

ENCHANTED FOREST OUTLINE

Class length:

To be in conjunction with nature journaling - can be its own class if desired

Class size:

Up to 20-25 participants

Class Location:

Sensory garden start

Goals: To isolate 5 senses: hearing, smelling, taste, touch & sight; to experience the outdoors

Taste

Materials: Taste-mint, wintergreen, garlic, wild onion, pine, rosehips, autumn olive, wood sorrel, berries, sumac (depending on the space and location)

Activity: Have the students put blindfolds on, teacher will then walk by students handing them a small piece of food. Instruct the students not to place the food in the mouth until told to do so. Ask the students what each item is and if there were any other senses that were used to identify it. (May want to bring in items from the outdoors i.e.-berries, etc. depending on what's in season)

Smell

Activity: May want to incorporate with smell section. Go on blindfold hike and see what smells there are, as well as, if they may be able to determine what area they may be in.

May also talk about how seasonal changes will affect what you smell.

Different smells in different areas – example: deciduous forest vs. coniferous forest.

Hearing

Materials: Blindfolds

Activity: Take the students into an open field, have them spread out, then blindfold them. Assign each student an animal & it's corresponding call. Two students should have the same animal. The object is for the students to make their animal calls and try to find their match. Do this in the pskills field or the big field behind the farm.

Another activity may be to go on a nature walk using blindfolds (or without) and determine how many sounds of nature they hear. Do this activity in the sensory garden.

Touch

Materials: Blindfolds, brown paper bags, numbered labels, nature items (fungus, pine needles, pine cones, sand, rocks, walnuts, leaves, cattails, mullein leaves or snakeskin), paper and pencils

Activity: Walk with bags and have each student either blindfolded or with closed eyes, reach into each bag and write down what they may think the object is. After all bags are passed around, go

through each one and ask what they had, then show the group. (Snakeskin is always a fun one!) May want to talk about what object felt like using texture terms (rough, dry, soft, prickly). Go onto trail and designate certain plants to touch – have them feel and explain their experience.

Touch cont...

Materials: Egg cartons with each egg cup marked with - rough, smooth, hard, sharp, etc...

Activity: Group students into smallest groups possible (depends on # of cartons). Take them outdoors and have them find a small object to fill each category. Remind groups not to destroy anything living. Allow approx. 5 minutes. You may want to have groups present their findings out the other groups. Usually that will take around 20 minutes. ONLY items from the ground.

Sight

This needs a name like "eye spy"

Materials: Box with lid, various objects found outdoors (pine needles, pine cones, bark, fungus, moss, flowers, clover, and one piece of garbage), paper and pencils

Activity: Have each student come look into the box for 5 seconds than write down everything they saw. After everyone is through try to empty the box as they tell you what's in it. Talk about the items they may have missed, as well as, why (not knowing what they are). Ask why the garbage was in there and how much it stood out from the rest of the items. What does it tell about the forest it was found in.

"Worms, of the woolly sort"

Materials: 3" long pipe cleaners of various colors, wrap around leaves, logs, and other conspicuous places, behind Barnett. OR preserved woolly bears (caterpillars collected in the winter).

Activity: Give students approximately 10 minutes to find as many "worms" as they can hidden in the forest. There are approx. 50 but do not tell them. After, you may want to talk about camouflage, which worms were easy to see, which were not. Why? Also, during what seasons would what colors be more visible? Less visible?

Why are worms – especially earthworms – important? Fertility for the soil, decomposers – they break down matter and dead material

Why are caterpillars important? Pollinate plants and are a food source for other animals and insects

"Blindfold Walk"

Materials: Rope tied through small stand of trees (sensory garden forest bath path is a good one, or somewhere near there)

Activity: Blindfold the students and walk each over to the start of the trail. Have them place one hand on the rope and the other in front of their face. Have them walk slowly through trail until the end. Talk about what senses they used to get through it. This activity takes approx. 30 minutes for a group of 15. You may just do a blindfold walk instead.
Check out Nature with Children activities regarding this activity.