

THE CASE OF THE MISPLACED ARTICLES

Activity 41

AGE LEVEL = 5-9 (3-12)
DURATION = 15 min.
LEARNING STATION = Anywhere
RELATED ACTIVITIES = All

WHEN =  



UNDERSTANDING: Everything in nature must go somewhere, including waste products from humans.

MATERIALS:

For each pair of children:

- Detective notebooks (clipboard and paper work fine, see Activity A.)
- Pencil or pen
- Several plastic garbage bags (optional)

PREPARATION: None

LESSON:

Warm-up: Have the children sit in a half-circle, while you inform them (with fear in your voice) that there is a creature on the loose, crawling around the woods, fields, hills, farms, seas, cities and towns of the world. You always know the creature is nearby because it often leaves signs of its presence behind. Look for foot tracks, marked trees, litter left behind from feeding activity and more. Many of these signs seem out of place because they were not made by nature. What could this creature be? What things does it leave behind?

Activity: Pair the children up into detective teams. Give them names: Sherlock (child's last name) and Dr. (child's last name). Explain that to solve the identity of the creature they need to look for clues. Encourage them to use all their senses (sight, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting). Have them record clues carefully in their notebooks so they can refer to them later. Focus on the following questions: What is the clue? Where did it come from? How long has it been here? Was the creature young or old? What is the creature doing, just before it left? What is the creature that left it behind?

Wrap-up: Gather together after 15 minutes. Have each team pick two or three clues that satisfactorily answer the questions above and solve the mystery. After a few turns, the process will become redundant. Ask the children if all believe that people are the creatures. Have the remaining teams present their clues of the human presence. Conclude with each team collecting their clues in a garbage bag.

OPTIONS AND FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

1. Use the activity as a lead-in to a community clean-up project.
2. Trace the path of our household wastes. Visit a garbage collecting agency and find out how much garbage they pick up in a week, month or year. What kind of garbage is collected and where does it all go? Then visit the landfill or incinerator. This tour will help children understand the ecological concept that everything must go somewhere.
3. Tour a local sewage waste treatment plant. Discuss how waste water coming in one end of the facility is treated before it's usable. Discuss what happens to the solid waste. Where is it stored?