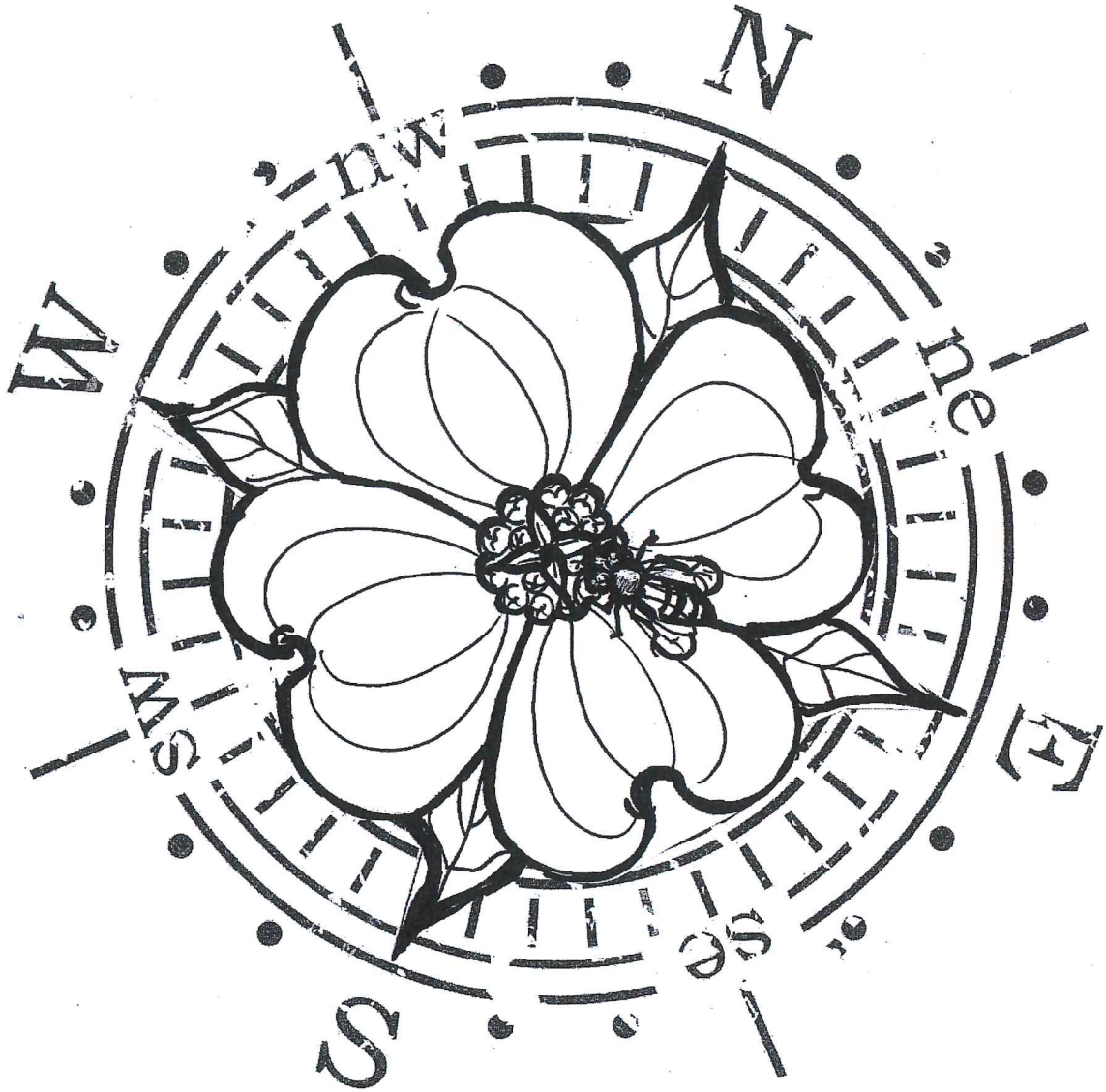


# Nature Navigators



## Journal & Play Book

for 6-8 year olds

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## About this book

This book contains activities for parents and children to do together in nature. They are short and fun! Each one should take 20 to 60 minutes, depending on how much you get into it.

Do one activity per week. Fill in the date you start each week's activity. Each activity has three parts: an introduction, an assignment to do later, and a journaling prompt to do at the end of the week. Check the boxes in the introductory part once you finish!

Each activity has a things-to-do page and a journal page. Use these journal pages to write a quick summary of how the exercise went. Keep a record of your thoughts, feelings, and "magic moments" in nature. Make notes with writing and with drawings!

If possible, pick a consistent time and day of the week to do this journaling exercise together.

## Nature Navigators Certificate Program

For the certificate program complete **at least as many weeks as your age**. This total includes the Starter and Closing activities; for the middle weeks you can pick and choose. Fill in the Secret Spot Visit # line each time you do an activity to help keep track!

This book is for six to eight year olds.

**Six year olds** should complete six activities (Starter, four of your choice, and Closing)

**Seven year olds** should complete seven activities (Starter, five of your choice, and Closing).

**Eight year olds** should complete eight activities (Starter, six of your choice, and Closing).

If you're having fun, feel free to do more!

**Starter:** Beginning your exploration, being aware of hazards, and having fun!

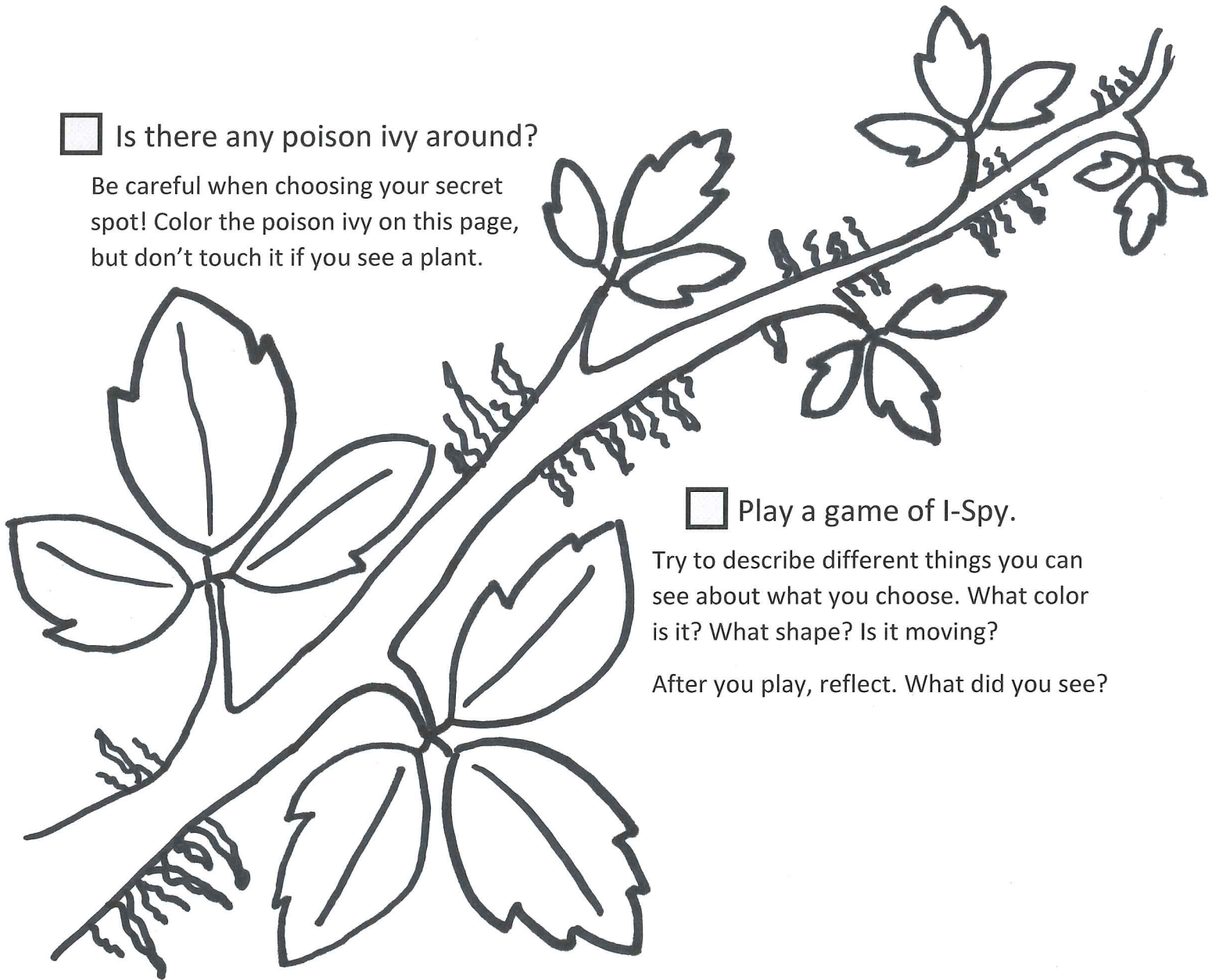
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: 1

Look for and choose your own special secret spot in nature. It should be easy to get to from your house and safe to play in.

It could be in your backyard! Bird feeders, back porches, and tree houses all make great spots. Try walking downhill to find water, like a sewer easement or creek. Different spaces will have different animals and plants to observe.

Is there any poison ivy around?

Be careful when choosing your secret spot! Color the poison ivy on this page, but don't touch it if you see a plant.



Play a game of I-Spy.

Try to describe different things you can see about what you choose. What color is it? What shape? Is it moving?

After you play, reflect. What did you see?

Assignment

Come back to your secret spot at least once during the week.

## Starter Journal Exercise

What makes your secret spot special?  
List 3 things.

1.

2.

3.

Did you see anything exciting in nature this week?  
How was visiting your secret spot?



# Animal Homes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Play a game of hide and seek at your secret spot.

Where do you think animals might live here? Do you see any animal homes?

Look for nests, holes in trees, and small places insects might live. Draw or take notes of what you see.

## Assignment

Build a fairy or gnome house at your secret spot.

Make a tiny house with things you find in your secret spot.

Twigs, leaves, and rocks are good to use!

Try not to hurt plants that are still growing.

## Animal Homes Journal Exercise

Did anything change at your secret spot  
from the last time you were there?

Did anything exciting happen?

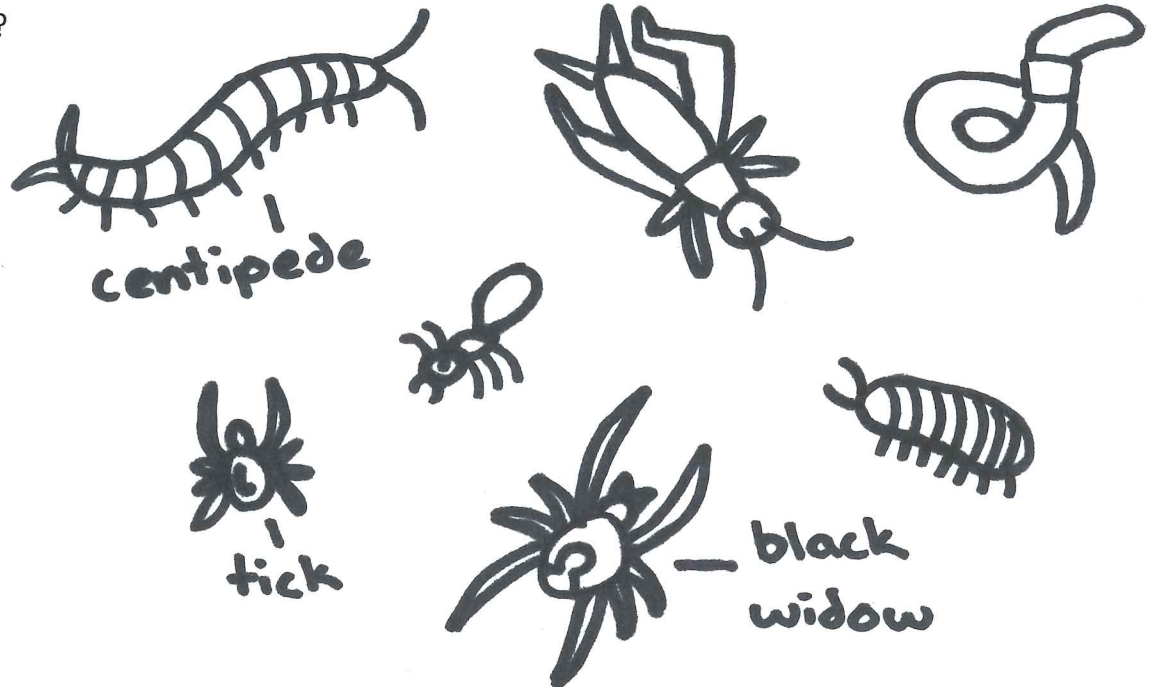
# Moving Things

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Roll over a rock or log in your secret spot – carefully!

Who's under there?

Color in these bugs and draw your own picture of your favorite bug!



Don't forget to put the log or rock back nicely for all the creatures who live there.

Be careful with bugs. Black widow spiders, bees and wasps, fire ants, and ticks can be dangerous!

## Assignment

Use your Owl Eyes when you visit your secret spot.

Get your Owl Eyes ready by looking straight ahead and moving your fingers to the very edges of your vision. Try to find the edges of where you can see to the left, right, up, and down. Keep your eyes looking forward!

You can see a lot! Use your Owl Eyes by carefully looking for moving things everywhere you can see – up and down, side to side. It helps to sit still and only slowly move your eyes or head.



## Moving Things Journal Exercise

Did you see more when you used your Owl Eyes? Did you notice anything moving?

# Soil

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Dig a hole! Make it as deep as you want.

Take soil samples. Save a scoop of the different kinds of soil you notice when you dig. What's different about them?

Try filling your hole with water and see what happens!

## Assignment

See how many colors of soil you can find.  
Make rubbings with the different colors here.

Fill in your hole with the dirt you dug out of it before you leave!

## Soil Journal Exercise

Did you find anything exciting when you were digging?

Did you find anything alive? Non-living?

What differences did you notice in the different kinds of soil? Think about color, texture, size, and wetness.

# Trees and Other Plants

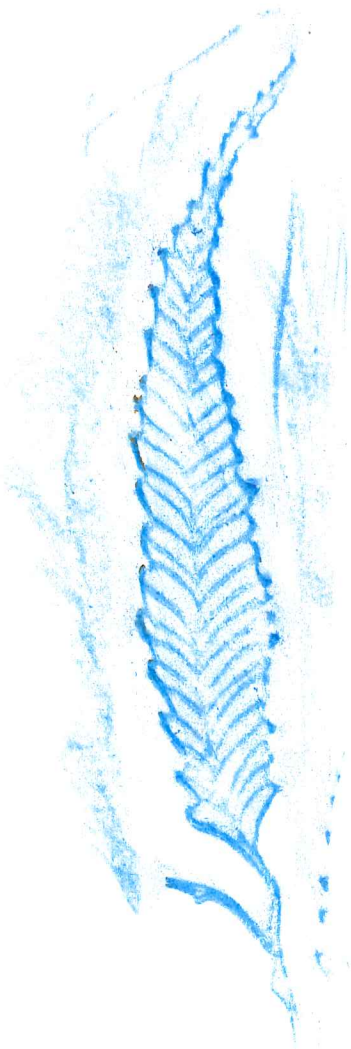
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

- Find five dead leaves on the ground in your secret spot.  
Match them to the trees they came from!

## Assignment

- Make leaf rubbings with leaves from your secret spot.  
Put the leaf under this page. Use the long side of a crayon to rub the paper on top of your leaf to get a picture of it.



## Trees and Other Plants Journal Exercise

Did you find any exciting plants in your secret spot?  
Write down three details. You could talk about the  
plant's bark, height, color, texture, shape, or anything  
else you noticed.

1.

2.

3.

Did anything change in your  
secret spot from the last time  
you were here?

**Weather Observations**    Date: \_\_\_\_\_    Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Record the weather in your secret spot during the week.

What's the temperature?  
How does it feel?

Are there any clouds? What do  
they look like and how much  
of the sky do they cover?

Is there any precipitation? Is  
it rain, snow, or something in  
between? How much is  
coming down?

What time of day is it?

Assignment

Record another set of weather observations.

Come back to your secret spot later in the week and record the weather that day.



## Weather Observations Journal Exercise

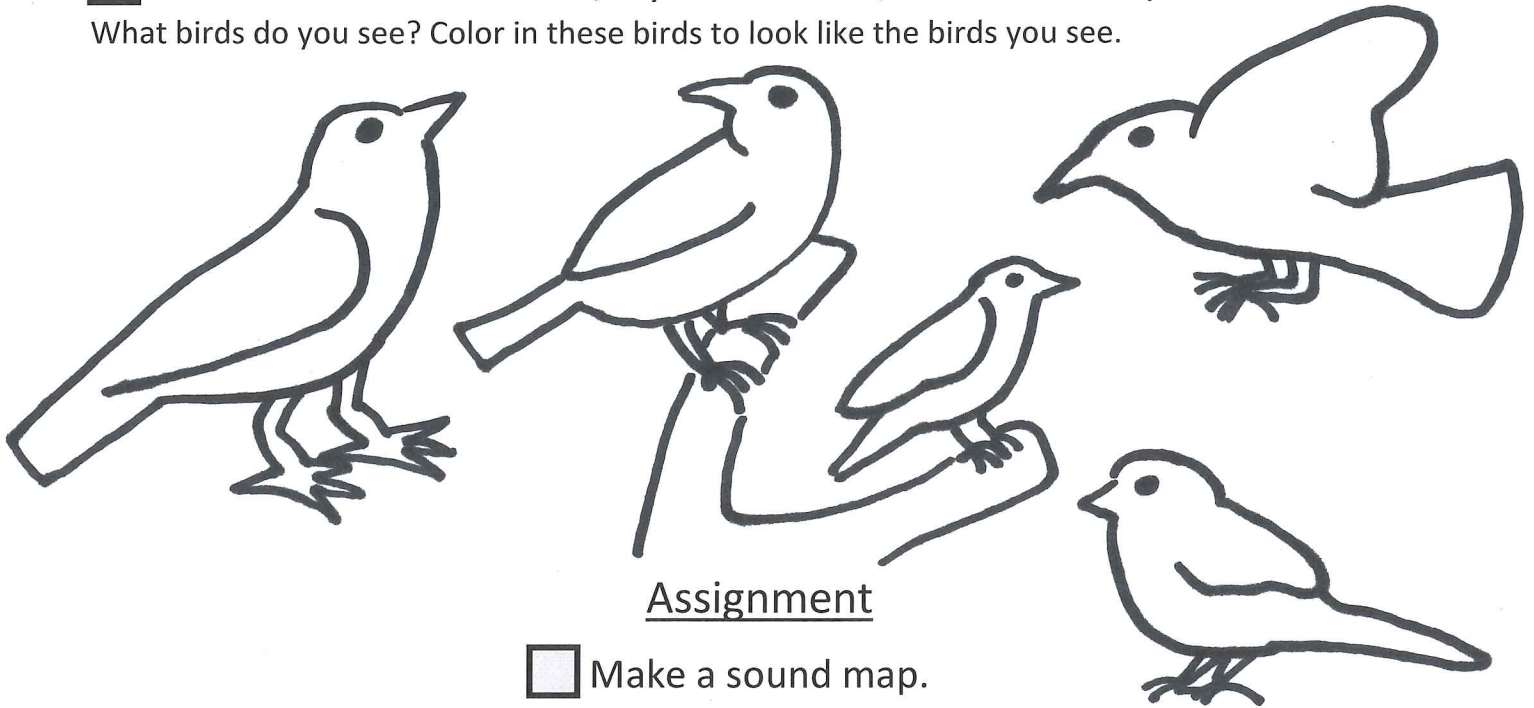
How did the weather  
change in your secret spot?

Did you notice anything else that changed with the weather?  
Think about the plants, animals, and non-living things in your  
secret spot.

# Birds and Listening

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Put out some bird feed or, if you have one, take a look at your bird feeder.  
What birds do you see? Color in these birds to look like the birds you see.



## Assignment

Make a sound map.

Listen carefully to all the sounds you hear.

Draw a map of where they are coming from around you.

x  
(you are here)

## Birds and Listening Journal Exercise

Did you hear anything exciting at your secret spot?

# Water

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

If you were a raindrop falling from the sky, what path would you take through your secret spot? How does water move?

## Assignment

Go on a water walk.

Find a body of water near your secret spot, like a creek or pond.

## Water Journal Exercise

What was different about the place you found on your water walk and your secret spot? Were there different animals, plants, or weather?

Did you see anything exciting?

**Closing:** Final map and things you wonder

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Secret Spot Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Write or draw any fun memories from your secret spot!

Think of things you've done and seen here.

### Assignment

Draw a picture of your secret spot. Make a map!



## Closing Journal Exercise

Did anything change at your secret spot from the last time you were here? What has changed from the very first time you were here?

Write down at least five things you wonder about your secret spot.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.