

# Nature Games

**SQUARE FOOT FIELD TRIP** - Give each girl a piece of string so she can mark off her own square foot of land. Have each girl write down everything within that square foot (different types of plants, leaves, twigs, seeds, etc.). When they are finished, have the girls pair up and describe their areas to each other. They then try to determine which area is their partner's according to the description given. Be sure to pick up the markers when the activity is over. Also, take the time to discuss the variety of things found in the square foot.

**FIND A TREE** - Give her time to "make friends with" the tree. (Feel it, reach high, feel the ground around it, smell it, hug it, etc.) After a few minutes, bring her back to the starting point, remove her blindfold, and let her find her "friend". They are almost always able to find the tree they "saw". Pair girls, blind fold one. The un-blind folded leads her partner to a tree.

**SHARING WALK** – Give each pair of girls a blindfold. One girl puts it on while the other acts as her guide. There should be no verbal communication. The guide leads the other girl to things she wants her to experience (different feelings, smells, temperatures, etc.) After several minutes, let them look at the things they were experiencing. Was it what they thought it was? Then, let the girls change places and start over again.

**PRICKLEY-TICKLEY** – Tell each girl to find a prickly item and a tickly item and not show it to anyone. Have them get into groups of three. One girl should sit with her eyes closed, legs extended, and arms extended with palms facing up. The other two non-verbally share what they found by rubbing it on her arms, hands, cheeks, etc. Give each girl a chance to be giver and receiver.

**ONE-OF-A-KIND** – Give each girl a leaf from the same kind of tree. (This can also be done with apples, oranges, etc.) Allow a few minutes for the girls to get to know their leaf. Then, put all the leaves, plus a few extra, into a pile. Now give the girls time to find their own one-of-a-kind leaf.

**WEB OF LIFE** – Each girl is given a card naming a member of the "Web of Life". (Sun, plants, air, water, mosquito, grasshopper, fish, bean, human, fox, mouse, snake, etc.) One girl starts the string by sending it to one of the members she needs to survive (or, in some cases, by sending it to a member that she helps to survive). Then, that person holds one end of the string and passes the other end to someone she needs to survive. This continues until everyone has some string and/or the string runs out. Discuss the web. Can we do without any one thing in the web? What would happen to the balance of nature if we took one thing out?



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**CREATIVE EXPRESSION** – Go to a quiet spot and give each girl some paper, a pencil, and some crayon. Give them time to express the way they feel in the situation. (Spread them out so they aren't all sitting together.) They can express themselves through poetry, a song, a drawing, etc. A haiku is a Japanese form of poetry often used on some subject in nature. It is done in three lines. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven, and the third has five.

Example:        Spider on the branch  
                    Busily spinning its web  
                    A net to catch food

**WATER GAME** – On really hot days it's great to have an excuse to get wet. For this game, put a large bucket of water in the middle of a circle of girls. One girl is also in the middle with a cup or a dipper of some sort. She thinks of one thing in a specific category (such as trees, birds, insects, flowers, etc.). The girls in the circle each get a turn at guessing of what she is thinking. The girl who guesses right gets splashed with a cupful of water. Then, it's her turn to take the middle position.

**FOXES AND RABBITS** – Divide the group into foxes, rabbits, and leaves. Give each rabbit a tail (a piece of cloth). The foxes form a large circle with rabbits inside and leaves outside. At the "go" signal, the rabbits try to tag the leaves (the leaves can't move), and the foxes try to pull the rabbits' tails. When a fox catches a rabbit, the rabbit becomes a fox. If a rabbit gets a leaf, the leaf becomes a rabbit. If a rabbit doesn't get a leaf by the end of a round, she dies and becomes a leaf. If a fox doesn't get a rabbit by the end of a round, she dies and becomes a leaf. After the game, get into a sharing circle and discuss the food cycle.

**"MAGIC" TO ADD TO WALKS** – Have everyone lie down in a circle with their heads in the middle (like the spokes of a wheel) and just listen for awhile. Pass interesting objects back to share. Focus in on things. Make "magic windows" with thumb and forefinger. Make a telephone lens using cardboard tubes from toilet paper or paper towels.

**UNNATURE TRAIL** – Take 12-16 objects that don't belong in nature and place them along a path. Examples of objects would be a cup, a twist tie off a bread wrapper, a comb or brush, a gum wrapper, a broom, etc. Try to place them so that they blend in as much as possible, but are still visible. Have participants' line up at the beginning of the trail. Start each person along the trail so that they are walking about 10 feet behind the person ahead of them. Participants should count to themselves as they spy the objects that don't belong. Warn them not to point or show that they have seen something! After everyone has reached the end of the trail, ask how many things they saw. Then tell them how many objects there were and point them out. Suggestion: In order to make this activity meaningful to a Girl Scout troop, use objects that might be left behind after a camp out. Talk about what it means to "leave no trace."



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**FRAMING** – Take an index card and tear out a small hole in the middle. Save the piece in the middle (about ½” square). Now hold the card up to your eye so you can look through the hole. What do you see when you look at something far away? Scan the area around you and find your favorite “picture.” Now take a close up picture of something really close to you. What do you see? Try putting something behind the close up object (a jacket or piece of cloth, or a person). What happens to the “picture?”

**GROUP POEM** – On an index card, write down one sentence that describes your feelings, thoughts, and impressions about the outdoor experience you’ve just had. Have one person collect all of the cards and shuffle them. Then read one card right after the other to create the poem. (Or for older children, go around the circle and have each person read their own card.)

**COLOR SWATCHES** – Cut small squares of construction paper and hook them together (or paint chips would also work). Give each person a set of color swatches to use during the walk. They should try to find something in nature that matches the colors they have in their hand. After the walk, talk about what each person found for the different colors.

**USING THE SENSE OF SMELL** – Have everyone in the group put on a blindfold (or have one-person blind folded at a time while the rest of the group waits outside). See if they can recognize certain items by smell only. Good materials include coffee, lemon, onion, vanilla, tea, vinegar, cheese, chocolate, leather, mint, garlic, sage, soil, cinnamon, mustard and soap. This activity can lead into the Odors in Nature activity (next paragraph).

**ODORS IN NATURE** – Divide the group into teams. Give them five minutes to go outside and find as many odors as possible. Nearly everything, including soil, has an odor. Some possible odors they may find: Smell of rain, Wood decomposing (rotting), Plants – mints (always have a square stem); wild sage (smells like sage in Thanksgiving turkey), Stagnant water, Soil, Animal decomposing, Trash left behind, etc.

**BACK TO BACK** – Divide the group into pairs and have them sit back to back. One person will be responsible for describing an object given to them while the other person tries to draw it, based on what they’re being told. Several variations are possible: one would be to allow only the person giving the description to speak; another would be to allow the person drawing to ask questions about the object.



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**ONE HUNDRED INCH WALK** – Assign each group of two or three participants a plot of land about 100” square (10” x 10”). Have them spend at least 10 minutes doing an intensive exploration and writing down what they found in their 100” area. Try to pick an area that will have a variety of conditions (anthill, plant variety, a tree, etc.)

**HAIKU** – This is a Japanese poem that is written like this:

Pick one word for a subject for your poem: For example:

TREES

Write 2 words to describe the subject:

TALL, STRONG

Write 3 action words about it:

SIMMERS, BENDS, SIGHS

Write a 4-5 word phrase about it:

A HOME FOR ANIMALS

Write one word that sums up the thought:

BEAUTIFUL

**MEMORY CIRCLE** – Objective: Girls will increase their listening and memory skills and be able to relate experiences they have had in the forest. This is a memory game. Ask the girls to arrange themselves in a circle. The first player tells something she has observed in a forest. (“I saw a trout hiding in a pool under some rocks.”) The next player repeats the first statement and adds one of his or her own. The game continues around the circle until the list is too long to remember.

Students might also state what they did to or in the forest (“I caught a trout.” “I burned wood in my campfire.”), or what the forest did to or does for them (“I was warmed by the wood burning in my campfire.” “I was refreshed by the long hike through the trees.”). After the game, write down the girls’ statements and ask the group to decide whether each is beneficial, detrimental, or has little effect on the forest environment. Lead a discussion including:

What makes an action or event beneficial to a forest?

How can we distinguish between a detrimental and beneficial effect?

Whether any of the actions were detrimental to the forest, but beneficial to people. If so, which ones?  
Whether, when, and how we can justify such actions.



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**MAPPING THE NIGHT SOUNDS** – Find a special spot to stop and listen. Have a note pad and pencil and, if needed a flashlight with you. Make a sound map by placing yourself in the middle of the paper with an “X” and drawing night sounds on your paper as you hear them from different directions. Which way is the noisiest, which direction is the quietest? Are there any reasons for their differences? Share and compare you map with a friend.

**DOORS** – Find three different doors each to human and animal homes.



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