

Nature Games and Activities



Here are a few ideas to for some games to play in your garden or when out and about.

Foxes and Rabbits (or Sharks and Seals or Owls and Mice or...) (A tag game)

Nominate someone as 'it' and lay out some hoops, or circle shapes in rope. These are safe places (i.e. rabbit holes, islands, etc.). The child who is 'it' is a Predator (i.e. fox, shark, owl, etc.). Everyone else is Prey (i.e. rabbit, seal, mouse, etc.) and the prey have to run around OUTSIDE the safe places UNTIL the predator calls out 'I'M HUNGRY'. At this point all the prey must run for safety and if the predator catches them before they reach the safe areas then they are 'eaten' and become a predator as well. Continue the game until everyone has been caught and become a predator at which point the last person to be caught becomes 'it' and the game begins again.

Sparrowhawks and Finches (a game demonstrating habitat destruction)

This game is a little like musical chairs. Lay a long rope on the ground in a roughly circular shape (you may need several metres, depending on how many children have to fit in); this represents a woodland. All the children are small birds, such as finches, and are feeding on seeds in the fields around the OUTSIDE of the 'woodland'. On a call of 'sparrowhawk' all the small birds have to try to hide in the wood safely away from being caught and eaten. If a player doesn't get inside the rope outline within 5 seconds, they have been eaten by the sparrowhawk and will have to leave the game! (This game is about helping each other to survive so tell the children that if it all gets TOO silly the game will be stopped!) Play this for a couple of goes, and then announce 'The woodland has had some trees cut down at one end' and gradually make the shape smaller...and smaller... Keep playing! After each round, announce that more of the wood is being destroyed to build various kinds of new development. As it gets smaller fewer and fewer finches will be able to take refuge inside. Eventually there will be no wood left and the small birds will have nowhere to hide any more.

Habitat loss is very sad. This activity can be used to promote discussion about the effects of development and ways to make room for nature.

Bat and Moth (a form of Blind Man's Bluff)

If there are lots of children, ask them to form a circle about 15 feet across on smooth, level ground with no obstacles or trip hazards. One child is then blindfolded; that child is the Bat. Choose 3 or 4 other children to come into the circle: they are the Moths. The bat must try to catch the moths. The bat calls out 'Bat' and the moths have to call back 'Moth' – this is the bat using his echo location to detect where his food is! A real bat sends out a sound and when it bounces off his food and comes back to him this tells him where his meal is located. In the game, once the 'Bat' catches a 'Moth' that child then becomes the new Bat and the game starts again with a new team of Moths. If there are only a few children then everyone can join in.

Group Animal

A team of 5 or 6 children has to 'become' an animal. They have to act together as a group to make the shape of the animal and mime the way it moves. Everyone else has to guess what animal the group is portraying. Either the group can decide what animal they are representing themselves, or they can be given a card with an animal on it. Allow the group some practice time before they 'perform' for the others!

What Animal am I?

On a hat, blindfold or the back of a chosen child stick a picture of an animal. Don't let him/her see the picture but have them turn around so that everyone else can see it. Then he/she has to ask questions to try to find out what animal they are. The other children can only answer 'yes', 'no', or 'maybe' but must be truthful! Once the animal is correctly guessed, the 'guesser' can nominate a new player, and so on.

Sleeping Miser

Choose one person to be the Sleeping Miser. The miser wears a blindfold and sits on the ground, guarding an object of treasure in front of him/her (this can be anything you want such as a feather, a conker, a stick, a hat). Make sure that the miser sits in an area of ground where walkers will make some noise as they approach (like gravel or crunchy leaves). Everyone else is a stalker. The stalkers make a ring around the miser, about 20 feet away. They have to try to creep up on the miser and 'steal' the treasure by touching it. BUT if the miser hears them approaching and he points in their direction they have to go back to where they started again.

When a player has successfully touched the treasure, send them to wait quietly at the edge and let the others finish their game. The first person to touch the treasure will become the miser in the next game, and so on.

A Camouflage Game

Hide about 20 different objects out of doors, over a fairly small area, so that some blend in to the background and others are really obvious. Ask the children to spot as many of the objects as possible and make a list.

When the children think all the objects have been found ask them to hand in their list. If they have missed any tell the children there are still more hidden that they have not yet found and get them to search again.

When all the objects have been found, talk about which were the easiest and which were the hardest objects to find and why. This can lead to a talk about colour and camouflage in nature. You can also change this around for younger groups by giving them a list of things to look for.

Match the Colour

Make up some coloured pieces of card (using cut-up paint sample cards is a good idea). Give each child several pieces in different colours and ask them to match those colours as closely as they can from the things they can see in their surroundings.

Counting the Sounds of Nature

(A calm, quiet activity which is very useful to end a session)

Everybody sits or stands in a circle and closes their eyes for a timed minute or two.

Each time a bird sound is heard they raise a finger to count it. (This game can also be done for other sorts of natural sounds!) When the time is up, see who heard what. (Note: there is no right or wrong to this, it's just a quiet activity to get everyone to 'tune in' and concentrate on natural sounds in general.)

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