James Farm Activity

Recommended for Kindergarten but can be adapted for other grades. It is designed to correlate with curricular resource The Senses by Insights, Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

**Challenge:** Can you use your senses of sight, hearing, smell, and touch to learn about nature at James Farm?

**Materials:**

1. Paint chips in colors you think you will see in the meadows, forests, wetlands, and beach (you may want to keep seasonal colors in mind when you make your selection).
2. Hand lenses.
3. Cut shapes such as square, circle, triangle, rectangle, oval, heart, or various letters (V,X,L,Y,C,I,K,W,V,etc.) Cut them at least 4” tall and make one set per group of children.
4. Optional – cassette recorder.

**Procedure for the teacher:**

1. Divide students into groups of four to six students with an adult leader for each group. Be sure that each group leader has color chips, cut-out shapes and a few hand lenses.
2. Tell students that they are going to go on a nature walk and off the lesson challenge.
3. Take a few minutes to talk about behaviors as you walk on the trail and plan a way the students can signal that they have made a discovery.
4. Begin your walk on the Red Trail looking for colors.
5. As a color is discovered have the group gather around and ask the following questions:
   a. Do you know what it is?
   b. Is it living or non-living?
   c. What shape is it?
   d. What does it feel like?
   e. What does it smell like?
   f. Does it belong here?
6. Continue the walk making other discoveries. Follow the Red Trail to the beach.
7. When you reach the beach area have the students sit on the benches on the platform and/or the steps leading to the beach. Here the students will practice using their sense of hearing. Tell them that they will be using “animal ears”, cupping their hands behind their ears. Practice using “animal ears”.
8. Now tell the students to close their eyes and cup their hands behind their ears and listen. Give them a minute or two to listen. If you have a cassette recorder use it while the students listen to record some sounds.

9. Now give each student a turn to tell what they heard. Ask the following questions:
   a. What did you hear?
   b. What do you think made the sound?
   c. Where did the sound come from?

10. You may want to repeat the same activity with eyes open to see if they hear more or less.

11. As you prepare for your return trip on the Red Trail tell your students that they will be looking for shapes as they walk along the trail.

12. Hold up one shape and tell the students to look for that shape as they walk along. Be sure to tell them to look up, down and all around. For example they may see the letters LYVW in the branches of trees, the letter v may be seem in the shape of a flying bird.

13. Have them look for several different shapes as they walk along the trail.

14. Periodically stop and look at the shape of leaves. Have the students tell what shape various leaves have.

15. Challenge the students to find a tree with three different leaf shapes – the sassafras tree has leaves that look like mittens, dinosaur tracks and ovals. If you find the tree let the students touch a leaf. Take one leaf off the tree and crumple it so the students can smell it, it has been described as root beer or Froot Loop cereal.

Optional:

Use you recorder to make a recording near the beach and in the woods. Use this recording back in the classroom. Play the recording and have the students draw pictures of what they hear.

Extension:

Take a walk around the schoolyard doing the same activities. Compare what they see, hear, feel and smell with their experience at James Farm.