

SHHH!! QUIET PLEASE

Parent Notes: This activity focuses on predator/prey relationships. Only supplies needed is the outdoors. Just take a hike, find a picnic area, or complete this activity where you are staying in the Hocking Hills. It is fun to include different surfaces such as a grass lawn, gravel, pavement, leaves, bare soil, wet and dry surfaces if available. (Oh, and you may get a few moments of quiet too 😊)!

Considerations: Follow all **Leave No Trace (LNT) Principles**. **Stay on the trail; LNT Principle - Travel and Camp on durable surfaces.** If you are moving slow along a trail as part of this activity, step to the side and let other visitors pass. **LNT Principle - Be Considerate of Other Visitors.**

Let's Begin

Most predator/prey relationships rely on the predator being sneaky in some ways. A predator is an animal that hunts prey for its food. A prey is the animal being hunted. Name a type of predator. Name a type of prey.

Even when we try our very best to walk quietly, we are probably not as quiet as we think. Surrounding sounds like the wind, birds singing, water running and other hikers may mask the noise we are making or we may be so busy going on our way, we are unaware of how loud we really are being.

While you are hiking or having a picnic, have everyone try to walk on different surfaces without making a sound. Try walking on different parts of your feet; heel to toe, only on your toes, along the sides of your feet. Ask the following questions;

- Which method worked best? Can you name an animal that uses this method of walking?
- Who in your group is the quietest? The loudest?
- Does the speed you walk make a difference?
- What about shoe types? Boots vs. tennis shoes vs. sandals
- What if you were barefoot? (Only do this on surfaces free of debris/litter/broken glass and other sharp objects). Scout the area before trying this.
- What surface was the easiest to be quiet on? What was the loudest?
- Are there any other factors that come into play?

A predator's ears are usually oriented forward to catch the sounds of the prey they are hunting. Prey usually have ears that are oriented in the middle or side of the head and may move forward or backward to listen for predators. There are many adaptations for different types of animals. What others can you think of? Specialized feathers, camouflage etc...

Extension: Find an area where one person (prey) can sit down in the middle of everyone else with a stick or small stone in front of them. Have one person (acting as a predator) in your group try to sneak up and take it before they hear you. If the "prey" person hears a noise, they point in the direction of the noise. If it is the "predator" that is sneaking, they must go back. Take turns. A bandana will help cover the eyes (ONLY if the person is comfortable with this), and reduce the urge to peek!