

Forest School Activities - 4/5/20

I have put together a few easy activities that you can do either in your garden, out on a walk around the streets or if you can get out into the country or woods. They should only need either items that you can collect, see with your eyes, have around the home and your imaginations.

A note on safety - at Forest School one of the most important 'rules' that we teach the children from day one is 'No pick, no lick'. This means that we only use natural items that have fallen from trees or plants rather than picking from them when they are growing (the exception to this may be if you have a garden and you are happy for them to take a few flowers or leaves you might choose to do this). It also means that we never put anything in our mouths, including fingers. We always wash our hands when we have finished-we are all experts at this now anyway! I would also advise that if you do not know what something is then leave it alone, we tell the children that they should always check with an adult if they are not sure when collecting natural items and we never touch mushrooms, fungi or berries.

Activity 1 - Nature's Colour Pallet



This is a great activity to do whilst on a walk, but it can be done at home in the garden as well. You will need:

- Pot or bag for collecting or card with double sided sticky tape on it.

Collect as many different natural items and arrange them by colour, even if you can only find leaves it is amazing how many different types of green you can find. At this time of year, you may still find blossom and there are lots of other flowers and leaves making an appearance.

If you have double sided sticky tape then you can put a strip onto a piece of card or cut out an artist's pallet shape, however you can also collect the items and then arrange them onto a piece of card or paper as above.

This is good for encouraging children to look carefully at the world around them and to see the subtle details that we often miss, we find that they enjoy making patterns with what they find. It also leads to discussions about what they have found and can be extended by identifying the items.

The Woodland Trust has a good range of identification resources:

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/tree-id-kids/>

Activity 2 - Stick Raft

This one might be good to try if it rains this week or you could launch it in a bowl or sink.

You will need:

- 8 or more sticks or pencils-they need to be wood pencils.
- 2 x 70cm lengths of wool or string.
- Blue tack or tape.
- Feather or paper to make a sail.
- Scissors.

1. Find your sticks or pencils and line them up on a flat surface.
2. Fold the string in half and tie a double knot around the first pencil. Add the second pencil and tie a double knot around this. Keep adding pencils and wrapping and tying the string around the pencils. The children are quite proficient at tying knots as this is a skill we use regularly at forest school.
3. Repeat with the other end of the pencils until you have made the base of your raft.
4. Make a sail from paper or a feather and attach to the middle of the raft with tape or blutack.
5. Launch your raft on some water with adult supervision!

We would love to see photos of any rafts that you make at home!



Activity 3 – Natural Mandala

This is a good activity if you like being creative!

What you will need:

- Natural materials
- Chalk or sticks to mark out your mandala.
- Floor or table area.



The idea is to create a circular pattern using natural materials that you can find either in your garden or out on a walk. They usually have a pattern but it is really a creative activity so it is really interesting to let your children explore. If you have chalk available you could draw out some circles as a guide or you could just use some of the items collected to make an outline and go from there. If you are unable to get outside then this works just as well with items from within the house, for example, coloured Lego bricks, toys, pencils-use your imagination!

Activity 4 – Fishing Rods/Wands

There is not a day that goes by at Forest School that someone doesn't use a stick to make either a fishing rod or a wand! There are many things that you can do with sticks, it's just a case of using your imagination!

What you will need:

- A stick - ask the children how they will measure the stick to see if it is a good length for playing/making with - they should be able to show you using their arms as a measurement!
- String or wool.
- A leaf or smaller twig to tie to the end.

I haven't put instructions for this activity because I am sure that your children will want to show you how to make it but they may need help tying the string-any knot will do!

Here is a link to the National Trust website-they have some more fun ideas to do with sticks!

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/no-12-have-fun-with-sticks>

Activity 5 – Magic Potions

This is a lovely sensory activity that can also lead to some verbal instructions. If you are unable to use things from outside then this can be done with spices and herbs from your cupboard (not chilli) but it can be messy so be prepared!

What you will need:

- Water
- Herbs, flowers, mud, sticks or herbs and spices from the kitchen cupboard.
- Pots, old bowl or a mug
- Something to stir with (sticks work well)

The challenge is to invent a magic potion using water and some ingredients that you have found together. They need to think about how much of each ingredient they have added and how they have mixed it. The potion also needs a name that describes the magic that it does.

When they have finished they can tell you all about what they have made, for example:

First I put 2 pieces of grass in.

Then I added 3 leaves.

Next I put a spoon of soil.

Finally I stirred it 4 times.

My potion is called Because it

Note: Please remind them about NO PICK NO LICK with this task!