



NYSDEC Environmental Education

Find Your Tree

Objective: The students will become aware of the importance of their sense of touch as they investigate the world around them. They will also learn some different characteristics of trees.

Grade level: Elementary – Intermediate

Time: 20-30 minutes; any season

Materials: One blindfold for each pair of students (made from strips of material, Halloween costume masks with tape over the eye holes, etc.)

By blocking the sense of sight with the blindfolds, the students are better able to explore and discover their sense of touch. This activity provides an opportunity for the students to use an important sensory skill as a discriminating tool.

Activity Description: Small groups of 8-10 students per chaperone or leader are most desirable.

Locate an area which has different kinds of trees and little underbrush. Explain to the students that they will be using their sense of touch to learn more about trees. Pair the students up and have one in each pair put on a blindfold. The blindfolded student is spun around by his partner, who then carefully leads him to a tree which he must investigate thoroughly. He should feel the bark, the skin of the tree. Have the sighted student ask these questions: is the tree smooth or rough? Is there anything growing on it? How wide is the tree? Does it have any low branches? Are its roots exposed? After a full investigation of about 5-10 minutes, the blindfolded student is led back to the starting point and spun around once more. He should then take off the blindfold and search for his tree. Once he finds it, the partners switch roles and repeat.

Hints: In choosing a site, watch out for possible dangers like poison ivy, holes, or obstructions that can be tripped over. The sighted partner should also be reminded that they are responsible for safely guiding the blindfolded partner and must warn them of any hazards (holes, roots, low branches, etc.). Encourage safe behavior during this activity and remind the "guide" partners that they will soon become the blindfolded partners!

Follow-up: Have the students write descriptions of their trees. They might further portray the trees' textures by making sketches or rubbings.