

Nature Games

Games are an important part of the Girl Scout Program. They help girls to cooperate willingly and easily. They develop good sportsmanship, self-control, and muscular and emotional control. They also give girls an opportunity to release energy. Most importantly, games are FUN! Here are some suggestions of games that are fun to play. More games can be found in *Fun Games for Girls to Play (#04-104)* in the volunteer resource section of our website. Your girls will have fun inventing or adapting games to fit the situation.

Nature Drawing Game

Teams send one representative equipped with pencil and paper to the leader who assigns them, in a whisper, the name of some object (squirrel, daisy, etc.) to be drawn. Representative runs back to the team and draws the object. First team to guess object correctly wins a point. Then teams send up another representative for assignment. Have as many assignments as girls on team.

Note: Good for rainy days and as review after hike.

Leaf Relay

Use pictures of as many different leaves as possible. All must be identified to begin with. Two lines are seated facing each other – each line numbers off, starting at the opposite ends. Leader holds up a leaf and calls a number; the two with that number name that leaf, the first correct answer scores a point for her team.

Twenty points is a game. To repeat, different leaves may be used, or at least have the girls change places and take new numbers.

Staking Claims

Each group of 4 or 5 fences in with string a small area 2 square-ft. or less and count the variety of items in it. One member acts as secretary. Descriptive names of unknown objects may be given. Varieties of plants and animals - living or dead, evidence of animals, shadows, breeze, sunshine, clouds, sounds, birds and insects passing through, or over, the claim can be counted. Can be played competitively with a time limit or just see how much can be found in a small area.

Who Am I?

On the back of each player pin a piece of paper bearing the name of an animal, tree, flower, etc. Each player must then guess who or what she is by asking questions that can be answered by YES or NO from her companions. When she has guessed her identity she may pin the paper on front. This is a quiet one for a mixer or a rainy day.

Bird's Nest

Players sit in a circle. Leader whispers the name of a bird to each, taking care to have the same number of each – four robins, four blue jays, etc. Player in the middle calls out the name of a bird. All those with that name must exchange seats. Middle one tries to get seat. The player without a seat is now in the middle. To make everyone change seats, call "Bird's Nest"

Ducks Fly

The players stand in a line, with the one chosen to be the leader standing in front of them. The leader starts off by saying "Ducks Fly" and flapping her arms like wings. All the other players must immediately flap their arms too. The leader continues by saying "Cats Meow" and meowing. All others copy her. Next may come "Horses Trot", "Hens Cluck", "Cows Moo". Each time everyone makes a sound and/or motion. After a few animals have been named the leader tries to trick the others by making a false statement such as "Dogs Moo" and starts to moo. If any player starts to moo after her she is out of the game and leaves the line. The game can keep going until all the players are out.

Secret Leaves

The troop is divided into teams, each team numbered. On a signal, number ones run to the leader who secretly shows them a leaf. They run back to their teams and describe it as accurately as they can but do not name it. Depending on the age of the girls you may have them draw the leaf instead. When the team has decided what the leaf is number one runs to the leader. The first team to name the leaf correctly wins. For the next round, number twos look at a different leaf.

Fire in the Forest

All players form a double circle and face toward the center. The inside circle are trees and the outside circle the forest rangers. One player stands in the center and shouts "fire in the forest" and begins to clap her hands. As long as she claps, the rangers run around the outside of the circle counter-clockwise. When she stops clapping, she steps in front of one of the "trees" and all of the rangers do the same thing. The ranger who cannot find a "tree" takes the place in the center.

Sardines

While all the others cover their eyes and count to a given number, one player within a defined area hides in a place big enough to hold all the players. The others separate and hunt for her, and only when seen by other players, those who find her slip in and hide with her. This continues until the last one finds the hiding place. The game is then repeated, the first one who found the place being the new one to choose a place.

Streets and Alleys (A large area is needed for this game)

All but two players are lined up with as many players in each line as there are lines or as nearly so as possible (i.e. 5 lines each with 5 players in it). Players then spread out at arm's distance from each other, both sideways, back, and frontways. The leader stands in one place and as the lines face her, the players with their arms outstretched form the corridors between the lines – STREETS. At her call of "ALLEYS", players all turn one-quarter to the right and again stretch their arms, this time forming corridors at right angles to those made at the call of "STREETS". As soon as these two changes are clear to all the players, the game begins. One of the two players left outside being the runner, the other the chaser. The leader calls "STREETS" or "ALLEYS" as often as necessary to keep the runner and the chaser active. If, after two minutes the runner isn't caught, she chooses another runner and chaser.

Rabbits in a Trap

Eight players form a fairly large circle and then two by two arches, which are the traps. The rest of the players – the rabbits – run around the circle through the arches. At a signal, the arches bring their arms down to form a trap. As rabbits are caught, they form more arches. Remaining rabbits continue until all are caught.

Farmyard

Each team chooses the name of an animal that may be imitated by some noise. All players are blindfolded and scattered around the room. On signal, animals make their noises to attract other members of their team. For instance, the ducks start quacking. When two ducks meet, they join hands and seek other ducks. The first team to gather all their members – wins.

Find the Possum

The leader hides the "possum" (any object can be the possum). Each patrol has one hunter and the others are hounds. The hunters send their hounds to find the possum. Each patrol has a distinctive call of its own. As soon as a hound has tracked the possum to its hiding place, she gives her call. Immediately all the hunters and hounds run for the "tree". All the hounds join the baying. Only hunters may capture the possum. Ten points are given to the hound tracking the possum. The other hounds score according to their arrival at the hiding place. The second hound scores 5 points, the third 4 points, and so forth. The hunter who captures the possum scores 5 points. Patrol with the highest score – wins.

Nature Sounds

The group is given 5 minutes to see who can make the longest list of things heard in the woods during that time.

Nature "Crows and Cranes"

Divide the group into two teams and line them up facing each other in two lines some 10-12 feet apart. Back of each line is the team's base line. One team is known as "TRUE" and the other is "FALSE". Make nature statements that may or may not be true, such as "Birds have teeth", "Poison Ivy has 2 leaves", etc. If the statement is true, the true side chases the false side to its base line. Anyone caught enroute joins the true side. If the statement is false, the false side does the pursuing. At the end, the side with most players – wins.

Matches

Leader collects a number of different pictures of leaves, weeds, seeds, etc. (Each picture needs a match) Players are divided into equal teams. The leader shows the first in each line one picture and they run off to match it. And so on until each player is searching for a specimen. The first team to return with perfect matches – wins.

Trial and Error Trail

There is no labeling or tagging of specimens. Notes read: "If this is a dogwood tree, walk straight ahead nine paces, but if it is an elm, walk two paces to the moss-covered stump." Walking in the right direction will bring you to the next clue, which is written in the same manner. Only correct choices lead to the next clue.

Motions

Players sit in a circle. IT goes away while those in the circle decide on a leader. All take the same position as the leader and perform the same motions as the leader. IT returns to the center of the circle and has 3 chances to guess the leader. When discovered, the leader becomes IT and a new leader is chosen.

Quests

Make a list of probable "discoveries" which may be found on a hike. Give a copy to each pair or small group. For beginners in the field of nature study the list may include such items as spider webs, a bird's nest, a four-footed animal, etc. For more experienced girls, the names of specific plants or animals may be added. Give each item a score value according to the probability of finding it. The group with the highest score at the end of the hike wins. [Note – be sure that the girls practice Leave No Trace by not picking or disturbing the things they find.]