

## Creating Natural Connections

### Activity: 'Sit Spot Seeking'

#### Way Finding - Made Fun!



#### What you need:

- Paper/ Fabric (Hapa Zoming option)
- Clipboards
- Charcoal
- Pencils
- \*Plants for colouring background

#### Purpose

Mapping activity to engage group with **exploring and observing the site**. The 'Sit Spot' is an opportunity to encourage a 'mindful moment' – as well as establish a sense of **ownership and ultimately stewardship**.

The aim of this activity is to **communicate spatially and visually** through the practise of drawing a map. The map needs to sign post points of interest along the way – which supports improving observation skills as well as the **development of ID skills**.

#### Creating the Map

This is not about perfecting drawing skills - but quick expressive mark making to suggest features and 'signpost' the way to the sit spot.

**No words – only 3 arrows can be used on the maps.** Encourage the map makers to make their maps as simple as possible.



\*Some ideas for plants to select for adding colour + texture

First encourage rubbing grass and soil onto paper to mark out grassy areas or bare ground. The use of charcoal instead of pencil will help to halt perfectionism!



## How it works in practice:

If the maps are too well rendered and detailed it will make the exercise less fun and engaging – interpretation of the maps invites questioning imaginative engagement.

Way markers (no more than 3!) can support the maps in the form of arrows made of sticks.

Walk the site together as a group to discover what is there – identifying any trees or plants or features that stand out to the group.

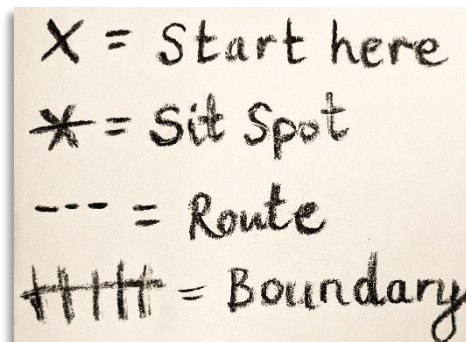
Return back to 'basecamp'. Everyone partners up. Each partner goes to find a special safe quiet spot where they could sit peacefully for 5 minutes. **Most importantly they must make sure that their partner cannot see where their Sit Spot is.**



The Sit Spot can be marked with a star made of twigs

Ask each partner to go to their sit spot and sit there - in stillness - for 5 minutes. Their only mission is to notice thoughts and feelings as they arise, but rather than try to fight the thoughts that come - just make a mental note and show friendly curiosity towards what this 'mental weather' is like.

After this, each partner has 10 minutes to draw a map which traces the route from basecamp to their sit spot.



Some suggestions for key map features

Marking as many noticeable landscape features as possible – including any trees, bushes, boundaries (like fences) as well as buildings and play areas. The pairs swap maps and allow each other 5 minutes to trace the route using the map. Ideally if there is time it is better for the finder to be accompanied by the map maker as it helps to give the seeker indications of "warmer/colder".

Once the Sit Spot has been found the pairs swap over – once both pairs have found their Sit Spot they may revisit it and do a quick sound map on the back of their map - by listing how many sounds they can hear coming from nature to be reported back on at the end. This develops listening skills by auditory awareness.

At the end gather as a group and discuss what makes a good map and ideas for how to make the maps even better next time.

## Revisiting the Sit Spot

Given the opportunity, the Sit Spot can quickly be a place of solace for a child – a safe space that they can revisit at many later occasions when the need some time to themselves. This can be particularly helpful at times of stress and/ or upheaval and is to be encouraged as an effective coping strategy.