



Fantastic Forests

Meet a Tree

Ask the children to get into pairs. One person in each pair will be the seeing one, and the other will wear one of the blindfolds.

The seeing one guides their blind partner to a tree – carefully and safely, with hands outstretched, so that hands meet the tree first, and not heads! The blind person is encouraged to ‘meet’ the tree and get to know it, by feeling it with their hands (is it rough, smooth, mossy?), reaching up (can they feel any branches?), reaching down (can they feel any roots?), putting their hands or arms around it (can they reach all the way round?).

The seeing one then takes the blind one back to the starting place, turns them around three times and removes the blindfold. The one who was blindfolded then tries to find the tree that they met – checking it is the right one by feeling it again.

The pair then swap roles.

Tree ID

Use the tree identification guides to help you find the name of some of the trees around you.

Each tree species has its own distinctive leaf shape, bark and twigs, buds and crown shape (the top of the tree).

Discuss as a group the things that all trees do for us, and why they are so important.

Explain that when trees are fully grown (about 60 years for conifers, but sometimes more than 150 years for broadleaves such as oak), they are ready to be felled or cut down for timber. Wood is a really useful material. How many things can the children think of that are made from wood? All the trees that are cut down in our forests are replaced. This makes the way that we look after our forests sustainable.

Discuss with the children the four things that a tree needs to grow to maturity (sunlight, air, water and soil).

Tree words

Coniferous – trees with cones and needles e.g. Scots pine, Douglas fir; usually evergreen

Broadleaf – trees with broad flat leaves e.g. oak, silver birch; usually deciduous

Evergreen – trees which keep their leaves all year round; mostly conifers (but not all e.g. holly is evergreen, but not a conifer)

Deciduous – trees which lose their leaves in autumn; mostly broadleaves (but not all e.g. larch is a deciduous conifer)

Tree Parts: Forest Floor Art

Stand in a circle and clear a space in the centre on the forest floor. Explain that you are going to make a large picture of a tree on the ground. You will need natural materials to create the trunk, leaves etc.

First ask the children to collect large sticks and fallen bark to make the trunk. They will need to place these in the cleared space in the centre of the circle and then stand back around it.

Next, ask them to collect smaller sticks for the branches and roots, and then repeat this, collecting different things each time eg. seeds, leaves etc.

Why does the tree need all its parts? What do they all do? Read the laminated tree part cards with the children and then decide where to place them on the tree floor art.

Discuss what these tree parts tell you about the time of year, and what season it is, e.g. are there leaves on the trees and what colour are they? Did you find any tree flowers, seeds or fruits?

Shrinking Forest Game

This is a great active game to demonstrate the importance of trees and the forest habitat and what would happen if trees were cut down and not replaced.

See separate sheet for instructions.