



Camouflage

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Activity Name: Camouflage

Ages: 6-teens

Activity Level: High

Length of time: 20 to 30 + min

Number of Participants: 10-15 ideal but could be done with less or more

Concept: This activity is great for participants to better understand why it is important for prey animals to be camouflaged within the habitat they live both by keeping still and their colouration.

Materials Required: None (but see tips for some enhancements)

Introduction:

This activity should be done in a forested setting with good ground cover and trees. The playing boundary must be clearly identified as the predator and the prey must be able to see each other at all times.

Methods:

Have one person be the predator (wolf/cougar) while the rest the group are deer. The predator “catches” the deer by eyesight alone as they can only rotate on one spot in order to catch their prey. The predator catches its prey by seeing and either calling out the person’s name or what colour clothing they are wearing and the location they are hiding. (e.g. “I see Bob wearing a yellow shirt behind that tree.”). When caught the prey reveals themselves and comes a sits near the predator without blocking the predator’s view. When hiding, the prey must hide within the specified boundary and need to be able to see the predator at all times.

Running the activity: To start, the predator selects the spot which is about the centre of the defined playing area. With their eyes closed they count backward from 40 for this first round. While the predator is counting all the ‘deer’ find hiding places within the defined playing area that best camouflages them and allows them to see the predator at all times. Upon completing the count down the predator opens his or her eyes and from that spot looks for evidence of the hiding deer. When the predator suspects a sighting, then they call out either the name or clothing colour or type (hat) and location of that person. The person seen then comes out and sits down. To move the game along the predator at anytime can put up one hand as ask the hidden players how many fingers he or she is holding up. All players still in hiding must yell out the number of fingers seen.



This provides additional clues of locations for the predator using sound. When no more players can be detected in this round, predator shouts out “Food and water for 30” and holds their arms out with their palms up, closes their eyes and begins counting down from 30. The players still in hiding must now run to the predator, touch one of his or her outstretched hands and then run back into the forest to a new hiding spot. At the finish of this countdown the predator opens their eyes and begins to search again. After a short time and there are still players out in the forest unseen, the predator can again all for food and water this time for a count of 20, then 10 and even 5 if all the players are still not found. At the end have the predator share with the group who was the easiest and who was the hardest to spot and why. For the prey players have them share why they think they were caught. Have a group discussion on how

important camouflage is in the survival of species and perhaps see if they can come up with examples.

Tips for Teachers:

- Children really enjoy this activity and you should be prepared to have several run throughs with different people as the predators.
- The countdown range is totally flexible and should be based on the timeframe the activity is being held within, how many run throughs that might be done. The example used 40 as a start, but 30 is fine or 25.

Background facts and information:

This activity has a more lasting impact if there has been some discussion in the classroom about predator-prey relationships and how both predator and prey have evolved different strategies to improve their chances of survival. For example, both groups use colouration patterns to blend in to their surroundings and they have heightened senses of sight, hearing and smell.