

## Sensory Walks

### **Listening**

#### **Echo that sound**

Practice copying the sounds you hear outside. Cats, dogs, gulls, sheep, cows, frogs, bees, mosquitoes, cars, etc. It can be a lot of fun. Who let the dogs out? Woof, woof! Woof-woof! Who let the bees out? Buzz, buzz! Buzz-buzz! The more realistic you get the better. This can be rowdy!

#### **Sound records**

If you have digital sound recorders then let children use them to record sounds outside. After each sound, ask "What is it?" Leave a 6 second pause and then say the answer. This way you have a ready-made quiz for playing back as a reminder of your trip. Children will need to be taught how to use the digital recorders prior to going outside.

#### **Magic Sounds**

Each child goes to their magic spot. Sit quietly and listen for the sounds. Draw or write what you hear in front of you, behind you, to your left and to your right. Use card and pencils. This can be re-done neatly indoors as a follow-up activity as a reminder of the sounds heard.

#### **Owl ears**

Get your children to pretend they are scooping up water using their hands as pretend cups. Ask them to tip out the water and then put the "cups" behind their ears and listen. Cupped ears collect sound like satellite dishes on the side of your head. This is how owls, rabbits and deer hear.

#### **If any child discovers a snail or slug...**

Encourage the children to leave it on the ground and hum to it. Experiment with different pitches. At the correct pitch, the creature will uncurl, stretch its antennae and start moving.

#### **A Natural Orchestra**

- 1) Each person should go and find some natural objects to make a sound, e.g. 2 sticks to clack together or 2 stones to chink together or a handful of dry leaves to rub together. The children should walk about and play their object whilst seeing and listening to others.
- 2) Get into a circle. Go around the group demonstrating everyone's instruments.
- 3) Sing a simple song. Everyone should try and keep the beat.
- 4) Sort the group into a simple orchestra by their instruments. For example the stones might be in one group, sticks in another, leaves in another, etc.

The orchestra plays with the teacher as the conductor, giving the instructions visually, e.g. raising hand for a louder sound, lowering hand for a quieter sound, stop hand for a group to stop.

## **Seeing**

### **A game to test memory and observation**

Resources A piece of material for covering objects, and some natural objects picked up along the way.

Whilst out playing games or on a walk, pick up some natural things, hopefully without anyone noticing! Fold the material and place the objects between the two layers. Then ask everyone to gather round. Tell them that under the material you have ten (or however many) objects that you want them to find exact copies of. BUT, they will only have a few seconds to look at and remember all the objects before they're covered over again. Uncover the objects for 10 seconds (more or less!) and go through all the objects on the material, giving a short description of each one. Then cover them up. The children will run off, searching for their own objects. Every so often, remind them how many objects they are looking for. After about 5 minutes, call them back and go through all the objects one by one - telling another amazing fact or story about each one. Ask who found an item like it. Afterwards, ask if everyone knew what all the objects were, or if they had learned about any new objects.

## **Smelling**

### **Go for a smelly walk**

Go for a smelly walk outside in a park or garden in the garden smell herbs, flowers, compost, cut grass, the dampness after a rain shower, the smoke of a bonfire or barbecue.

## **Touch**

### **Feely bags**

Resources: 5 or 6 drawstring bags / opaque bags.

The children should be divided into teams of about five. Each team then has the challenge of finding something to put into the bag, which the other groups have to identify by feeling the object inside the bag. They can either be given a free choice, or each group can be told to find a different texture, e.g. rough, smooth, tickly, prickly, furry or crumbly. Obviously, be careful to tell children *not* to pick up anything unhygienic or things that might be painful, such as nettles.

### **Feeling cards**

Resources: Enough cards for each person / pair with different textures stuck to them

Prepare a set of cards, using double-sided sticky tape and sticking on various materials with different textures. E.g. velvet, crushed paper, smooth paper, sandpaper, fur, etc. Explain to the children that they will be given a card with a texture on it. They have to feel the texture, describe it and then feel the natural objects about them to find objects with the same texture as on their card. Encourage them to feel their objects gently with their hands or face, not

pick them or squash them! See how many they can find of their own texture, then swap with someone else and see how many of that texture they can find.

Afterwards, they could each choose one particular object from each texture they have felt, to take back inside and make into a group 'texture' collage. People could then explore this collage with their hands, and with their eyes shut. A step on from this could be to develop a 'story', illustrated with textures, so that people could 'read' it with their eyes closed.

### **Meet a tree**

Resources: Enough blindfolds for half the group

This activity links the two senses of touch and sight together, relating what we can touch to what that looks like. This encourages us to use more than just our eyes in making sense of our surroundings. It also makes the point that woodlands are made up of a collection of separate, unique trees. This is a game of trust and responsibility.

Children are matched up into pairs. Each pair is given a blindfold. One child should be blindfolded, the other is the guide. The guide should lead their partner to any tree that they think looks interesting, making sure to guide them around any obstacles on the way (including brambles and nettles). They should then help the blindfolded child to explore their tree and to feel its individuality. Children can be encouraged to do this by suggestions such as 'Try feeling the bark with your cheek', 'Can you put your arms around your tree?', 'Is there only one trunk?', 'Are there other plants growing on it?' etc. When the blindfolded child has finished exploring, they should be led back to where they started by taking an indirect route. Now the blindfold is removed and they have to try to find *their* tree with their eyes open. Once they have found their tree, the partners swap roles.

---

**The Gatton Trust Ltd. Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0TW**

Registered Charity 1063964 Company Number 4216691

Tel: 01737 649066, Fax: 01737 649067 education@gatton-park.org.uk www.gattonpark.com  
London Schools Project

Sponsored by JP Morgan, CLA Charitable Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation and The Goldmith's Company