

Connecting Kids to Nature

Try this activity in a forest—a natural place to learn!

For over 30 years, Project Learning Tree® has used the forest as a “window” to help young people gain an awareness of the world around them and their place within it. Blending a walk in the forest with a fun and engaging PLT activity creates a powerful learning experience for children of all ages. Here’s one idea in a series from PLT that introduces the concept of forest diversity.

Activity 2: Get in Touch with Trees

By way of neighborhood trees and a mystery box, children will explore their sense of touch and discover different shapes and textures in nature.

Doing the Activity

Before venturing outdoors with children, take a walk yourself and find an area where a few different tree species grow. Collect one or more objects from the ground underneath the trees. Place the objects in a “mystery box” so they can be felt but not seen. Take the children to your collection spot, have them feel the items in the mystery box, and challenge them to search the collection area to find the matching objects. Ask:

- What is important about your sense of touch? How do you use it?
- What would life be like without your sense of touch?
- Can you identify objects by only feeling them?

You can also bring along a blindfold and have children examine trees using only their hands. Can similarities and differences be found?

To learn more about the unique characteristics of a few American trees, check out *Trees, Leaves, and Bark* by Diane Burns, 1998, ISBN: 1559716282.

Complete this word search puzzle to discover ten words that describe texture. Look below for the answers.

Z	Y	S	U	T	F	O	S
M	P	C	T	S	A	M	P
A	D	P	S	I	O	L	O
F	H	R	H	O	C	R	N
U	H	A	T	M	O	K	G
Z	B	H	B	U	M	P	Y
Z	H	S	G	Y	B	T	U
Y	O	H	A	R	D	G	R



Adapted from Activity 2: Get in Touch with Trees from *Project Learning Tree's PreK-8 Environmental Education Activity Guide*.

Discover how PLT can help you teach... from nature!

- Attend a workshop near you to receive PLT activity guides, ideas, and materials.
- To contact your local PLT State Coordinator, visit www.plt.org or call 202-765-3641.

Answers: bumpy, fuzzy, hard, moist, rough, smooth, soft, spongy, sticky

www.plt.org



Project Learning Tree® (PLT) is a program of the American Forest Foundation.

