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Storytelling with Shawn

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Stories, Songs and Games for the Trail



The Importance of Children in Nature

- Allows children to look at the natural environment for the first time
- Allows children to have a new found respect for the nature
- Allows children to develop stories about nature
- Allows children to love and respect animals, birds, and insects
- Allows children to learn about new settings to draw, write or tell about

How To Learn A Story

- Do Not Memorize the Story
- Find a way to Learn the Story
- Practice, Practice, Practice

How To Tell A Story

- Change your voice
- Sound effects
- Pantomiming
- Sign Language
- Look at your audience

Stories for the Trail

- The Tortoise and the Hare
- Grandmother Spider Brings the Light
 - The Boy and the Rattlesnake
 - Jack and the Magic Beans
 - A Dark, Dark Story
 - Abi Yo Yo
 - Music Charmed the Pirates
- The Three Bully Goats Gruff
 - The Three Little Pigs
 - The Tale of Two Frogs
 - The Little Red House

Story Reading (Books)

- Where the Wild Things Are
- The Paper Bag Princess

Songs and Chants

- The Finger Band
- Five Little Pumpkins
- Way Up High in the Apple Tree
 - Dinosaur Rap
 - 5 Giant Snowmen
 - Little Boy Blue
 - Jack Be Nimble

Games

Pigs Fly:

The children should stand in a group facing the leader. Each child should have enough room to make full "flapping" movements with their arms. The leader calls out "Ducks Fly", "Owls Fly", "Pigs Fly"...and so on. If the animal that is called out really does fly, the children should continue flapping their "wings". If the animal is one that does not fly, then the children should stop flapping.

Camouflage:

This game is very simple; you need no supplies, just bodies. One person has the "Camouflage"; this is kind of like being "it". The person with Camouflage calls out "CAMOUFLAGE!!!!" so everyone can hear it. Once it is called they close their eyes, and count to ten. From this point on they cannot move their feet.

Everyone scatters and has 10 seconds to find a suitable hiding place, the ideal hiding place is one where they can see the person with the Camouflage but is hiding from the one who is "it". Once the one who is "it" has finished counting, they still are unable to move their feet, and they have to (using their hands) hold up a sign (ex. pinky up, ring finger down, middle finger up, index finger up, thumb down) they must hold up the sign

for 15-30 seconds, during this time they may twist at the waist, but not moving their feet, and call out people who they see and their hiding spots. Once the 30 seconds are up, the one who is "it" calls out "Show yourselves" those who are left undiscovered come out and the first to show the correct sign then gains the camouflage. Which can be used at anytime!

Flash Flood:

During a hike, have a teacher yell flash Flood. All the children are told that a raging flash flood is coming through the forest and all the animals have to escape. So the children take on the roles of the animals. The teacher counts to 20 and every child has to get above the forest floor. Stepping up on a rock or the roots of a tree. Make sure to have the children not climb up a tree higher than their waist.

You Can't See Me

The object of this game is to allow the players the opportunity to pretend they are animals, trying to hide from Man.

The group walks a given distance down a nature trail, while the leader explains the rules:

- 1) Each player is given time to hide along the trail.
- 2) They may travel no more than 15 feet from either side of the trail
- 3) May use anything in the natural environment to provide camouflage.

The leader waits about five minutes until all players are hidden. He walks the distance of the trail ONCE ONLY, and tries to find as many people as possible.

After his walk, he calls out, and watches to see where all the successful 'animals' hid.

This game can be repeated many times, with different players taking the role of the searcher. It is fun to talk about the hiding places that were the most successful, and how animals might protect themselves from predators.

Owl and Crow

1. Have the children form 2 lines that face each other. It helps to have group of 4 or larger for this game.

2. You are the announcer, and as such you ask true and false questions. These questions can cover all kinds of natural history and outdoor related questions on whatever topic is relevant. For example you might ask, "Do robins eat worms?" or "Are bats blind?" or "Does water run up hill?" and so forth.

3. You do not give the answer immediately; rather you let the children decide if this is a true or false statement. If it is true, the owls chase the crows. If it is false, the crows chase the owls. You do not announce what the answer was until the children have started chasing each other or you can wait until they have returned to the line. Once they are back in line you can give a short description of why it is true or false.

4. If the owls chase the crows, and one of the crows is tagged it becomes an owl and vice versa.

5. The game restarts when all of the players end up on one side of the line, i.e. all crows or all owls.

You as the announcer can make the questions as difficult or easy as you want. If some confusion happens because the kids don't know the answer, and they end up running in the wrong direction this is okay. Making mistakes is a big part of the process of learning.

Outdoor games for children are an excellent teaching tool. Try using these and other outdoor games for children to help encourage kids to maintain and grow their connection to the natural world.

Knee Walkers

This is a relay race with a difference. Children are divided into even groups (let's say two sets of three, for example). The first child in Team 1 is positioned 30 feet from the finish line. The second child is placed 30 feet directly behind them, and the third is placed at the tail, 30 feet behind the middle child. The three children in Team 2 are positioned in the same way, parallel to Team 1, also facing the finish, and also lined up behind each other in a straight line. Here's the catch: all the children conduct the race on their knees. At the signal to start, the children at the back of each team (furthest from the finish line) must walk quickly on their knees (not hands and knees, just knees) up to the child waiting in place directly in front of them. Once they touch them, that child then walks on knees to reach the final child. Once that last child is touched, they take off toward the finish line to complete the race. Because humans aren't designed to walk 'upright' on their knees, attempts at speedy locomotion are usually quite hilarious, both for participants and spectators.

Eagle Eye

This stationary variation of hide and seek is always popular. The 'eagle' is blindfolded, and all the other children must go and hide within a 300-foot radius. Pick a location that offers a variety of good hiding spots. The key rule is this: each hiding child must keep at least one eye on the 'eagle' at all times. They're not allowed to hide their whole body behind big trees, or hunker down unseen behind a boulder. When all the hidiers are in place, the blindfold comes off, and the 'eagle' must remain in the same spot (although they can pivot to look behind them). If their eyesight is as good as an eagle's, they should be able to spot someone soon by a thorough scanning of the area. This game teaches children to look through the forest, rather than just at it, which, incidentally, is often the best way to spot wildlife.

What animal am I?

Pin a picture of an animal on the back of the children in the group. Don't show them the picture. Have them turn around so that all the other children can see what animal they have become. The child then asks questions to discover his own identity. The other children can answer only yes/no and maybe questions.

Giants, Wizards and Elves

Split group up into 2 teams, designate 2 safety zones, one on each teams side, and designate a middle area.

Each team then gets in a huddle and picks what they want to be as a team, a giant, a wizard or an elf.

Giants put their hands up over their heads, wizards put their hands out straight in front of them wiggling their fingers, and elves make pointy ears on their head with their pointer fingers.

Once the teams have decided their character they want to be, they come up to the center spot and line up face to face, then on a count of 3, everyone does whatever action their team picked.

Giants beat elves, elves beat wizards and wizards beat giants, so the team that beats the winning team chases the other and tries to tag as many members on the other team as possible before they reach the safety zone.

The members from the team that get tagged become a part of the other team.

Repeat until all players are on one side.



Activities

- The Unnatural Trail
 - Scavenger Hunt
- Storytelling Nature Prop Boxes
 - Group Story

Book List for Storytelling

Aesop's Fables by Aesop

Eleven Turtle Tales by Pleasant DeSpain

Five Minute Tales by Margaret Read MacDonald

How and Why Stories by Martha Hamilton

Native American Animal Stories by Joseph Bruchac

Ready to Tell Tales by David Holt & Bill Mooney

The Paper Bag Princess by Robert Munch

Three Minute Tales by Margaret Read MacDonald

Thirty-Three Multicultural Tales To Tell by Pleasant DeSpain

Where The Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Web sites

<http://www.rifamiliesinnature.org/resources/games-for-the-trails/>

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/you-can-t-see-me-.html>

<http://scoutermom.com/14534/hiking-activities/>

<http://www.wildernesscollege.com/outdoor-games-for-children.html>

<http://www.muckboots.com/blog/3-awesome-outdoor-nature-games-for-kids/>