



4-H Grab and Go: *Nature Walk*

Concept:

Engage in nature to develop an appreciation for the animals, insects and plants that make up the habitat.

Age Level:

Middle School: Grades 6-8

Education Standard:

NS.5-8.6 Personal and Social Perspectives: Populations, Resources & Environments

SET Ability:

Observe, Collect Data

Life Skill:

Responsible Citizenship

Success Indicator:

Youth will demonstrate connectivity to nature through observing specimens out of their habitat and the importance of "leave no trace".

4-H Curriculum:

Exploring Your Environment
(www.4-H.org/curriculum/environment)

PREPARATION**Time:** 10 Minutes

(The initial preparation of collecting the specimens will take more than 10 minutes. It is recommended that you collect the items and then keep them in a plastic storage container. This will reduce preparation time because the activity can be set up within minutes using it "out of the box.")

Space: Classroom**Materials:**

- Paper
- Pencils
- Nature specimens (See #1)
- Flip chart
- Markers

Background Information:

There are many recreational activities that focus on nature and being outdoors. Some people participate in recreational hunting. It allows them to witness the beauty of Mother Nature, perhaps be involved in a tradition, share time with friends and family, and put food on their table. Their tools are typically the bow and arrow, gun and trap. There is another group of people involved in another type of recreational hunting...bird watchers. These individuals meet with other hobbyists and go out to find birds in different locations. The tool they use most often for their hobby is a pair of binoculars. One of the least expensive recreational pastimes is hiking, which provides health benefits, along with the opportunity to witness nature and wildlife with a beautiful backdrop away from the everyday drum of society.

Preparation:

1. Recognizing that different parts of the country will have different samples, the following is only a representative list of natural and man-made items. Develop a partnership with a local environmental education group, a science or natural history museum or the Audubon Center to acquire loaners on some of the hard to find items:

- Rodent Skulls
- Discarded turtle shells
- Branches
- Leaves
- Nuts
- Soil
- Feathers
- Grass
- Pinecones
- Rocks
- Crunched soda can
- Small potato chip bag
- Plastic soda can holders
- Shells
- Driftwood
- Seaweed
- Sand



Nature Walk (Continued)

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT TIPS

Remind youth that some species and locations are protected by law and can't be removed from or disturbed in their ecosystems. Also remind them that when they are collecting samples, it is best to take a picture and leave "no trace" of having been there.

Checkpoint:

1. What was different about our meeting area?
2. There were (____) number of items in the room. Let's see what you found. Use the back of your note page to list what you missed.
3. How did you feel about seeing pieces of nature inside?
4. Were there any items that you had never seen before? (This can be used as a springboard for more learning.)

Open Ended Questions:

- Why do you think it was important that you remained quiet through your time in our nature setting?
- One of our responsibilities as visitors in nature is what is called "leave no trace." What do you think this means? (See #9)
- Humans are only visitors to Antarctica, no one lives there full time. Leave no trace is enforced on this continent even to the point that while in snow camps, the campers cannot create yellow snow. Why do you think Leave No Trace is important to Antarctica and the rest of the world?

2. Place the nature specimens around the room where you typically meet. Do not make them obvious. The youth should really have to look and become involved on the nature walk. Put them up on shelves, around corners, down low...even levels where you typically would not see them in nature.
3. When the youth arrive, meet in a different location so they do not see the nature items.

Instructions:

1. Distribute a piece of blank paper to each person and ask them to fold it in fourths. Have them label Square A): "What I see"; Square B): "What I smell"; Square C): "How I feel"; Square D): "Notes and Drawing."
2. Direct the youth to the location of the inside habitat. Line the youth up and let 1 go at a time. Instruct the group to:
 - a. Walk around the room. Be very observant, with absolutely no talking.
 - b. Make observation notes using the paper you gave to them in the previous step.

Notes: Do not let them know what they are looking for or that they are on a nature walk, this will help them to be more engaged. Once you note that the first item has been seen or passed and the person has moved on, let the next person in line go.
3. Once everyone is through, hold a Checkpoint (see sidebar).
4. Let the youth go through the room again, but this time they can wander on their own to try and find items that they missed. If they can't find an item, they may ask for help from a friend or the facilitator.
5. Once all youth have found their missing items, regroup to ask Open Ended Questions (see sidebar).
6. After the students answer what "Leave No Trace" is, ask them what they would do in the following situations in order to "Leave No Trace" and have a group member record the answers on a flip chart:
 - a. Campfire
 - b. Bringing pets to a camp or a hike
 - c. Coming across wildlife
 - d. Hiking on existing trails versus conquering unknown territory
 - e. Digging up a pretty plant and bringing it home
 - f. Taking care of trash during your stay