

## HUG-A-TREE

Modified from Sharing Nature with Children "Meet a Tree" pg.26-27

**Intended Results:** To show that trees, like people are each individual with different characteristics and personalities.

**Timeframe:** 15-20 minutes

**Supplies:** Enough blindfolds for half the group.

**Framing:** Normally when people go for a hike they don't take the time to stop and appreciate the flora. The plants and trees of the park are not only key to our ecosystem, but they are great for kids to take time to look at and feel since they won't run away.

**The Activity:** Instruct the students to pair up. One of the students will be blindfolded, the other sighted. When play begins, the sighted student will gently guide the blindfolded student around the area, twisting and turning their partner to try to confuse them.

Rules about guiding:

1. Guide with two hands on the shoulders, not by pulling or pushing your partner.
2. If there is something above their head, tell your partner to duck.
3. If there is something large on the ground, tell your partner to step up.
4. If anyone can't handle these rules they can sit out of the activity.

Once the blindfolded student is thoroughly confused, the sighted student should guide their partner to a tree.

Rules for tree selection:

1. The tree should not be right next to the starting point or so far away that the students are unable to be seen.
2. The tree should be of good size (thicker than a baseball bat).
3. The tree should be alive.
4. Before the blindfolded student is allowed to touch the tree the sighted student should do a full inspection of the tree to insure that it is safe, i.e. poison ivy vines, snakes or insects on the tree.
5. The blindfolded student must now get to know their tree with all of the senses that they have left. They can reach up high, feel down low, wrap their arms around the trunk, and feel texture of the bark (some children have been known to smell and taste the tree as well, but licking the tree is not recommended.)
6. Once the student feels as though they "know" their tree, the sighted student will then guide the blindfolded student back to

the starting point, making sure to confuse them on the way back. The blindfolded student should then be unmasked and must now identify their tree. The student will then have three chances to id their tree.

7. Once the pair is done, instruct them to switch roles and do it again.

**Safety:**

1. Stress that when they guide the blindfolded students that they must be nice and careful with them or they must get out of the activity.
2. Very important to check the tree first because of the amount of poison ivy around the park.

**Processing:**

- ✓ What are some of the things that you noticed about your tree that made it easy to identify later?
- ✓ What are some other things that you can think of which also may look the same from far away but are really not exactly the same?