

Nature's Hide and Seek

Materials for Activity

- Appropriate outerwear for the weather
- Small pads of paper
- Color markers or colored pencils

Preparation for Activity

- If possible, schedule extra time for this activity. Scout out a nearby body of water or wetlands, marsh, meadow, woods or other area of relatively dense vegetation which provides natural habitat for animals.

Description of Activity

Go outdoors as a family to notice how nature offers animals places to hide from predators, weather and other dangers.

Tell family members you will go outside to investigate the ways that nature provides for animals to hide and be protected.

You may want to read aloud this quote from Annie Dillard:

"... nature is very much a now-you-see-it, now-you-don't affair. A fish flashes, then dissolves in the water. Deer apparently ascend bodily into heaven; the brightest oriole fades into the leaves. These disappearances stun me into stillness and concentration."

Ask family members to predict what animals they may find outdoors, and where animals might be hiding when the humans approach. Even if you live in a city, you can probably find birds hiding in bushes or squirrels in the branches of trees. Follow clues of sound or smell to determine where animals may be hiding.

Encourage family members to keep as silent as possible so they can hear animals and not scare them away. Distribute pencils and pads, and ask everyone to sketch or write some notes about how animals find protection in nature.

Return indoors. Invite everyone to report on how they observed animals interacting with plant life.

Prompt:

- What did you first notice?
- Did you see any plant life?
- Could you identify what they were?
- What animals did you see? If yes, where were they?
- If you didn't see any? Why not?
- Why do you think it matters that we have this plant and animal life around us? What would it be like if we had none of it? Or, just the animals, or just the plants?

Affirm their responses. Mention the spiritual importance of connection. Say something like:

It is through our connection to nature that we are made whole. We spend most of our lives in buildings and inside our homes, yet we are still part of Nature. Let us remember to spend time in nature, among trees, in the sunshine, even in rain, so we remember that we are a part of the interdependent web of life.