



The Art of Sauntering: Games and Activities



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Trail Eyes

Sharpen your eyes for the trail!



Materials

No materials needed!

When we're out on the Ice Age Trail, it's important to keep our eyes peeled for plants, animals, and anything else we might see. This activity will help you hone your detective skills.

Instructions

Stand opposite your partner. Take a close look at what each of you is wearing. Be sure not to miss any details. Look so closely that if anything were to change, you would notice it.

Turn away from each other and each change ONE thing about your dress (roll up a cuff, move a ring, undo a shoelace, etc.).

Turn back. Now your partner has the challenge of finding out what has changed. If they can't, give them a clue.

When you feel your detective skills are honed, set off to explore the trail!

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A Fistful of Sounds

Notice what you hear on the trail!



Materials

No materials needed!

When we're out in nature, there is always something to listen for, from trees rustling to frogs croaking. This activity will help you focus in to see how many sounds you hear as a group.

Instructions

Gather the group in a circle.

Explain that you will all be silent for a minute and you will each be keeping track of all the different sounds you hear on your fingers. Have everyone hold up both hands and close their eyes. Announce when a minute starts and ends.

When time runs out, have everyone open their eyes with their hands still in the air and look around at everyone else's fingers. Ask people to name some of the different sounds they heard.

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Color Search

Sharpen your eyes for the trail!



Materials

**Samples of many different colors
(color pallets for printing are attached to this worksheet).**


What colors do you see around you? When we're out on the trail, the answer is probably brown and green, or white if it's winter. This activity will help you notice other shades in the natural world.

Instructions

The group should begin by answering the question above, "What colors do you see around you?"

Hand each person a color square and challenge the group to find something in nature that most closely resembles their color by looking under things, up, down, up close, etc. They should not pick living things, but rather just point to it and share it with the group.

After the activity, discuss their findings. Were they surprised by the colors they found?

 This activity can also be performed with many different types of green and brown, so students can notice the many different tints and shades.

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Shape Search

Find natural shapes on the trail!



Materials

Small pieces of card cut into squares, circles, oblongs, squiggles, etc.

Nature is full of different shapes, from circular rabbit holes to triangular flower petals. See if you can find these shapes on the trail!

Instructions

Take a new look at your surroundings by trying to see them as a collection of shapes.

Have each person take a card and try to find that shape in the world around them (a plant, animal track, bark, etc.).

Once everyone has found something resembling their shape, share with the group. They should not pick living things, but should instead bring the group to them so everyone can take a closer look.

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Wake Up Fingers

Identify through touch!



Materials

Brown bags, each containing a common household object with a distinctive texture (bubble wrap, sandpaper, tin foil, etc.)

What do milkweed leaves feel like? How about birch bark? This activity will help wake up our fingers so we can better experience our time on the trail.

Instructions

Lay the bags along the trail or in a circle. Each should contain a common household item.

Challenge folks to use their FINGERS ONLY to investigate the texture in the bag without looking at the contents.

Ask them to give a word to describe the feel of the object.

Once everyone has felt the contents of the bag, they should find something in the habitat that best matches the item's texture. Share findings and move on to the next bag!

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Art Gallery

Find a work of art in nature!



Materials

Cardboard frames (one per pair)

If you go to an art museum, many of the works are focused on nature. This is because nature and art go hand-in-hand. In this activity, you will get to find your own work of art on the trail.

Instructions

Gather your group and have everyone pick a partner. Give one cardboard frame to each pair. One person is the artist, the other will hold the frame for them.

The artist should look around choose their favorite view within the place. They should then position the frame exactly to capture that view.

The frame holder must keep the work of art as it is, while other artists view the gallery and visit all the chosen works of art. Switch roles.

Discuss the natural elements which captures the artists' notice.

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Last Picture

Save a memory of the trail!



Materials

No materials needed!

Hikers from all over the Midwest come to the Ice Age Trail to make memories. This activity will help you remember your favorite part of your hike today!

Instructions

Similar to “Art Gallery,” this activity will help hikers visualize a beautiful image.

Before you leave the trail, have the group imagine that they have one picture left in their camera. The camera is made by framing pointer fingers and thumbs into a square and looking through it.

Which shot would each person choose for their last picture? Share. Remember this place.

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Find Your Friend

Hone your identification skills!



Materials

One leaf/pine cone/acorn for each person (choose an appropriate item, but make them all similar – for example, all maple leaves)

No snowflake looks alike. The same goes for flowers, leaves, rocks, and people! This activity will help you build identification skills to use on the Ice Age Trail.

Instructions

Gather in a circle and give each person a leaf.

Ask them to take a couple of minutes to get to know this leaf SO well that if they were to lose it they could recognize it again.

Gather all the leaves and mix them up. Begin to pass the leaves, one at a time, to your right. Give the following instructions: "If it's YOUR leaf, hold onto it. If its not, pass it on."

When all have been reunited, share some of the characteristics they used for identification. How did they feel when they found their friend again?!

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Nice-Smell Social

Build a sundae of smells!



Materials

Sundae container for each person or group

Take a deep breath in your habitat. Can you detect any special smells in this place? What if you were to take a closer smell around you?

Instructions

Challenge each member of the group to think of this as an ice cream social, but instead of composing a sundae out of their favorite ice cream and toppings, they will create a “sundae” of the best smells they can find in the place.

When sundaes are complete, have a social!

Take a relaxing tour around all the sundaes and find out what their ingredients are. This can also be done in groups.

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Place Poem

Be a poet!



Materials

One piece of paper and a writing utensil

Countless poets have drawn their inspiration from nature. Now it's your turn! Work with your group to create a poem about the Ice Age Trail.

Instructions

Gather the group in a circle or on a log.

Ask them to look around this place and think of one word that describes it for them. Silently!

Walk around and have each person whisper their word to you as you record them on a piece of paper.

Then, simply read back the list with a “poetic” voice, and you have all created a poem that can transport any reader to this place.

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Focus Ring

Change your perspective!



Materials

Toilet paper tubes

Little details are hard to see when we're just walking on the trail. This activity will give you the opportunity to see the trail through a different lens!

Instructions

Distribute the toilet paper tubes, or "focus rings." Challenge each person to find something on the trail that they have never noticed before.

Demonstrate walking right up to within an inch of a tree trunk, lying on the ground (face down, looking straight up, etc.) to give them the idea of varying perspective.

Wander among the group, asking them to show you what they noticed. You could also pair them up at the start and have them show their partner what they found.

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Sound Mapping

Listen close!



Materials

A writing utensil and a journal, or piece of paper and a clipboard

Close your eyes and listen to the sounds around you. Would you be able to explain their location to a friend? This activity will help you create a treasure map for your sounds!

Instructions

Have each person find a quiet place to sit alone.

Explain that the students will need to be silent because they will be creating a sound map.

They should draw or write their version of a visual representation for the different kinds of sounds they hear, with themselves marked in the center of their map.

Come back together and share your maps.

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Drawing Swap

Listen close!



Materials

Paper and a writing utensil (journals or clipboards may be necessary)

Our eyes always need to be on high alert when we're hiking the Ice Age Trail. This activity will help you practice your attention to detail so you can use it on the trail!

Instructions

Have the group line up along a stretch of trail, or in a circle. Sit down facing out.

Ask each person to pick ONE detail of a tree, plant, geologic formation, etc. that they find particularly interesting.

Have each person draw that detail, not the whole scene. When they're satisfied that they've captured that distinctive quality, have them switch drawings with a partner or collect and distribute them.

Then, they must try to find the detail that was drawn by the other person.

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Belly Botany

Lie down and look!



Materials

Circle of string, paper, and pencil

There's a lot to see on the Ice Age Trail! But what if you were a bug? This activity will help you get an ant's eye view of the trail!

Instructions

Lay the string on the ground in a circle. The group should then lie down and look at what's inside the circle.

Each person should draw the circle on their paper and begin mapping everything they can find within the circle.

Share. What did you find that surprised you?

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Animal Camouflage

Don't get caught!



Materials

No materials needed!

Find out what it's like to be an animal in this place we call the Ice Age Trail!

Instructions

You start by being "it" in the middle. Close your eyes and count to 15 or 20. While your eyes are closed, the children should hide themselves.

Open your eyes and call out the names of anyone that you can see without moving from your spot. These people are out and should come to the middle with you.

Close your eyes and count again. The children should move in and camouflage themselves again. Repeat a couple of times.

Whoever is the closest person to you at the end of the last round and is still camouflaged is the winner.

Discuss how easy or difficult it must be for animals to hide from predators here on the Ice Age Trail. What type of camouflage works best?

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