



Igniting a love of nature

In this session, young people will...

- Map nearby green spaces to discuss connection to nature.
- End with a fire pit circle with marshmallows to talk about personal connections to nature.
- Use star gazers to discuss the night and be given tools for orienting themselves outside at night.

The aim of the session is to...

1. Open discussions about personal connection to nature and local green spaces with young people and between young people.
2. Create opportunities for young people to enjoy connecting with nature in a familiar setting through a fire and through star recognition.
3. Introduce mapping skills and create a map of local green spaces that young people value together.
4. Introduce the concept that we are nature and that nature doesn't look one way.

Activity 1a: Mapping nature connection

In this activity, young people mark areas where they feel a connection to nature on a large map of the area around the youth club. Young people make a land art map of a green space they like and photograph and scrapbook it.

Different ways to engage could include marking green spaces they like, writing why they do or don't like them on sticky notes, stickers to mark special places, drawing routes they enjoy, marking where they live / where the club is.

Accessibility

Make sure the map is pinned up at a height that a young person could reach sitting down. Staff nearby to support with step-by-step instructions. Write down instructions and pin up nearby in case people want to avoid conversation with new adult.

Talking points

- What is nature? Why?
- How can you find nature on the map?
- What kind of nature do you care about?
- Do you ever use maps?
- When was the last time you noticed something in nature?
- Are we nature? Is what we eat nature?
- What does nature mean to you?

Resources

- Large map of the area around the youth club.
- Coloured pens.
- Stickers and post-its.
- Blu tack or pins to stick on wall.
- OS maps of the area.
- Instant cameras.
- Scrapbooks.

Extensions

- Finding a new place they could explore from the OS map.
- Talking about where feels safe and why.
- Finding out where they can go and where they don't have access (and why).

Activity 1b: Star gazer craft

In this activity, young people learn constellations and make a star gazer for a constellation of their choice. Instructions can be found [here](#).

Different ways to engage could include colouring the star gazer sleeve, cutting out constellation templates, making holes in the tube.

Accessibility

Write down instructions for the activity on the table in case people want to avoid conversation with new adult.

Talking points

- Do you look at the stars?
- Do you know the names of any stars?
- What is a constellation?
- What is a star?

Resources

- Planisphere (star map).
- Glue.
- Pringles cans.
- [Template constellations](#).
- Glow stars.
- Torches.
- Coloured pens.
- Blu tack / pins to make holes.
- Instant cameras.
- Scrapbooks.

Extensions

- Finding their constellation on the planisphere.
- Making their constellation with glow in the dark stars.
- Recording their constellation in their scrapbook.

Activity 2: Fire pit

In this activity, young people light a fire together, gather sticks for marshmallows and toast them while talking about personal connections to nature and the seasons.

Accessibility

Youth staff should create a calm and safe environment around the fire, with a clear area for sitting. It should be in an accessible part of the youth club (e.g. the back garden if it's step-free). Make sure there are a few options for food available (vegan, gluten-free, soy-free). There should be no pressure to interact with the fire more than feels comfortable.

Talking points

- How do you feel being near the fire?
- Are in you touch with nature if you are cold? If you see grass? If you get a burn from the fire?
- Does a marshmallow count as nature? Does the plastic wrap count as nature?
- How would you build a campfire?
- What's your favourite season?

Resources

- Fire pit.
- Logs and firelights.
- Marshmallows and Starburst.
- Back-up toasting sticks.
- First aid kit.

Extensions

- Helping to build and put out the fire.
- Thinking about what else you could cook on a fire.
- Games like one word story.
- Putting wishes on the fire.
- Ghost stories.
- Star mapping.