

Nature Parade

by Nikki Samuels

Outdoor Activity Guide for Teachers & Parents



14 hands-on activities with open-ended questions for
encouraging play and exploration in nature

Preschool - 1st Grade

Shadow Play

What is a shadow? Can you use your body to make a shadow? Look for a flat surface (like a sidewalk or driveway) and position your body till it makes a shadow on the ground. Choose a fun position to hold then have a friend trace your shadow! What other objects can you use to make shadows? Can you make different shapes with them? What other things can you create?

What You'll Need:

- chalk
- paper and drawing materials (such as charcoal, markers, crayons, etc.)

What You'll Need:

- sticks
- tape
- scissors
- ribbon/string

Wind Wand

Wind wands can be used for dancing, creative play, and telling what direction the wind is blowing! Cut strands of ribbon that are similar lengths (1-6 will do). Then, tie each strand to one end of a stick using knots or tape to secure them. Hold your wand to the wind and watch the ribbons blow! What direction are they blowing? If it's calm out, can you make your own wind?

Leaf Hunt



Look up, down, and all around. Do you see any leaves? How many can you find? Search for different sizes, shapes, textures, and colors. Can you guess what type of tree or plant each leaf belongs to? What clues can help you figure it out? How many different colors can you find? Which leaf is the largest? Which is the smallest? Are any of the leaves crunchy?

What You'll Need:

- basket or bag for collecting
- color wheel (if desired)



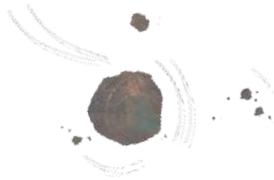
Nature Instrument

What You'll Need:

- natural objects
- household objects (such as cans, boxes, bottles, etc.)
- scissors/tape/glue

Can you create a musical instrument from nature? Think about the sounds you heard in "Nature Parade". What made those sounds? Search for objects outside that YOU can use to make a sound. Now think about instruments that you know...can you use any of your objects to create an instrument? What other things could you use to help make an instrument?

Rock Collection



Rocks can be bumpy, smooth, large, small, and even different colors! How many different types of rocks can you find outside? Look closely at each of your rocks. Are any of them the same color? The same shape? What differences do you notice? Which rock is your favorite? What are some ways you can sort your rocks? Can you build anything with them?

What You'll Need:

- rocks
- basket for collecting
- egg cartons for sorting

What You'll Need:

- rain boots
- measuring tool (ruler, measuring tape, etc.)
- natural objects

Puddle Hunt

Is it raining? Is the snow melting? Look outside to see how many puddles you can find! Where are you finding them? Why do you think that is? Try tossing an object (like a rock, stick, or leaf) into each puddle. What happens to them? What happens when YOU jump in the puddle? Using a measuring tool, see how deep each puddle is. Which is the deepest? Which is the shallowest?

Mud Paint



Let's make paint...with mud! Mix together dirt and water till you get a paint-like consistency. Fill a few bowls with different variations of your paint (thick and chunky, thin and watery, etc.). Choose what tools you want to paint with. Then, using a surface of your choice (such as a concrete wall, rock, or paper) start painting! Have you tried painting with your hands? What does it feel like?

What You'll Need:

- paint brushes
- food coloring
- paper (if desired)
- buckets/ bowls
- dirt and water

What You'll Need:

- plastic bottle
- scissors & tape
- permanent marker
- ruler
- pebbles

Rain Gauge

Take a plastic bottle and cut the top off with scissors. Place one end of a ruler on the bottom of the bottle and mark each measurement using a permanent marker. Then, place a few pebbles at the bottom of the bottle to keep it weighted. Invert the top of the bottle you cut off in the beginning into the bottom portion. Now, think about where you will put it to collect rain!

Listening Spot



Choose a spot outside and find a comfortable position to rest in. Close your eyes. What do you hear? How many different sounds do you hear? What do you think is making each sound? How do the sounds make you feel? Open your eyes and write/draw about what you heard and felt. Return to this special spot another day. Do you hear the same sounds? Do you hear any new sounds?

What You'll Need:

- clipboard
- paper or journal
- writing and drawing tools

Imaginary Stick

What You'll Need:

- sticks
- basket for collecting
- twine

Sticks come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. How many different types of sticks can you find? Can you find a skinny stick? A fat stick? A bumpy stick? A smooth stick? A curved stick? A stick that is taller than you? A stick that fits inside your hand? See what you can make with the sticks you've found. Will you build with them? Create a game? Or imagine they are something else?

Bug Boogie



How many different bugs can you name? Search for bugs outside and watch how they move. Did you find any new ones? Do they move the same or differently? Write or draw about the bugs you observed. Can YOU move your body like a bug? See if you can jump like a grasshopper! Can you slide like a slug? Try crawling like a centipede. Can you flap your wings like a butterfly?

What You'll Need:

- paper/journal
- writing and drawing tools
- magnifying glass (if desired)



Nature Detective

What You'll Need:

- Copy of "Nature Parade"
- magnifying glass (if desired)

"Nature Parade" is filled with beautiful illustrations from nature. Can you find all ten birds on the cover of the book? How many mushrooms can you find in the story? Can you find all three times the grasshopper appears? The bee appears four times, can you find them all? Now, see what you can find outside in your own backyard! Do you see any of the same things?

Name: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Bird



Bird



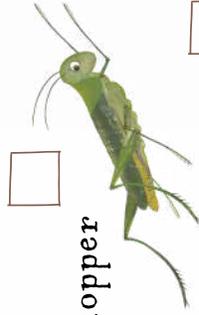
Bee



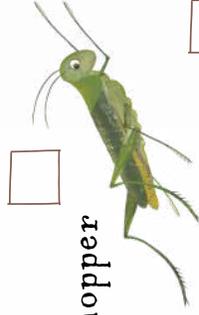
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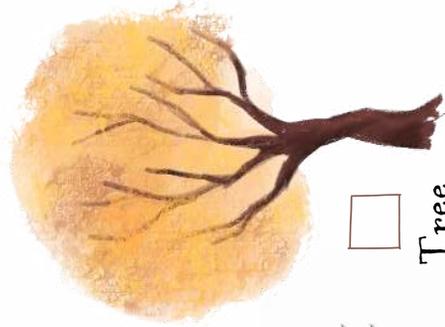
Grasshopper



Grasshopper



Tree



Tree



Flowers



Flowers



Leaf



Leaf



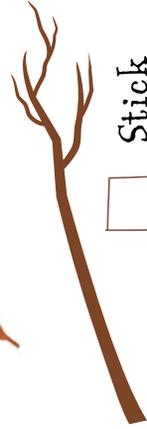
Rock



Rock



Stick



Stick



Name: _____

Scavenger Hunt

Bird



Bird



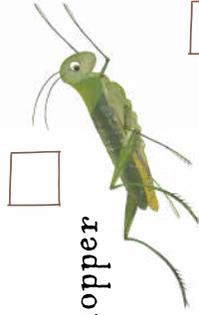
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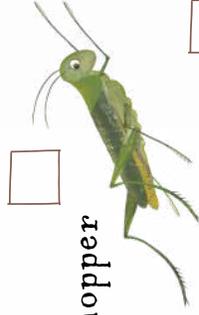
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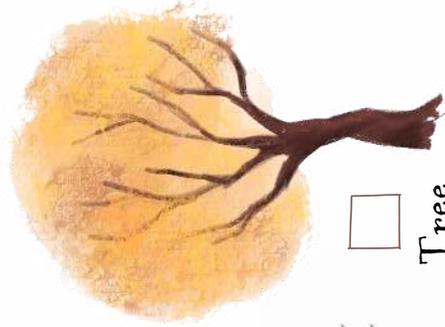
Grasshopper



Grasshopper



Tree



Tree



Flowers



Flowers



Leaf



Leaf



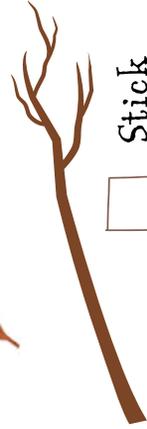
Rock



Rock



Stick



Stick

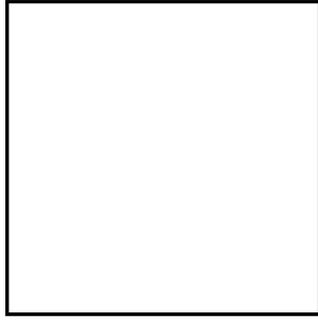


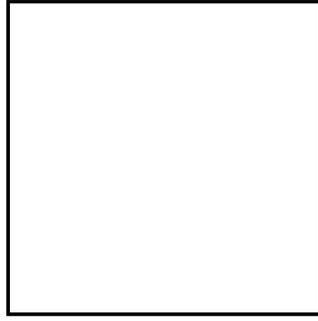
Create Your Own!

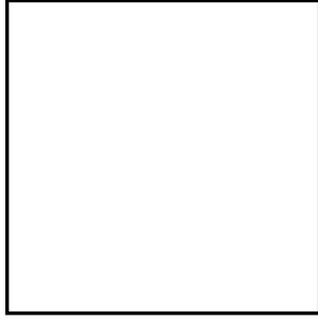
Name: _____

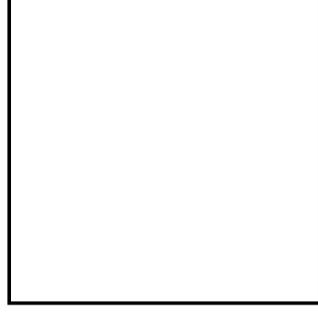
Scavenger Hunt

Draw a picture of your favorite outdoor discoveries in each box and write its name below. Share with a friend to see if they can find them all!









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Scavenger Hunt

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