



*Empowering pre-primary and primary school teachers' in using and combining Eco-Art for Eco awareness, psycho-social tools and non-formal teaching methods*



# SEEDS

**Empowering pre-primary and primary school teachers' in using  
and combining Eco-Art for Eco awareness, psycho-social tools  
and non-formal teaching methods**

## MODULE 3

### *Eco – Psychology*

## ACTIVITIES



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**Contents**

**Topic 3 – Activity 1: *Stone Meditation* ..... 3**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 4**

**Topic 3 – Activity 2: *Sensory Nature Walk*..... 7**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 10**

**Topic 3 – Activity 3: *Interactive Workshops*..... 13**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 16**

**Topic 3 – Activity 4: *Role Play assimilation*..... 18**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 20**

**Topic 3 – Activity 5: *Emotional Mapping* ..... 23**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 25**

**Topic 3 – Activity 6: *Secret Leaves Messages* ..... 28**  
     **Step-by-Step Guide ..... 31**

**References ..... 34**



## **Topic 3 – Activity 1: *Stone Meditation***

### **1. Activity Overview:**

**Activity Type:** Guided group meditation.

**Duration:** 30 – 45 minutes.

### **2. Activity Description**

Meditating with pebbles serves as a grounding and centering activity, allowing participants to slow down and connect with the natural world in a tactile, contemplative way. By holding or arranging pebbles, individuals can reflect on the deep history embedded within each stone—formed over millions of years, shaped by the Earth's forces—which fosters a sense of perspective and presence (Hanh, 2013; Abram, 1996). This simple meditative practice encourages mindfulness, emotional regulation, and ecological awareness by drawing attention to the quiet resilience and timelessness of natural materials (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Louv, 2008).

The practice also supports emotional grounding, a key component of trauma-informed and reflective educational practices, particularly when linked to the Earth's enduring cycles (Gonzalez et al., 2015). As students engage with the pebbles in silence or guided reflection, they are invited to consider their place within the larger natural continuum, reinforcing both personal well-being and environmental stewardship (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2009).

### **3. Material and Resources:**

#### **Required Materials:**

For this activity you need a picture of Thich Nhat Hanh, a picture of a flower, a picture of a mountain, a picture of still water, a picture of the wide open sky, and four pebbles per student.

#### **Technology/Software:**

Music player for relaxing music.



#### **4. Instructions for Facilitators**

##### **Preparation Steps:**

For this activity we need an open space (without tables, chairs or any other furniture), where the students can sit on the floor comfortably. If it's possible we should use mats for the floor. We need to have the five pictures mentioned in the materials printed and ready to show.

##### **Step-by-Step Guide**

- First, we show the students the picture of **Thich Nhat Hanh** and explain that he was the creator of **Pebble Meditation**, a practice designed to help people—especially children—understand and remember that they carry strong virtues within themselves. These virtues, like special powers, support them during difficult moments. They include qualities such as love and beauty, strength and bravery, calm and focus, and peace and happiness (Hanh, 2012).
- Then we show the students the pebbles and explain that each one represents a “super power” that we all have inside us. No one can ever take these super powers away from us, they are ours to keep forever.
  - First, we pick the first pebble and at the same time show them a picture of a flower. We ask the students to describe the flower and ask them what the flower means for them. Then, we explain that in Pebble Meditation, the flower represents the power of beauty and love.
  - Second, we pick up the second pebble and show a picture of a mountain. We ask them to describe the mountain and ask how it might feel to be a mountain. Then, we discuss how the mountain represents bravery and strength.
  - With the third pebble, we show the picture of still water. We discuss together the qualities of still water, like calm and focused, and ask if they can think of a time when they might need to be like still water.



- Finally, we show a picture of the wide open sky with the fourth pebble and discuss the qualities represented by the sky like freedom, peace, and happiness. Ask them how it would feel to fly across the wide open sky.
- After this discussion, each student gets four pebbles and we read the script that we show you below:



Figure 1: Guided Meditation



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### **Facilitator Role:**

The facilitator's role in this activity is to introduce the concepts and then guide the meditation.

### **5. Activity Procedures**

#### **Activity Flow:**

10 minutes: explanation of the activity (photo, meaning of each pebble).

20 minutes: Guided meditation.

5 minutes: Wrap up, stretch and exchange impressions.

#### **Engagement Strategies:**

Motivating activity that starts with questions about the meaning of the pebbles to engage the students in participating.

#### **Reflection Opportunities:**

At the end of the activity we encourage an exchange of impressions, so they can understand what we intend with this activity, and so we can apply it to our everyday life. For example, if someone's feelings are hurt, remind them of the flower and the abundant beauty and love that fills them. Or, if they feel scared, they should remember the brave, strong mountain they have inside them. If they are angry or frustrated, they can spread their arms and feel the space around them filled with peace and happiness. And when they need to settle in for a quiet activity, they can become the still water and find calm and focus within.



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### **Topic 3 – Activity 2: *Sensory Nature Walk***

#### **Activity Overview**

**Activity Type:** Hands-on experiential learning, guided reflection

**Duration:** 45–60 minutes

**Ages:** 6–11

#### **Activity Description:**

#### **Goal & Learning Outcomes:**

This activity aims to build environmental awareness, curiosity, and emotional well-being by guiding children through a multi-sensory nature experience. Through simple sensory exploration, listening, touching, smelling, and observing, students develop a deeper appreciation for the natural world. The activity encourages mindfulness, empathy toward nature, and understanding of how spending time outdoors supports calmness and happiness (Williams, 2017; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

#### **By the end of this activity, students will be able to:**

- Identify different sensory elements in nature (e.g., sounds, textures, colors, and scents), enhancing observation and environmental awareness (Williams, 2017; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).
- Demonstrate curiosity and mindfulness during outdoor exploration, fostering attention restoration and sensory engagement (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).
- Express personal feelings and observations about their nature experience through drawing or discussion, supporting reflective learning and emotional expression (Kolb, 1984; Williams, 2017).
- Recognize how spending time outdoors can improve their mood, calmness, and sense of connection to the environment, reinforcing the link between nature exposure and well-being (Williams, 2017; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).



**Summary of the Activity:**

Children will participate in a guided sensory nature walk designed to heighten their awareness and appreciation of the natural environment. During the walk, they will use their senses, listening to birds, feeling tree bark, smelling flowers, and noticing colors or shapes, and explore nature in a calm and mindful way. Facilitators may invite children to close their eyes briefly or focus on specific sensory details to deepen their experience. However, this step is optional to maintain an emotionally safe environment where each child feels comfortable and in control of their experience. Children can choose instead to simply soften their gaze or concentrate quietly on one sense at a time (Williams, 2017; Kolb, 1984).

After the walk, children will share their favorite sensory discoveries through a short discussion or drawing activity. This reflective stage helps them express their thoughts, build observation skills, and understand how nature contributes to their happiness and well-being (Williams, 2017; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989).

Context/Scenario: The walk takes place in a safe outdoor area such as a park, school garden, nearby forest or other green space. The facilitator leads the group along a short, clearly marked path with sensory “pause points”, spots where children stop to notice a sound, smell, or texture. The focus is on mindful exploration, curiosity, and respect for nature, making it both educational and emotionally enriching for primary school students (Kolb, 1984; Williams,2017).



**Figure 2.** *The benefits of a nature walk for children?*. Retrieved from: <https://wildaboutthere.com/the-benefits-of-a-nature-walk-for-children/>



### Required Materials & Resources:

- A pre-assessed map of the walking area for safety and planning. Include a simple, child-friendly map (hand-drawn or printed) showing the walking path, rest points, and boundaries.
- Mark sensory stops where children can pause to listen, touch, or observe nature safely.
- Blindfolds (**optional**) or gentle instructions for children to close their eyes briefly to focus on other senses. This step is strictly optional to ensure each child feels comfortable and safe.
- Clipboards, paper, and pencils for drawing or jotting notes after the walk.
- Wet wipes or tissues for cleanup if needed.
- Water bottles and sunscreen for outdoor safety.

### Supplementary Resources:

- Readings on nature's impact on well-being (*The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams)

Book: Williams, F. (2017). *The Nature Fix: Why nature makes us happier, healthier, and more creative*. W.W. Norton & Company.

- Short video on the sensory benefits of nature exploration

[Senses Nature Walk \(Nature Walk for Kids\)](#)

### Instructions for Facilitators

#### Preparation Steps:

- Check the area: Visit the outdoor space before the activity to make sure the path is safe, easy to walk, and free of hazards (e.g., uneven ground, sharp objects).



- Get materials ready: Bring along clipboards or small notebooks, pencils, and optional blindfolds (only for those who want to try).
- Set up reflection space: Choose a comfortable area (like a circle on the grass or benches) for discussion after the walk.
- Safety briefing: Before starting, explain the walk rules, stay with the group, walk slowly, and use gentle touches when exploring.
- Assign helpers: If possible, have extra adults or older student helpers to guide and support children during the walk.



**Figure 3.** 50+ Simple Outdoor Sensory Activities for Kids to Enjoy in Nature. Retrieved from <https://getthekidsoutside.com/outdoor-sensory-activities/>

## Step-by-Step Guide

### Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

- Gather the group and explain the goal: to use their senses (hearing, touch, smell, and sight) to discover new things about nature.
- Keep the language simple and engaging



- “Today, we’re going to explore nature using all our senses!”
- “We’ll listen, feel, smell, and look closely to discover what nature wants to show us.”
- Let children know that **closing their eyes or using a blindfold is optional**, some may prefer to keep their eyes open, and that’s okay.

### **Step 2: Sensory Walk (25–30 minutes)**

- Lead the group along the safe, pre-checked path.
- Walk slowly and pause at different “sensory stops,” prompting children with short, simple cues:
  - “Let’s stop and listen—what can you hear?”
  - “Touch a leaf or a tree trunk—what does it feel like?”
  - “Can you smell anything nearby?”
- Encourage quiet moments so children can focus and enjoy the sensory experience.
- Provide gentle support for children who may feel unsure or overstimulated.

### **Step 3: Sharing & Reflection (10–15 minutes)**

- Gather everyone in a circle, in a calm, comfortable spot after the walk.
- Ask open-ended, age-appropriate reflection questions:
  - “What was your favourite sound or smell?”
  - “What did you notice about how you felt during the walk?”
  - “How does being in nature make your body feel: calm, happy, relaxed?”



- **Optional:** Invite children to draw or write one thing they enjoyed most in their nature journals or on paper.



**Figure 4.** *Nature Journaling with Kids.* Retrieved from: <https://expeditionaryart.com/blog/2018/04/nature-journaling-with-kids/>

### Facilitator Role

- **Guide and Support:** Lead the walk at a gentle pace and ensure safety at all times.
- **Encourage exploration:** Use prompts and praise curiosity (“That’s a great observation!”).
- **Be inclusive and flexible:** Allow children to choose whether to close their eyes or not and remind them that they can change their mind at any time. Emphasize a comfort-first approach, ensuring every child feels safe, supported, and in control of their experience.
- **Model mindfulness:** Demonstrate slow breathing or quiet listening moments to help children focus.

### Activity Flow

- **Introduction:** 5 minutes
- **Sensory Walk:** 25–30 minutes
- **Reflection & Discussion:** 10–15 minutes



### Engagement Strategies

- Use games or challenges, e.g., “Can you find three things that feel different?”
- Integrate storytelling or sound games (“Let’s pretend we’re nature detectives!”).
- Pair up children for buddy exploration to promote cooperation and confidence.

### Reflection Opportunities

- Encourage short sharing sessions or drawings to help children express their thoughts.
- Ask them to finish simple sentences like:
  - “Nature makes me feel \_\_\_\_\_.”
  - “The best thing I noticed today was \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Reinforce messages of calmness, curiosity, and care for the environment.

## Topic 3 – Activity 3: *Interactive Workshops*

### 1. Activity Overview

**Activity Type:** Group activities where participants role-play different elements of an ecosystem to understand interdependence.

**Duration:** 90 – 120 Minutes

**Age:** 4 to 12

**Number of participants:** 4 to 25

### 2. Activity Description:

Interactive workshops are a way to make learning dynamic, engaging, and enjoyable. According to educational experts, they refer to “a structured set of facilitated activities for groups of participants who work together to explore a problem and its solutions, over a specific period of time in one location” (Wilson et al., 2016, p. 5). These workshops promote active



participation, peer collaboration, and experiential learning—key factors in meaningful education (Kolb, 1984; Brookfield, 2013). With these interactive workshops, we aim to explore various artistic and emotional concepts in a fun, reflective, and student-centered way.

We'll divide the students in 4 different groups, with mixed-abilities, and they'll spend approximately 20 minutes in each Workshop, working together, considering the opinions of all their peers, and defending their own with arguments, without belittling any opinion.

The activities we are going to develop in these workshops are:

- Drawing with music.
- Land Art (creations in group).
- SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”.
- Emotions collage.

### **3. Material and Resources**

#### **Required Materials:**

- Blank sheets of paper.
- Paints or watercolours.
- Paintbrushes.
- Music player.
- “Sounds of birds” that offer a soft, atmospheric tone that inspires calm, reflection, and imagination. And in contrast, Vivaldi’s “The Storm” presents an energetic, raw sound.
- Elements from nature: stones, sticks, leaves, flowers...
- *The artwork Slave Labour by Banksy that highlights child exploitation in modern society (Banksy, 2012).*





**Figure 5.** Slave Labour - Banksy. Retrieved from: <https://banksybrooklyn.com/2020/11/29/banksys-top-5-most-controversial-works/>

- Magazines and newspapers.
- Scissors and glue.
- Timer with alarm.

**Technology/Software:**

Music player and digital board (preferably – if not, printer)

**Supplementary Resources:**

- Birds sounds
- Vivaldi’s “The Storm” (The four seasons)
- Banksy “Slave labour” (Banksy, 2012).

**1. Instructions for Facilitators**

**Preparation Steps:**

Before starting the activity we need to prepare all the workshops in advance, both the materials, and the setting in the space we are going to use. Ideally, we would need people (responsible adults) to develop the activity.

So we need to divide the space in four different settings. In each space we'll prepare the material needed:

- Drawing with music: music player, sheets of paper or canvas, paintbrushes, paints or watercolours.
- Land Art (creations in group): outside space or previously prepared materials – pebbles, stones, flowers, plants, sticks, shells, sand -.
- SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”: BANKSY’s artwork, “Slave labour” either in a projection or digital board, or in printed papers.
- Emotions collage: magazines, newspapers, scissors and glue.

### Step-by-Step Guide

**STEP 1:** Divide the students in different groups, ask them to take a seat in the workshop they are going to start with, and explain every workshop to everyone before starting. We set a timer with an alarm.

**STEP 2:** Start the workshops, in some of them they can work autonomously, but in other workshops the students will need guidance. For example, there has to be a responsible person in BANKSY’s workshop, or ideally in the “Paint with music” workshop.

**STEP 3:** When the timer ends, students change to the following workshop and we set the timer again. We repeat this same action 4 times, for the four workshops.

**STEP 4:** Once the activity finishes we make an evaluation of the different workshops: if they found any difficulties, if they would change something of these workshops, if all members of the team participated equally, if all the opinions were taken into account and respected, etc.



### **Facilitator Role:**

The facilitator plans the interactive workshops session. They prepare a different activity for each small group, which can be done in a short time.

Dynamises and promotes interactions between learners. Ensures that all students participate in the activity and successfully complete the task. Promotes help and solidarity among peers.

## **1. Activity Procedures**

### **Activity Flow:**

- 5 minutes: Introduction of the activity. Facilitators divide the people in 4 different groups and explain every workshop before starting.
- 80 minutes (divided in periods of time of 20 minutes for each workshop): students start in one of the workshops proposed, and after 20 minutes they change to the following workshop.

The activities proposed are these:

- **Draw with music:** ask them to listen to music inspired by natural sounds (like birdsong, water, or wind) or music that evokes the seasons, and then draw how these sounds make them feel and how they relate to the natural world. Tell them: “Listen to the music and let it guide your drawing of how you feel, paying attention to elements of nature and the connections between living things and their environment.”
- **Land Art:** In a natural environment, they explore and take what they like without harming plants or animals. They can use stones, sand, sticks, dry leaves, shells... to create sculptures or creations. These creations will later be showed to their classmates, although this is ephemeral art that will eventually disappear.
- **“Slave labour”:** The artist Banksy is known for his vindictive works that appear in public spaces in different cities. These always have a social critique behind them. In this case, “slave labour” shows a child working, and the criticism is directed at the United Kingdom. We’ll use this work of art to talk about the SDG 8 “Decent work and economic growth”. We’ll show them the painting and ask them what they feel when seeing it, they have to express what they feel without receiving any judgments from the



other participants or facilitators. After sharing their impressions, they can make their own draft about the SDG 8.

- **Collage:** We provide them with magazines and newspapers that they will use to search for words and images that describe their mood at that moment, and then they will create a collage that they will share with the rest of their classmates.

- 5 minutes Reflection time: We ask questions about their experience in the workshops. This serves as both a self-evaluation and a co-evaluation of the activity.

### **Engagement Strategies:**

This activity is very engaging and all of them can participate. In the ones where participation could be uneven, there will be a workshop responsible to dynamise and promote interactions between learners.

### **Reflection Opportunities:**

As it's mentioned before, at the end of the activity there will be a reflection time to make an evaluation of the different workshops.

## **Topic 3 – Activity 4: *Role Play assimilation***

### **1. Activity Overview**

**Duration:** 60 minutes

**Age:** 4 to 12

**Number of participants:** 4 to 25

### **2. Activity Description:**

Enacting scenarios that demonstrate the effects of human behavior on ecosystems can foster environmental empathy and a deeper understanding of ecological relationships. The objective



of this activity is to help students reflect on how everyday actions—such as pollution, deforestation, and conservation efforts—can either harm or help the natural world. By role-playing from the perspective of animals, plants, or ecosystems, students are encouraged to develop empathy toward the environment and see nature as a living system affected by human choices (Louv, 2008; Sobel, 2005). This approach aligns with environmental education goals that emphasize experiential learning and emotional connection to nature as vital components of long-term ecological awareness (Chawla, 1998).

### 3. Material and Resources

#### Required Materials:

- Scenario cards (describing different human behaviors and their impact on the ecosystem)
- Props or costumes (optional, like trees, animals, trash, water bottles, etc.)
- A large open space or outdoor area (ideal, but can also be done indoors)
- A whiteboard/flip chart and markers for group discussion

### 4. Instructions for Facilitators

#### Preparation Steps:

Prepare a set of cards with different scenarios that involve human actions and their impact on ecosystems (both positive and negative).

For example:

- **Scenario 1:** "A group of people are throwing trash into a river."
- **Scenario 2:** "A family plants a garden with native plants in their backyard."
- **Scenario 3:** "A company is cutting down a forest to build a shopping mall."
- **Scenario 4:** "People are picking up litter during a park clean-up."
- **Scenario 5:** "A farmer uses chemicals that pollute the soil and harm animals."



## Step-by-Step Guide

- Introductions: discussion with the students to introduce the topic.
- Divide in small groups and assign specific scenarios.
- Role-play planning.
- Act out in front of the class.
- Reflection and empathy discussion.

### Facilitator Role:

- **Facilitator:** Guide the students in understanding the importance of ecosystems and how their actions affect the environment. Help them with their role-play scenarios, offering advice or ideas if needed.
- **Empathy Builder:** Encourage students to think from the perspective of nature, plants, and animals. Use the role-play to foster empathy and understanding of how human behavior impacts the world around them.
- **Discussion Leader:** Lead the reflection discussion to ensure that students understand the emotional and environmental impact of human actions and how they can help.

This activity encourages empathy by helping students understand that ecosystems are delicate, and their actions can make a significant difference. By stepping into the shoes of plants, animals, or even the environment itself, students gain a more profound respect for nature and the importance of protecting it.

## 5. Activity Procedures

### Activity Flow:

#### Introduction (5-10 minutes):

- Begin by discussing ecosystems with the students. Ask them to think about different ecosystems they know (forests, oceans, wetlands) and the plants and animals that live in those places.



- Introduce the concept that human actions can positively or negatively affect these ecosystems. Explain that today, they will role-play different scenarios to understand the effects of human behavior on the environment.

#### **Assign Roles (10 minutes):**

- Divide the students into small groups (3-4 students per group). Each group will be assigned a specific scenario.
- Give each group a scenario card that describes a human action and how it impacts the ecosystem. If the scenario involves a positive action (e.g., planting a tree), the group will act out how this helps the environment. If the scenario involves a negative action (e.g., dumping waste into the ocean), the group will act out how this harms the environment.
- Provide any props or costumes that might help students feel more connected to the role (e.g., tree posters, animal masks, water bottles for pollution).

#### **Role-Play (10-15 minutes):**

- Allow each group 5-7 minutes to plan their role-play. Encourage students to think about how the human action affects the environment, the animals, and the plants.
- After planning, each group will act out their scenario in front of the class. For example, in the "littering in the park" scenario, students might act out people throwing trash and the resulting effects on animals and plants.
- Once each group performs their scenario, the teacher can facilitate a brief discussion about the impact of their action. The class can share how it made them feel and what could have been done differently to improve the situation.

#### **Reflection & Empathy Discussion (10 minutes):**

- After all the groups have performed, gather the students together for a reflection discussion. Ask questions like:
  - "How did it feel to be part of an ecosystem that was hurt by human actions?"



- "What could have been done differently to help the environment?"
- "How do you think animals and plants feel when their homes are damaged?"
- "How can we make better choices to protect ecosystems?"
- Encourage students to think from the perspective of nature: How would an animal, plant, or river feel if people took better care of it? This kind of perspective-taking nurtures empathy and deepens emotional connections to the environment, an essential part of fostering pro-environmental attitudes (Sobel, 2005).

### **Conclusion (5 minutes):**

- Conclude by summarizing the key takeaways of the activity. Emphasize that human behavior has a powerful effect on ecosystems, and small positive actions (like recycling, planting trees, cleaning up trash) can make a big difference.
- Encourage students to share their new ideas and commitments to taking care of the environment in their daily lives.

### **Engagement Strategies:**

In this activity, several engagement strategies are used to actively involve students, ensuring they are both motivated and invested in the learning process. Here are the key engagement strategies:

- Active learning through Role-Play.
- Peer collaboration.
- Visual and Kinesthetic learning.
- Real-World relevance.
- Creativity and expression.

### **Reflection Opportunities:**

Besides the last part of the activity (Reflection and empathy discussion) we can create an empathy Journal or Worksheet. To deepen reflection, give students an “Empathy Journal” or worksheet where they can write or draw their feelings. Prompt them with questions like:



- “How do you feel when the ecosystem is hurt by human actions?”
- “What are some things you can do to help the environment in your daily life?”
- “Write or draw about one way you can make a positive impact on the ecosystem.”

Moreover, and as an extension activity students can create posters or a class mural that shows different eco-friendly actions they can take to help protect ecosystems.

### **Topic 3 – Activity 5: *Emotional Mapping***

#### **Activity Overview**

**Activity Type:** Hands-on project, reflective exercise and group discussion

**Duration:** 45–60 minutes

**Ages:** 4–11

#### **Activity Description:**

**Goal & Learning Outcomes:** This activity introduces young children to the connection between their feelings and nature. By exploring colors, shapes, and textures in natural materials, children can express emotions like happiness, calmness, curiosity, or excitement. It helps develop self-awareness, emotional expression, fine motor skills, and a sense of connection to nature (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kolb, 1984; Williams, 2017; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Goleman & Bennett, 2012).

By the end of the activity, children will be able to:

- Identify and choose natural materials (leaves, flowers, stones, sticks) that reflect how they feel.
- Arrange these materials on paper, fabric, or a tray to represent emotions visually.
- Share their emotional map using simple sentences or gestures.
- Understand that nature can help them feel calm, happy, or curious.





**Figure 6.** Fun Nature Tree Craft for Kids. Retrieved from: <https://rainorshinemamma.com/2015/10/22/fun-nature-tree-craft-for-kids/>

### Summary of the activity:

Children explore a safe outdoor area or a prepared collection of natural materials. They select items that “match” their feelings—e.g., a smooth stone for calm, a bright flower for happy. They then arrange these items on a flat surface to create a visual map of their emotions. (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kolb, 1984; Williams, 2017; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Goleman & Bennett, 2012).

Facilitators support children by asking simple questions:

- “Which item makes you feel happy?”
- “Can you find something that feels calm?”

After creating their map, children can show their arrangement to the group and say a short sentence or word about their feelings, or the facilitator can help them articulate it.

**Context/Scenario:** This activity works in a garden, playground, or classroom with collected natural materials. The focus is on playful exploration, creativity, and emotional expression, while keeping instructions simple and supportive.

### Required Material and Resources:

- Natural materials: leaves, flowers, stones, twigs
- Flat surfaces: large paper, trays, or table space for arranging materials
- Optional adhesives: glue or tape
- Paper and crayons for drawing emotions
- Supplementary resources: short stories or videos about feelings in nature

### Supplementary Resources:

- Handouts or readings on nature's impact on emotional well-being (e.g., excerpts from *The Nature Fix* by Florence Williams)
- 2 videos, one on eco-art practices one on the benefits of emotional mapping

[HOPE Series | Self and Nature Connection Through Eco-Art Therapy](#)

[Emotions Map](#)

### Instructions for Facilitators

#### Preparation Steps:

1. Prepare a safe, contained space with accessible natural materials.
2. Arrange seating or working areas for children.
3. Have assistants or helpers ready for supervision.
4. Prepare simple prompts and discussion questions suitable for young children.

### Step-by-Step Guide

**Introduction (3–5 minutes):** Explain that children will make a “map of feelings” using things from nature. Show examples of simple arrangements.

**Material Exploration (5–10 minutes):** Children pick materials that represent how they feel. Encourage touching, smelling, and noticing colors and textures.



**Creation Phase (10–15 minutes):** Children place materials on paper or trays to make their emotional map. Celebrate creativity and choices.

**Sharing & Reflection (5–10 minutes):** Ask children to share one thing about their map:

- “This leaf makes me feel happy because...”
- “I chose this stone because it feels calm.”

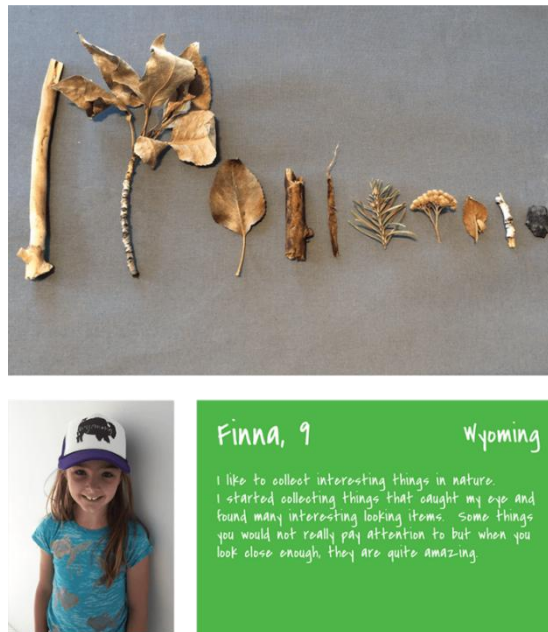


Figure 7. Kids Collect. Retrieved from: <https://www.wildlifeart.org/exhibits/kids-collect>



Figure 8. Start a nature journal. Retrieved from: <https://theladybirdsadventures.co.uk/nature-art/>

### **Facilitator Role:**

Support children safely and gently. Encourage exploration, praising choices and effort. Ask open-ended, simple questions about feelings and nature. Be flexible: allow children to express through gestures, words, or drawings (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Kolb, 1984; Williams, 2017; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Goleman & Bennett, 2012).

### **Activity Procedures**

- **Introduction:** 5 minutes
- **Material Exploration:** 10 minutes
- **Creation Phase:** 20 minutes
- **Guided Reflection and Discussion:** 10–15 minutes

### **Engagement Strategies:**

This activity uses open-ended prompts to spark creative and emotional expression, encourages collaboration through small group discussions of material choices and the creative process, and incorporates scheduled pauses that allow participants to fully engage with their sensory experiences and reflect deeply on their feelings (Kolb, 1984; Goleman & Bennett, 2012; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; Williams, 2017).

### **Reflection Opportunities:**

After the creation phase, facilitators conduct a group debrief to capture initial reactions and insights, while also providing journaling prompts or an exit ticket question—such as asking what creating the emotional map revealed about their relationship with nature—and offering additional time for individual reflection if desired (Kolb, 1984; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Williams, 2017).



### Topic 3 – Activity 6: *Secret Leaves Messages*

#### 1. Activity Overview

**Activity Type:** Individual activity. Hands-on activity.

**Duration:** 60 - 90 minutes.

**Age:** 4 to 12

**Number of participants:** 4 to 25

#### 2. Activity Description:

Encourage creativity, communication, and appreciation for nature by using natural materials to write and send messages among students (Louv, 2008; Sobel, 2004; Knight, 2013).



Figure 9. *Creating messages in nature*. Retrieved from: <https://dbg.org/creating-messages-in-nature/>

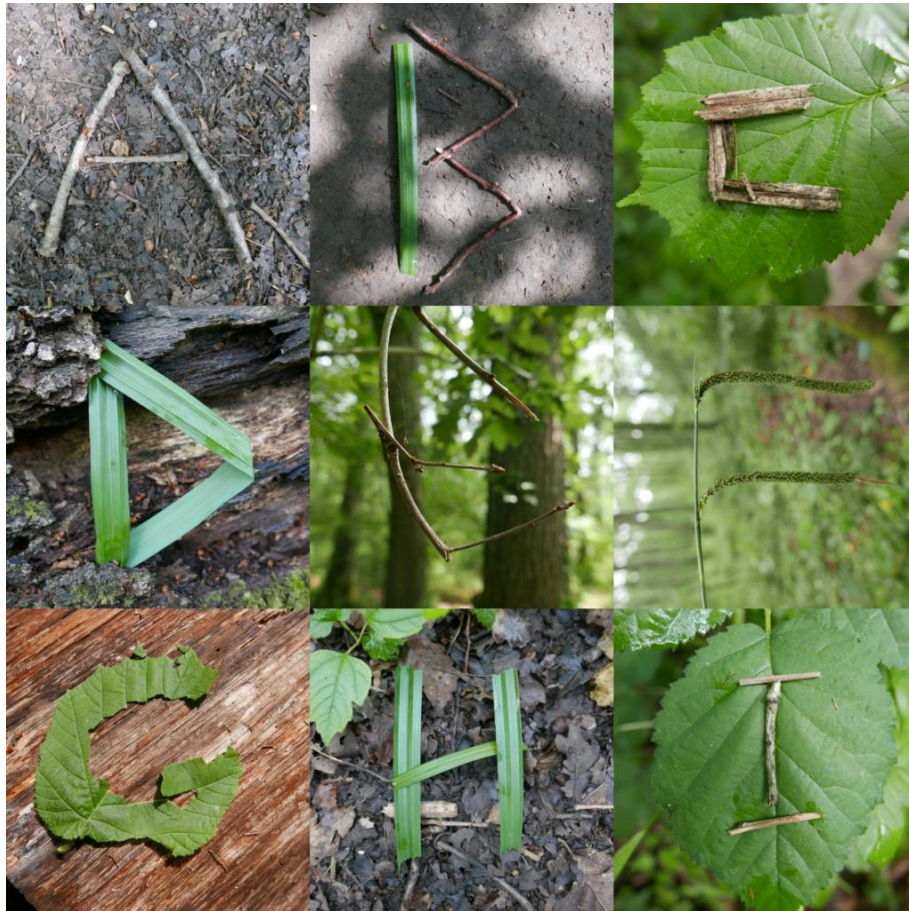


Figure 10. *Natural alphabet*. Retrieved from: <https://childsplayabc.wordpress.com/2021/06/17/nature-alphabet/>

### 3. Material and Resources

#### Required Materials:

- Large leaves (banana, magnolia, or any broad leaves)
- Small twigs or pointed stones (for etching)
- Flowers or pebbles (for decoration)
- Bark, smooth stones, or dried mud tablets (as alternative writing surfaces)
- Twine or grass strands (to tie messages)

### 4. Instructions for Facilitators

#### Preparation Steps:

Before starting with this activity:



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**Gather Materials:**

- Collect large, sturdy leaves (banana, magnolia, or similar broad leaves).
- Gather smooth stones, bark pieces, and dried mud tablets as alternative writing surfaces.
- Find small twigs, pointed stones, and flower petals for writing or decorating.
- Prepare twine or grass strands for tying rolled messages.

**Select a Location:**

- Choose an outdoor area with natural elements (school garden, playground, or nearby park).
- If indoors, set up a table with collected natural materials.

**Prepare the “Nature Mailbox”:**

- Use a tree stump, woven basket, or a decorated box for collecting messages.

**Demonstrate Writing Techniques:**

- Practice etching messages on leaves or bark to ensure the materials work well, the letters on the leaves may be hard to see, so using larger leaves or limiting each leaf to a single, short word may help.
- If using mud or flower petal ink, test it beforehand.

**Plan Message Prompts:**

- Prepare examples of simple messages to inspire students (e.g., “You are kind!” or “Nature is amazing!”).
- Introduce the idea of secret codes or pictograms for added fun.



## Step-by-Step Guide

- Introduction.
- They have to write two different messages: one for the student they are assigned (so everyone gets a message) and one free.
- Writing the messages.
- Decorating and sealing.
- Delivery and exchange.
- Reflection.

### Facilitator Role:

- Guide: introduce the activity, make a demonstration, encourage creativity and participation by giving examples of simple messages.
- Material organizer: ensure all the necessary materials.
- Encourager and motivator.
- Mediator.
- Discussion leader.

## 5. Activity Procedures

### Activity Flow:

#### Introduction (10 min):

- Discuss how ancient people used natural materials for communication (e.g., carvings on stones, messages on leaves).
- Explain that they will be writing and sending secret messages using nature.

#### Writing the Messages (15 min):

- Students gently etch their messages onto leaves using small twigs or stones.
- If using smooth stones or bark, they can use mud or flower petals to "ink" their words.



- Encourage short, simple messages such as "You are a great friend!" or "Nature is beautiful!"

### **Decorating & Sealing (10 min):**

- Let them add small flowers or pebbles to make their messages special.
- They can roll the leaf and tie it with a grass strand or place it under a small rock for a friend to find.

### **Delivery & Exchange (15 min):**

- Students place their messages in a designated "Nature Mailbox" (a tree stump or a basket).
- They take turns picking and reading messages from their classmates.

### **Reflection (10 min):**

- Discuss how it felt to communicate without paper and pens.
- Encourage them to think of other ways they can use nature for creativity.

### **Engagement Strategies:**

This activity includes several engagement strategies to keep primary students interested, involved, and actively participating:

- Hands-on Learning (Kinesthetic Engagement)
- Collaborative Learning (Social Engagement)
- Creativity & Personal Expression (Emotional Engagement)
- Mystery & Curiosity (Cognitive Engagement)
- Connection to Nature (Experiential Engagement)
- Gamification (Motivational Engagement)
- Reflection & Discussion (Metacognitive Engagement)

These strategies make the activity interactive, meaningful, and engaging for young learners.





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### **Reflection Opportunities:**

This activity makes learning fun while fostering a connection to the environment.

In this activity, students reflect on the balance between what nature gives and what humans take, fostering respect and gratitude for the natural world. They begin by exploring their surroundings and collecting natural materials thoughtfully, taking only what has already fallen to the ground. After sharing their messages, students discuss how nature offers resources, beauty, and inspiration, and how humans have a responsibility to care for and protect it in return. This helps them understand that respecting nature means taking only what is needed and giving back through kindness, conservation, and mindful actions.

As an extension to this activity, you can turn this into a scavenger hunt by hiding messages around a garden or playground. Or introduce symbols or pictograms for a "secret code" element.



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