

CAMERA

A Sharing Nature Activity by Joseph Cornell



Because Camera quiets distracting thoughts and restlessness so that one can see clearly, this exercise is one of the most powerful and memorable of the *Sharing Nature* activities.

HOW TO PLAY

Camera is played with two people: one person is the photographer and the other the camera. The photographer guides the camera, who has his eyes closed, on a search for beautiful and captivating pictures. When the photographer sees something he likes, he points the camera at it, to frame the object he wants to shoot.

The photographer signals the camera to open the lens (his eyes) by tapping twice on the camera's shoulder. A third tap 3 seconds later tells the camera to close his eyes again. For the first picture, it may help to say "Open" with the first two taps, and "Close" with the third.

Have the camera keep his eyes closed between pictures—to give the three-second "exposure" the impact of surprise. Encourage photographer and camera to walk in silence (speaking only if absolutely necessary) to enhance the camera's experience.

After taking 4 to 6 photographs, the camera and the photographer trade roles.

GUIDELINES FOR PLAYING CAMERA WITH CHILDREN:

Children younger than twelve years normally should pair with an adult or mature teenager. Younger children don't have enough awareness of others to allow them to guide another child. It is, however, fine to have a young child lead a parent or grandparent. In this situation, I recommend letting the adult camera know it's okay to peek from time to time.

To ensure safety, you can have the camera stand behind the photographer with his hands on the photographer's shoulders. As the photographer begins to walk, the camera will follow directly behind, and thus will avoid low-lying tree limbs and other obstacles. Using this method, adult leaders can guide three or four child cameras at a time.

Make sure to tell players about any potential dangers such as poisonous plants, harmful insect nests, or animal holes.

MORE CAMERA TIPS:

1. **Sensitively guide the camera by holding his hand and gently pulling his arm in the direction you want to go. Go slowly and remain watchful for obstacles on the ground and for low-lying tree branches.**

Concepts, skills and qualities taught: Aesthetic appreciation

When and where to play: Day / outdoor area

Number of people needed: For 2 or more people

Suggested age range: Ages 4 and up, with adult / Ages 12 and up

Materials needed: Index cards, pencils

2. Make the photographs stunning by taking shots from unusual angles and perspectives. For example, you can both lie down under a tree and take your picture looking upward, or you can put your camera very close to a tree's bark or leaves.
3. You can prepare the camera's vision for the next picture by telling him which lens to use. For a picture of a flower, tell the camera to choose a close-up lens; for a sweeping scenic panorama, a wide-angle lens; and for a far-away object, a telephoto lens.
4. Photographers can also pan the camera, i.e., move it slowly with the shutter held open, like a movie camera. While panning, you can keep the shutter open longer, since the movement will hold the camera's interest. You can also pan vertically—for example, start at the base of a tree and slowly move up the trunk to the highest branches.
5. After participants have played both roles, each player can “develop” (sketch from memory) one of the pictures he took while he was the camera. Then have each camera give his developed picture to his photographer.