

# STORIES FROM THE BRANCHES

How would I see a tree if I were a...

**Goal:** To experience nature as a unique place to create stories. The children will try to see the world around trees from the perspective of someone else. How does another tree, an ant or the wind see a tree? Learning to see familiar places through the eyes of someone else teaches us more mindfulness, empathy and respect for the needs of others.

How long: 30–60 minutes

Who: 8–99

Where: A place in the countryside, among some trees

When: All year round (start in the warm part of the year)

You need: Utensils for writing, painting, creating; natural materials, writing pads, cushions, string, clothes pegs

## 1. LOOK BACK TOGETHER

Stop at a pleasant place among some trees, ideally where you and the children have often spent time before, and sit together in a circle and think about what you have already experienced, produced, and discovered with trees. It is important to look back before embarking on further work. It is useful to bring some of the photos, journals or results from previous projects along with you.

## 2. TRANSFORMATION

Each of the children will choose what they will turn into in this game. It can be anything in the world of a tree (e.g. mouse, bird, ant, lichen, fungus, leaf, wind or rain). Really anything. The important thing is to be able to talk about what that chosen animal, plant or element might experience among trees.

## 3. THEIR OWN STORIES

Agree upon a set area among the trees and have everyone choose a comfortable place in which to create. The challenge is to create a story, poem, drawing, comic, poster, song, dance, sculpture or any other creation to present: How would I view trees if I were a ...

*TIP: It is useful to have a few examples ready such as a short text, poem, or comic to show the possibilities of expression to the children who might not be used to such creative freedom.*

## 4. THE STUMP IS ALIVE

If transmogrification is too difficult or unattractive for some children, they can find a stump and watch it. What's going on around it? Who's marching on or through it and what's growing on and/or around it? The children can then prepare pictures, stories or descriptions of their observations.

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## 5. SHARE YOUR CREATIONS

Looking back can take different forms depending on the time and types of creations. A line stretched between some trees with some pegs is useful to hang whatever can be displayed that way. Whoever is finished can then browse through the emerging tree gallery. You can leave the presentations that need to be demonstrated for when everyone is ready to meet. In the end, it is useful to share how the creations were made, any challenges faced, what was pleasant, etc.

### EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

The children spent time among the trees transformed into something else.

The children saw other examples of different views and the needs of the animals, plants, and elements around the tree.

The children expressed their new experiences and views in a form they had chosen (in a story, poem, picture, ...).

