

Outdoor teaching

How to work with detecting, discovering and experience nature

Some general advices which will make the outdoor teaching day a success.

A very good start of the day that makes the group calm and concentrated is to make a listening exercise. Make sure everyone is sitting dry and comfortable. Tell everyone to sit absolutely still with their eyes closed and ask them to find out what kind of sounds they can hear. Do this for about one minute. (Perhaps 30 seconds will be enough for the first time you try this with your group).

Ask what they have heard – let everyone who wants tell about their experience. Discuss the different sounds. Perhaps you can tell something interesting or something odd about what have caused the different sounds? Why did you pay attention to them now? Has anybody experienced absolute silence?

Tell the group about “The Mission of the Day”. It could be to examine a square meter in the wood. What is growing there? Who are living there? Can you find traces of some animals? It is very important to limit their search area. Use ribbons or something like while. Give each and all plastic cans to catch small bugs and other creatures in.

Finish the exercise by looking at the catch, use looking glass or loupe, and talk about who is food for whom and who is eating whom. Show some spectacular animals using a loupe. Have you looked a spider in its eyes magnified eight times? Let all the animals free afterwards.

Time for lunch. Find a nice place where you can spot the whole group. Perhaps you can do some outdoor cooking or just grill some sausages over an open fire?

Time to play! Have you tried the “Sardine can”? One person hides in a good place, all the others search for her/him. When one of the search team finds the hidden person she/he looks around, and when nobody sees she/he creeps down and hides beside the hidden person. After a while there are a lot of persons lying close together and a few still searching around. That’s why the name of the game! It is important to limit the area for a game like this!. You don’t want to loose someone in the wood!

You can also make a “Nature Memory” Collect different objects that everyone can find in the close surroundings. It could be a white stone, a yellow flower and so on. Put the different things in a square net made of branches and cover it. Bring the group together around the Memory, let them work two or three together, uncover for say 15 seconds, cover again and let the small groups make their own Memories.

You don’t need to travel far to find a good place for an outdoor day. A park will do fine!