

# Sights, Sounds, and Smells: Exploring the Forest Through Our Senses

Adapted from PLT's "Sounds Around" lesson, *PLT Environmental Experiences for Early Childhood*, by Karen Christenson, teacher and facilitator

**Learning Objective:** Provide opportunities to explore nature through our senses, especially hearing.

**Optional:** Before we begin, you may wish to construct your own pair of "binoculars" to use on our hike today. You will need two paper towel rolls, masking tape, a hole punch, and string. (See examples.)

## 1. BOOK

- Read *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers.
- Explain, "We are going to taking a listening walk of our own today. What do you think we might hear outside?"
- Form a standing circle

## 2. RAINSTORM

- Create the sounds of a rainstorm by snapping, clapping, and stomping.
- Listen to the sounds after the storm. (Play excerpt internet or CD.)
- Ask, "What did you hear?"

## 3. EARS

- Pass out jumbo "ears" (paper plates cut in halves) and crayons.
- On one "ear," draw any sounds made by people or machines
- On the other "ear," draw any sounds made by nature or animals.

## 4. PARTNERS

- Choose a partner for our nature hike outdoors.
- Sing, "Here We Go On A Nature Adventure" song
- Optional: Bring your headbands or eye covers outside with you. This can help focus attention on listening instead of looking.

## 5. NATURE HIKE

- As we walk, wear your paper towel "binoculars" to look for signs of animal life.
- Find a quiet place to sit with your partner. Wear your headband as an eye cover. Listen quietly to sounds for 2-5 minutes. Then draw the sounds on your "ear" shapes.

## 6. SONG

- Sing "In the Forest" song, adding pairs' new sounds to the last verse.

## 7. MATCH THE SOUNDS STATION

- On a table in the classroom, provide 10 pairs of film canisters full of nature objects. (Pebbles, twigs, sand, seeds, etc.) Have children try to match the two canisters containing the same objects by shaking them and listening to the sounds.

## 8. SOUND MAKERS

- Select an empty container (various recycled cartons, jugs, and plastic bottles) and a few "noisemakers" from nature (pine needles, rocks, acorns, etc.) to place inside. Shake your sound-maker to try different rhythms individually and as a group.

## 9. FOREST ORCHESTRA

- Use your sound-makers and voices to create a symphony of forest sounds. Tape record and play the symphony back to students.

## 10. SNIFF A WHIFF STATION

- Without reading the label, try opening one of the essential oil bottles (grapefruit, peppermint, lemon, etc.) and sniffing the aroma inside. Describe what you smell and try to guess what it is. Check your guess by looking at the bottle.

Related books:

*My Night Forest by Roy Owen*

*The Listening Walk by Paul Showers*

*The Way to Wyatt's House by Nancy White Carlstrom*

*Walk with Me by Naomi Danis*

*My Five Senses by Alikei Brandenberg*

*Old Elm Speaks by Kristine O'Connell George*

# The rainstorm builds

1. Hold palms open
2. Rub your hands together
3. Snap your fingers
4. Clap your hands (slow and fast)
5. Slap your hands on your legs
6. Stomp your feet
7. Listen to the storm!

# The rainstorm dwindles

1. Stomp your feet
2. Slap your hands on your legs
3. Clap your hands
4. Snap your fingers
5. Rub your hands together
6. Hold palms open
7. Listen to the quiet after the storm...

# “Here We Go on a Nature Adventure” Song

to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush”

Here we go on a nature  
adventure,

A nature adventure

A nature adventure

Here we go on a nature  
adventure,

What do you think we’ll  
hear?

*(May substitute see or feel.)*

# “In the Forest” Song

to the tune of “Are You Sleeping?”

In the forest, In the forest,

What do you hear? What do you hear?

Birds and buzzing bees

Birds and buzzing bees

In the forest, In the forest.

.....

In the forest, In the forest,

What do you hear? What do you hear?

Wind and bubbling streams

Wind and bubbling streams

In the forest, In the forest.

.....

In the forest, In the forest,

What do you hear? What do you hear?

*(Fill in your own forest sounds here...)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

In the forest, In the forest.

.....

In the forest, In the forest,

What do you hear? What do you hear?

*(Fill in your own forest sounds here...)*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

In the forest, In the forest.

# “Match the Nature Sounds!” Station



*\*Please do not peek inside the canisters.*

We found a lot of small things on our nature adventure. We picked up rocks, feathers, acorns, twigs, grass, seeds, and many other wonderful treasures.

We placed these nature things into the film canisters in groups of two. So there are two canisters with rocks in them, two that have seeds in them, and so on.

**Just by listening, can you match up  
the ones that have the same things inside?**

You can pick them up and shake them, but please don't peek inside until you are done guessing.

1. **Shake each of these.**
2. **Can you guess what is inside?**
3. **Find pairs of sounds that match.**
4. **When you have finished guessing, go ahead and look inside the canisters.**