

Ant Walk



This activity is useful if you have to walk a distance to get to your woodland area or just for its own sake around school grounds. For it the group imagine they are a colony of foraging worker ants creating trails for others to follow to bring food and building materials back to the nest. These highly organized nests can have millions of inhabitants all working together in different roles for the survival of the colony. Ants can carry loads of 50-100 times their own body weight and heavier loads when they work as a team, communicating using vibrations and scent.

You will need:

- A natural place where walking in a long line is safe and possible.

What to do:

1. Plan the route for the walk.
2. The ants form a long line and head off.
3. As they walk the leader ant looks for a natural object that attracts their attention which they pick up and pass back down the line. (Make sure they know not to pick up anything harmful, sharp or rare and poisonous plants)
4. The leader then runs to the back and collects their object, holding onto it.
5. The new leader chooses an item, passes it back and so on until everyone has gathered something.
6. Once the worker ants have finished foraging look at what has been found for the colony. Each ant can talk about why they picked it up and what benefits it might have for the colony – it could be food for the ant larvae, material for nest building, a useful item such as a leaf boat or just something beautiful!
7. You can then marvel at the incredible achievements of ants. There are over 12 000 known species and they live in a wide range of habitats all over the world. They can nest almost anywhere next to water, up trees, underground and even in acorns. These nests range from woven leaves to vast chambers with in-built air conditioning. They play a major role in the cycle of life as seed dispersers and soil turners.

