

# Microtrails

Shrink down, down, down, right to the forest floor and create a microtrail where you can wander amidst towering mosses or grasses, and explore a whole new world.

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Ages:** 6 and up

**Materials Required:** none

**Nature-Friendly Park Experience:** Help keep people, wildlife and habitat healthy.

**Stay on designated trails at all times.** Walking off trails can damage small plants and tree roots.

**Admire berries, leaves and flowers without picking them.** Animals use them for food and to make homes.

**Everything in the park must stay in the park.** All things found in nature have a role to play.

Choose an area outdoors in nature (on the forest floor, open meadow, sand dune etc.). Have everyone find their own sitting spot away from others, close their eyes and visualize that they have transformed into a very small bug such as an ant, beetle, woodbug, daddy longlegs, millipede or one of their own imagination.

## Guide everyone with questions such as:

- **As a bug, what do the trees (grasses, sand grains, etc.) look like?**
- **Is there much light where you are?**
- **What do you have to worry about?**

Ask everyone to focus on the kinds of things they might find or encounter: moss, twigs, decomposing logs, plants, other bugs, huge footprints, tunnels, blowing wind and falling rain.

Then ask each person to make a guided nature trail for bugs (or alternatively to give visiting bugs a tour of their home). Let their imaginations decide what is at each point along the nature trail. They can use their fingers or fallen sticks to mark these features. A small hole in the ground may be an underground tunnel, or some moss could be a tall tree. Ask everyone to mark where they sleep, where they get their water, etc. It is important that the scale of their home is consistent with their size as a bug. When they have set up their trail, have them take another person on a tour.

A nice follow-up to this activity is to have everyone write a story about a tiny animal or person's adventures along their microtrail.

SOURCE: CORNELL, J. (1998). SHARING NATURE WITH CHILDREN. ADAPTED FROM "MICRO-HIKE" (PP.50-51). NEVADA CITY, CA: DAWN PUBLICATIONS.