SIT SPOTS

Our lives can be so busy, we rarely stop our play or our chores or our talk to just sit in one spot. There’s so much to do! But when you do slow down, and turn on your senses, you may discover things you never knew were right there all along. Scientists use their observational skills to explore the world, but it takes practice! Come along outside with us, slow down, and be as still as a stone. Find your own sit spot. What will you discover?

**Time:** 15-minute activity

**Materials:**
- YOU and your senses
- A place to sit outside
- If you’d like to record your observations, paper and something to write with
Directions:

1. With permission from an adult, head outside to a place where you can sit for some time without being interrupted. You may choose any place where you can be still for a while and become an observer. This is your very own sit spot.

2. Time to settle in to your sit spot, so you can become an even better observer. Have a seat and get comfortable any way you like. Close your eyes and breathe for three breaths, like you always do. Now take three more breaths, but this time breathe in a special way as you count along, with each count lasting about a second, like this:

   Breathe in a deep breath as you count to three.
   Then hold that breath in as you count to three.
   Then breathe out as you count to three.
   And hold that breath out as you count to three.
3. Have a normal breath, open your eyes, and think about you for just a moment. How do you feel? Do you feel different than when you first sat down, or the same? Is it a good feeling, or a not-so-good feeling?

4. Tune in to your ears. Close your eyes again and focus your attention on hearing. What do you hear? Are the sounds soft, sweet, grating, loud, repetitive, gentle? Do you hear sounds made by humans, by you, living things, non-living things?
   a. Listen more. Where do you hear those sounds coming from? All around, from one direction, from the ground, the air, from you?
   b. Now hear even further. Stretch to see how many more sounds you can find with your ears. You are on an auditory scavenger hunt, finding all the sounds you can with your ears!
5. See what you can see. Open your eyes and focus your attention on all around you. What do you see? How many different colors do you see? Look more closely. How many different colors of green do you see? Of brown? Of blue? Do you see things made by humans? Made by nature? Made by living things? Made by non-living things?
   a. See more. Peer down at the Earth, peek up at the sky, look all the way to the horizon scanning with your eyes on near things and far away things. Do you see something you hadn’t noticed before?
   b. Now see close up. Zoom in to one leaf or one clump of Earth or one pebble. What do you notice with your eyes now?

6. Put your skin to work. How many different textures can you feel within reach of your sit spot? Can you find something soft, prickly, fuzzy, rough, or sleek?
   a. Feel more. Feel with the skin on your face. Can you feel a breeze, the sun, the temperature of the air?
   b. Now feel even more. Can you feel where your body touches the Earth? How does the Earth feel underneath you? Is it as hard as cement, soft and spongy, lumpy, level and flat? Is it warm, cold?
7. Sniff out the scents. Take a long deep breath in through your nose. What do you smell? Can you give each scent a name with words like sweet, pungent, spicey, and more?
   a. Smell more. What happens if you bring in a deep breath or a shallow breath, do you smell more scents or less? What happens when you sniff?
   b. Now smell close up. Put your nose next to a plant and sniff, next to the Earth and sniff, next to your skin and sniff. What do you smell?

8. Well done slowing down! You have used four of your five senses to become a keen observer from your sit spot! Now just let your mind think about anything it likes, and just breathe three more breaths, as you always do. What did you discover that was brand new to you?

**Wonder Why with Nature WY…**

Try this sit spot activity near home, and then in a more wild, natural area. What do your senses tell you about these two sit spots? How are they the same? How are they different? How does each sit spot make you feel? Which one do you like best?

Wonder what would happen if you returned to the same spot, multiple times, maybe even every day for a week? Try sitting for 5-minutes before school, or just before dinner
time, or try the same spot at different times of day. What do you think would change? Would the sit spot change? Would you?

Capture your observations on paper. Make a soundscape by making a map of all of the things you hear, whether near or far, and add words or drawings to describe each sound. Do the same with what you see or smell or touch.

Go to your sit spot again, but this time, as you use your senses, think about how your sit spot and your observations make you feel. Do you feel safe, at home, excited, concerned, wondering, jittery, calm, soothed? What words would you use to describe how what you hear, see, touch and smell make you feel?

Wonder what you found as you made observations from your sit spot? Beautiful flower? Interesting insect? Try using Seek by iNaturalist to help you identify living creatures. Or head to the library for a field guide on plants or insects or birds or rocks, and start learning about your sit spot.

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