

Tree Bathing

Learning Intentions:

- Explore and play with patterns and sounds
- Select relevant information and organise into a logical sequence
- Convey information, describe events and processes
- Share experiences, feelings, ideas and information

About this activity:

Forest bathing originates from Japan, where it is known as “shinrin yoku” (shinin means “forest” and yoku means “bath”). It stems from an awareness that spending time amongst trees is very helpful to our bodies, our health and our wellbeing, and this is backed up by science. You might not have a forest near where you live, so this activity has been retitled “tree bathing”.

Find one or a few trees to spend some time amongst, follow the steps below to take part in some tree bathing activities and reflection.

What you need:

- Access to at least one tree. If you don't have one in your garden, perhaps you can go for a walk with an adult and find some.
- Paper, pen and something to lean on.

What to do:

1. Spend a bit of time in silence. If you are with someone else, perhaps make it into a game to see how long you can be quiet together for! Try and follow the next steps in silence:
2. Walk slowly around/under the tree(s). How slow can you go? Can you step without making any noise?
3. Feel the bark of the tree. Notice how it feels against your fingers. What is the texture like? Are there any differences – can you find smooth areas and rough areas? Feel the leaves. Do they feel the same as the bark or different?
4. Look closely at a part of the tree. Take in the details, the colours, the patterns. Now look away and in your mind try and remember what you saw. Look back again and take another closer look. Is there anything you forgot about or missed or didn't notice last time?
5. What does the tree smell like? Pretend to be a badger sniffing the trunk, the branches, the leaves.
6. Sit down at the bottom of the tree and notice all the sounds around you (just like you did last week with the sound map exercise). Close your eyes if you like to really focus on the sounds.
7. What sights do you notice around you? Any animals (including insects)? How about colours? Shapes? Does being quiet change how you notice things?
8. Become aware of your breath, knowing that right now the tree is supplying you with fresh air which allows you to be alive and well.
9. Did you manage to do all of this in silence?
10. Now repeat steps 2-8 but talk about each of the experiences with the person you are with, or if you are alone, write and draw your experiences and find somebody to share this with after.
11. Reflect on how you are feeling right now. Which of these steps did you find most fun and why? Did you feel relaxed at all? Which steps did you not enjoy so much and why?

There is a page of words overleaf to describe textures and smells to assist. Perhaps copy out the ones that you noticed. Can you write them on the ground around the tree using twigs?

Textures

Rough

Smooth

Thick

Thin

Soft

Hard

Shiny

Matte

Rugged

Flimsy

Slimy

Squishy

Bumpy

Fuzzy

Prickly

Smells

Sweet

Pleasant

Foul

Perfumed

Pungent

Mild

Unpleasant

Musty

Fresh

Earthy