

TREE FACES

Let trees come to life
and ask them how they are



Goal: To meet a tree as a magical creature. To create a face for your favourite tree using soil or snow. Talk to a tree to find out how it is. Maybe perform theatre plays for the others where trees come to life. The children will perceive trees around them as living neighbours who often live longer lives than we do.

How long: 15–30 minutes

Who: 6–99

Space: A place with taller trees

When: All year round (snow can be used to make faces in the winter)

You need: Containers for mixing mud, water, natural material for decoration, rags for wiping hands

1. MEET YOUR TREE

You can start with a short walk among the trees, telling a story or reading a short text. The goal is to calm down and tune into a creative mood. Agree upon the boundaries where the children can roam and then let them walk alone and choose their own tree, or part of a tree, that fascinates them, interests them or they are curious to know more about. The choice is up to them and they should be allowed to use their intuition to find the tree that is “just right”.

2. MAKE A FACE

Where possible, gather up suitable soil. It should be rather sticky and clayey so it models well. Mix it with water to create a rather solid mud that will hold well to the bark of a tree.

Show the children how they can create a tree’s eyes, nose, and mouth. Let them choose the most suitable place on a tree first and then have them gradually model a face. The clay will hold best on the trees with the coarsest bark.

TIP: Children can add other natural materials to the soil face (dry grass, twigs, flowers, pine cones etc.). If there is a shortage of trees in the area, more than one child can work on each tree at the same time. It will depend on the size of the trees’ trunks and the dynamics of the group.

3. DIALOGUE

Now that the trees have faces, they can come to life and the children can sit with them and talk. How is the growing going? What have the trees experienced? What do they observe every day? What do they enjoy the most? And, conversely, what annoys them the most? What would they like to tell people?

4. TREES COME TO LIFE

Children who find it interesting can make a short performance. They can hide behind tree trunks so that the spectators can hear a voice but only see the tree, the tree face and maybe hands (or legs). The trees have come to life and can now tell a short story, a fairy tale, or just give a greeting or a message.

5. LOOKING BACK

In the end, you can all settle together amidst the trees and briefly share the strongest experiences, feelings, impressions from the day. You can plan who you would like to invite to the trees to make their acquaintance.

TIP: Soil faces will dry and can last a few days on the trees if it doesn't rain right away. It is useful to return to the trees from time to time to greet and talk with them again, or to paint or draw their soil faces to remember them.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY'S GOAL (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

- The children chose their trees and gave them faces made from soil.
- After forming the soil face, they talked to „their“ trees.
- The children acted a short theatre scene for the others.
- The children no longer see trees as just pieces of standing wood but as living creatures that have their own lives and perceptions of their surroundings.

