

## **Sensory-Based Activities**

## Ant's Eye View / Micro Parks

**Props:** Toothpick flags (see box)  
**Location:** Forest

Tell the students that they have just become park rangers at a very unusual park: the Ant's Eye View National Park. They, as forest rangers, must come up with attractions that visitors to Ant's Eye View would like to see. Have the students look around the area for something that would look like a natural National Monument for an ant. They must be able to explain why it would be interesting to an ant and as a ranger they must explain the details of why it became an attraction at Ant's Eye View.

### Focus

Different perspectives. This activity stresses viewing the natural world up-close and trying to imagine it from a different view other than the one that we normally would use. It encourages the students to be creative in their examination of the world and in the way they interpret the things around them.

### Wrap-up

Does how tall we are change the way we see things? Why or why not?  
How would we humans look to an ant? Why?  
Did you see anything special when you got close to the ground and looked? If so, what?  
How would something like rain change the monuments in Ant's Eye View Park?



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## Camouflage

**Props:** Toothpicks (colored)  
**Location:** Use five different locations: concrete, gravel, grass, pine needles, prairie

Take toothpicks (preferably the colored kind), count out twenty and throw them out into the woods. The students must work together to find all of the toothpicks. Once they have them all brought back, count out forty toothpicks and try again.

### Focus

Natural camouflage. Different plants and animals blend into the background, making them harder to see. This teaches how well certain colors blend in and teach students why some animals can hide better than others. Teamwork skills.

### Wrap-up

Which color was easiest to find? Why?  
Which color the toughest? Why?  
Did you find all of the toothpicks? Why or why not?  
What "background" (dirt, pine needles, etc.) was it easier to see toothpicks on? Why?  
What background was it difficult to find toothpicks on? Why?



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## Hug - A - Tree

**Props:** Blindfolds  
**Location:** Starting near Goliath (recommended)

Divide the class into groups of two and blindfold one of the partners. Have the sighted person lead the blindfolded one to a tree within sight of the Instructor. The person who cannot see is to explore the tree in any way they choose: touch, smell, taste (not recommended), as well as by exploring the ground around the tree. When the person without sight is finished exploring, their partner leads them back to the starting point and removes the blindfold. The person who had the blindfold must now search for their tree based on what clues they gathered when they explored it.

Note: If they are wrong, have their partner show them the tree that they did explore. Also, the route to and from the tree does not have to be straight; students may weave around to try to confuse the blindfolded person.

Switch the blindfold to the next person and begin again.

### Focus

Using other senses to explore the world around us. Sight, for most people, is the primary way in which they experience their world. Depriving a person of sight encourages the development and reliance upon other senses and creates a unique way of exploring something common.

### Wrap-up

Did you find your tree? Why or why not?

Was there one main characteristic that helped you find your tree? What was it?

How hard was it to find your tree? Why?

Would it have been hard for you to find your tree if you could see it? Why or why not?



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## Perspectives

**Props:** Anything  
**Location:** Anywhere

Hold up an object and pass it around the circle. As each child touches the object, they must come up with a short (one-word) description. Each word needs to be different from the others.

### Focus

Different perspectives. This will enable children to realize that everyone looks at objects around them in a unique way. You, as a Facilitator, may be surprised by the answers that are suggested!

### Wrap-up

So, what can we learn from this experience?  
What does it mean that we are all different?  
Why is this important?



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## Scent Canisters

**Props:** Scent Canisters  
**Location:** Anywhere

Remove a scent canister from the bag and hold it up. Explain to the students that they are not allowed to look inside the canister, but must figure out what is in it by what it smells like. Explain to them that the different scents could be good smells or they could be bad. Demonstrate how to waft (wave the scent from the canister to your nose) or lightly smell the scents.

Recommended scents:

Canister A -	Lemon Extract	Canister E -	Pepper
Canister B -	Bleach	Canister F -	Peppermint Extract
Canister C -	Cinnamon	Canister G -	Garlic
Canister D -	Vanilla Extract	Canister H -	Water (Tap)

Once a canister has made its way around the group, ask the group if they can name what the scent was.

### Focus

Using other senses to gather information about the world. Students are encouraged to do more than simply explore the world by what they can see. In fact, while doing this activity, most students have a higher accuracy rate when they close their eyes! (Though that may have more to do with focusing on the activity than focusing on the scent...) 😊

### Wrap-up

What sense did you have to use on this activity? Was it hard having to rely only on being able to smell things? Why or why not? Would it have helped if you could have peeked into the canisters? Why or why not? Do you often use your sense of smell? What is the sense that you use the most? Why?