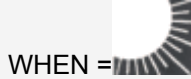


RAINBOW HIKE

Activity 10

AGE LEVEL = 7-9 (6-11)
DURATION = 20-40 min.
LEARNING STATION = Outdoors
RELATED ACTIVITY = → Colorful Confusion



WHEN =



UNDERSTANDING: Though there are a limited number of basic colors in nature, they come in an infinite number of shadings, making the environment an effective background for animals who rely on camouflage.

SPECIAL NOTES: This activity can be done as a filler between learning stations or as a stand-alone lesson.

MATERIALS:

- Colored paint chips from a hardware store
- Double-sided tape
- An index card for each child

PREPARATION: Place a strip of tape in the middle of each index card along the 5-inch axis. Leave the backing on the tape until you distribute the cards to the children.

LESSON:

Warm-up: Ask the children if they know what a rainbow is. Then ask how many different colors they think there are in a rainbow. Tell them they're going on a rainbow hike to look for some colors.

Activity: Fan out the paint chips like a deck of cards, color side down. Have each child pick a card. The child's job is to find small objects (or parts of objects) that match as closely as possible the colors on the card. Let them know they may not be able to make exact matches. When they find an object, they should stick it on the tape. (Caution them against picking up animals or taking too much plant material.)

Wrap-up: After the hike, gather into a sharing circle and examine the cards and objects. Even a single leaf can illustrate a multitude of colors. A single blade of grass is not one green; it has many greens in it, and possibly other colors too! Other good objects to examine closely are bark, stones and insects.

Discuss how colors are important to animals and people.

OPTIONS AND FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

1. For the following activity on camouflage, you will need several large pieces of scrap cloth, some of which are solid colors and some that have intricate, multicolored patterns; drawing paper; crayons; and scissors.

Divide the group into teams with equal numbers. Give each team a cloth. Their job is to create tiny animals using the paper and crayons, that can be camouflaged on the cloth environments. Give them about 10 minutes to draw, cut out and hide their animals. After the animals are all in place, rotate the teams to new cloths. Each team (now in the role of predators) has one minute to locate as many of the animals as possible, looking for them from a standing position. The activity will dramatically demonstrate that solid colored environments are poor ones for camouflage.

2. Discuss and research how some animals use color in their mating rituals. Challenge the children to create a mating ritual skit, using lots of color (perhaps with flags).
3. Discuss and research how many poisonous animals use color and other markings to warn away enemies. Examples include the coral snake, the gila monster and several fishes. The skunk's bold stripe is a related example.
4. Use the double-sided tape as a color bracelet. Wrap the tape around a shirt or coat sleeve (this way the hair on the child's arm is protected) and place the colored chip on one side of the tape. Have them place items on their bracelets.