

# Hide and Seek with Camouflage Critters



## Introduction

In the book *Jo MacDonald Hiked in the Woods*, author Mary Quattlebaum introduces children to the trees, plants, and creatures in a forest and models safe, courteous behavior in the wild. In this activity and its connections, children focus on how animal colors and markings can provide protective camouflage.

## Materials Needed

- ◆ Several photos of box turtle and chipmunk, printed from Internet. Cut around outline of animals.

## Key Concepts

- ◆ Organisms' patterns of behavior relate directly to the environment.
- ◆ Behavior is influenced by internal cues and external cues.
- ◆ Plan and conduct a simple systematic observation.

## Procedure

1. Have children look at animals in the book's illustrations. How do the animals' colors (largely brown or gray) help them to blend into their forest surroundings? Have them find the chipmunk and box turtle.
2. What does a box turtle's markings (yellow patterns on dark brown shells) make it look like? (Answer: a rock or pile of leaves speckled with sunlight) A chipmunk's markings (stripes of white and black on golden-brown fur)? (Answer: a sun-dappled leaf beside a tree root, fallen branch, or pile of leaves.)
3. Hide the chipmunk and turtle cut-outs in the classroom, close to photos of natural objects, or outdoors. Have the children find them. Which are the easiest places to spot the critters? Why?

## Additional Resources

### Nature Connections

- ◆ Assign some children to wear bright colors (red, yellow, blue) and others to wear neutral tones (brown, gray) or provide oversized t-shirts. Which kids are easiest to spot outdoors? Indoors? Does it make a difference if they stand still or move?

- ◆ **I See Animals Hiding** by Jim Arnosky
- ◆ **What Color is Camouflage** by Carolyn Otto, illustrated by Megan Lloyd
- ◆ **Where in the Wild? Camouflaged Creatures Concealed ... and Revealed** by David Schwartz and Yael Schy, illustrated by Dwight Kuhn
- ◆ **Find the Hidden Animals:** <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/photos/gallery/animal-camouflage/>

