

## Nature Study

Nature study at an early age is about exposure and a growing awareness of what is surrounding you at all times. Your enthusiasm is so crucial to capturing your child's interest. Think about what interests you about the outdoors and then come up with a way to involve your Bulbuls.

### Objectives

At the end of this Module, you should be able to:

1. Explain the Importance of Nature Study.
2. List the activities related to studying nature that could be undertaken by Bulbuls.

### Thought for Reflection

Adults should realize that the most valuable thing children can learn is what they discover themselves about the world they live in. Once they experience first-hand the wonder of nature, they will want to make nature observation a life-long habit.

- Charlotte Mason

### Why Nature Study

Being surrounded by nature and natural items provides infinite benefits to children.

1. Nature study lays the foundation for formal science studies. The child lays stores images and ideas to access and use in making personal connections when she reads about them in a science book later.
2. Nature study makes science interesting. A child who has the advantage of nature study, an "appreciative knowledge of things to begin with," can easily reach the "living science" level.
3. Nature study increases the child's capacity to understand the unknown. "By-and-by she will have to conceive of things she has never seen: how can she do it except by comparison with things she has seen and knows?"
4. Nature study cultivates a love of investigation. It exposes them to things that are alive and growing and promotes curiosity and exploration.
5. Nature study gives the child a sense of ownership and stewardship of the Earth.
6. Nature study prepares the child's heart to worship God.
7. Nature study enriches a child's life. A love of Nature, implanted so early will enrich their lives with pure interests, absorbing pursuits, health, and good.
8. Nature instills in everyone a sense of beauty and calmness.

9. Nature study increases the child's intellect and makes her a more interesting person.
10. With an adult as a guide, children can learn about being gentle and respecting living things.
11. Self-esteem can thrive outdoors because nature doesn't judge people.
12. At a time when bullying is prevalent—even in preschools—exposure to nature can help remind children that the world contains an infinite variety of things and all are important.
13. To observe nature requires patience and quiet watchfulness.
14. Imagination comes into play as children create special places and use natural items to create stories and play.
15. All senses become engaged when children interact with the natural world.

### **Nature Study Activities**

The level of exposure to nature given to the Bulbuls would very much depend on you the Flock Leader. You need to be first of all interested in nature. You have to be highly imaginative to design activities. There are so many books for you to refer to and also you need to seek the help of nature lovers. The more frequent your Bulbuls are exposed to outdoor activities, the merrier they would feel, and their knowledge about nature would keep progressing.

A few suggestions:

1. Walk around to study plant species. Have a close look at the shape, size and colour of leaves; shape, size and colour of flowers; the types of barks; the varieties of fruits; the patterns of stems and branches etc. 
2. Create opportunities to observe birds, animals and insects. Nature walks would help a lot to observe birds, animals and insects, their nesting pattern, the colour, shape and size of eggs, etc. 
3. Observe the water creatures preferably in a pond or a small lake. 
4. Recognise the sounds in nature – from animals, birds, insects, movement of trees, wind, etc.
5. Watch sunrise, sunset and the stars at night.
6. Make a collection of dry leaves, flowers, seeds, nuts, shells, fallen feathers etc. 
7. Teach how to make carbon impressions and ink impressions of leaves and how to make pressed specimen. 

8. Organise nature walks exclusively to observe and learn about tracks of animals and birds.
9. Make plaster casts of the footprints of animals and birds.
10. Help maintain a nature diary – Bulbuls to be encouraged to note down what they observe, collect pictures related to what they have seen, etc.
11. Organise visits to Parks, Zoo, Botanical gardens, Plant Nurseries, Aquarium, Planetarium, Museum, Lakes, and Beaches.
12. Organise visits to farms (agricultural farm, poultry farm, dairy farm, fish farm, crocodile farm etc.)
13. Undertake gardening.
14. Encourage having pets at home.
15. Show them photographs, pictures, books and videos about birds, animals, insects, plants etc.



It would be highly educative and motivating for the Bulbuls if you as the Flock Leader could collect pictures, posters, pamphlets etc., on animals, birds and insects – their food habits, habitat, breeding; specimen leaves, dry fruits, nuts, flowers; impressions of leaves and flowers etc., and display it at the Flock Den from time to time.

#### **Suggested Activity**

1. Prepare a Scrapbook on Nature. Paste on it pictures or draw pictures of animals, birds, insects and plants we find in India.
2. Make a collection of dry leaves, flowers, nuts and seeds of different shapes, size and colour and preserve them for display.
3. Make various types of impressions (carbon, ink etc.) of leaves.
4. Collect information and pictures on habitat, breeding system, and food of animal, birds and insects.

### **For further Reading:**

1. A Complete Handbook for Flock Leaders\*
2. Children's Encyclopedia of the Birds by Dr. Subhash C. Maheswari, Published by ABC Publishing House.
3. Some Indian Birds by N.N. Majumdar, Published by Children's Book Trust.
4. House Plants by Peter McHoy, Published by Pustak Mahal.
5. Our Useful Plants, Published by National Book Trust, India
6. Animal World, Published by Children's Book Trust.
7. How Insects Live by Walter M. Blaney, Published by Galley Press.
8. Manorama Tell Me Why: MAMMALS, Published by M.M. Publications
9. Manorama Tell Me Why: REPTILES, Published by M.M. Publications
10. Manorama Tell Me Why: AMPHIBIANS, Published by M.M. Publications
11. Manorama Tell Me Why: BIRDS OF PREY, Published by M.M. Publications
12. The World of Turtles and Crocodiles, Published by National Book Trust, India

\* Books published by TheBharat Scouts and Guides, National Headquarters, New Delhi.