



MY LIFE AS A TREE

Experience the story of a tree first-hand



Goal: Children will come to understand the life of a tree through a short story. They will experience the story first-hand by dramatising it. Later they will share their experiences as a tree with others.

How long: 20–40 minutes

Who: 8 to adult

Where: A pleasant place with trees or shrubs

When: Any warm time of the year

1. THE MAGIC

In a familiar pleasant natural place, children cover their faces with their hands and for a short while they close their eyes. The guide tells the story in a pleasant emotive voice.

„You can feel the pleasant warm wind as it plays with your hair. You feel it blowing around you in a circle. It's accelerating. Suddenly it becomes a whirlwind and draws you in and up. You fly for a while through the air. You feel comfortable. You are looking at the landscape. It's a beautiful view. The wind starts to calm down and gradually can no longer hold you aloft. You descend slowly and pleasantly to the ground. When you finally touch down, the ground feels different. You don't touch it with your feet. You can't feel your legs, arms, head or anything else recognisable. Suddenly your limbs seem to be shrinking and curling up, but you feel great strength. You have become a seed. A seed of a tree. You flew far away from your mother tree and you were lucky because you landed on a brilliant spot. You landed in fertile soil. You feel the comforting soil all around you, the warmth of the ground and its water.“

2. GERMINATION

Ask the children to curl up lying on the ground or squatting, with their hands still on their faces, and pretend to be a seed that has just landed in some soil. The earth feels fairly soft, warm. The guide continues to tell the story but at the same time asks the children to dramatise the story by portraying what is happening to them in their role as the seed. When the seeds finally germinate, the children can lift their heads from their hands and pretend to grow slowly.

„You are the seed of a tree. You are nestled in some good soil. You feel peaceful, secure, and with a sense of well-being and growing energy. Suddenly you want to get out. You begin by sending out your root. It grows and gets longer and stretches towards the centre of the earth.“

3. SEEDLING

„When the root is firmly attached, you start growing from the other end of the seed. You are also getting longer upwards. You are growing out of the soil. You feel light and warmth. You push yourself up towards the light and heat of the sun. Gradually, your first two leaves grow up. They stretch and enlarge towards the light and change the sun's energy into a source of energy for your growth. You have been luckier than most seedlings. You have not been eaten or stepped on and you have enough water, nutrients, and sunlight.“



4. TREE

„You have been growing in this spot for several beautiful years and you have grown into a strong solid tree. You have a rich crown that is full of branches and twigs that carry lots of leaves. It’s all around you. Birds nest in your crown. They often come and sing their songs in your branches. You have a strong bark that protects you and gives a home to many insects. You have strong roots in the ground that reach into the earth as deep as your crown reaches above. Animals have built a lot of corridors and dens among your roots. Through the roots you are connected to a network of other trees, shrubs, plants and mushrooms. It forms a natural internet through which you send signals. You have a lot of tree friends around you. Sometimes a person comes to you. They sit and read a book. Children play at your roots. Sometimes these people look at your big crown and talk about their wishes or worries. You are living a beautiful life.“

5. RETURN

„And suddenly you feel the warm wind on your bark again. It’s starting to blow around you faster and faster in circles. You feel a vortex on your bark, branches and leaves. A fog is coming to envelop you. Suddenly the wind calms down and the fog dissolves. You are standing in your place. But now you don’t have a heavy trunk with roots anchored in the soil and branches reaching for the sun anymore. You have returned to feeling your feet, body, arms, fingers, head, and your skin. You feel good, calm, rested. You have experienced a wonderful journey and a safe return.“

TIP: If the children are enjoying this, challenge them to use their bodies to show growing up, spreading, moving in the wind, etc. They should represent the movements of a tree during its growth and life.

TIP: Meet in a circle to share the experience but first give the children a short time to visit a tree. They can touch the bark, roots, branches and leaves.

6. SHARING

In the end, sit together in a circle close to one or more trees. Wait some time for the experience to settle. Read a tree story if there is time and inclination otherwise go straight to sharing what was experienced. How did I feel? How did it feel to be a seed? What did it feel like to be a seedling? Or a tree? What was the best stage? What felt a little unpleasant? Did I feel my roots? Leaves? Did I feel good in my imagination?

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY’S GOAL (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

- The children played a game in which they acted a part of the life of a tree, starting from being a seed
- The children dramatised the tree’s movements and other moments of the tree’s growth if they were willing
- The children shared their experiences as a tree with each other

