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WONDER WALK

Grades: All ages

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: A chime or whistle

Relevant Subjects: Language Arts and Science

Pertinent Information: The Wonder Walk is done in pairs with a leader and follower who switch roles halfway through the activity. It can be conducted any place where there is a bit of nature.

With elementary students, it's important to do this activity with either a small group or a large ratio of adults to children.

Once they've had this experience, it becomes so much more obvious why it's worth protecting our planet. Instead of an intellectual appreciation of environmental preservation, these participants have a visceral understanding of what it is they are being asked to protect. They care because they've seen and heard and felt the wonder of this earth.

1. Have participants pair up, and explain the entire activity before you begin. Let them know that the activity should be done in **complete silence**. The leader will be taking her partner on a very special journey to awaken his senses and invite him to meet different aspects of nature. The one being led will have his eyes closed. Firmly holding her partner's arm, the leader brings the follower to whatever she notices in nature and wants to share. Perhaps she sees a particularly beautiful tree. The leader carefully brings her partner to the tree, tilts his head back, and gently taps next to his eye. This is the signal for him to open his eyes and take a look at whatever he's been led to see, in this case the tree from below. The leader gives her partner a few moments to look before tapping his temple again, the signal to close his eyes. To awaken the sense of touch, the leader might place her partner's hands on the bark of the tree. If she hears the sound of a bird, she might gently pull on her partner's earlobe, the signal to listen. Maybe there is a flower nearby. The leader might bring her partner to the flower, touch the back of her partner's knee to signal him to bend and crouch lower, position his head near the flower, and tap the tip of his nose, the signal to smell.

2. After about 7-10 minutes, you can ring a chime or whistle, the signal for participants to switch roles.
3. When both people in each pair have had a chance to lead and be led, call them back together to discuss the experience.

Activity from *The Power and Promise of Humane Education*