animal Am I? Each kid assumes the identity of an animal. Identify based on movements and sounds.