



## A journey stick

Journey sticks are similar to story sticks made by Native Americans and can be beautiful works of art that show the sequence of the route. Samples of leaves, seeds, fruits, feathers, etc. are bound to a chunky stick about 30-40cm long using natural materials such as wool, hessian string or plant fibres.

Tying your found natural objects to a stick can represent different experiences, feelings or parts of the journey. On your chosen walk, pick up interesting objects that you can tie onto your stick. Note colours that you see and sounds that you hear at the spot where you found your 'treasure'.

**Resources:** One stick each, about 30-40cm long (these can be collected at the start of your walk if there are enough dead sticks); coloured wool or string for tying on treasures; scissors or knife.

### What to do

1. Talk about maps and journeys and what they mean to us. We use maps to find our way around and to share where we have been with others. However, our journey can tell its own story with the things that it produces and gives home to. While walking, pick up natural objects to tie onto your stick. The journey stick can then serve as a personal memory map.

2. Give out the sticks or each find a *fallen* stick which appeals to you.

*REMEMBER to respect nature – sticks must never be pulled or broken from living trees*

3. Give everyone a number of pieces of wool or thread that they can tie round the stick to fasten the small 'treasures' that they find.

4. As you walk, collect fallen objects that attract you e.g. a leaf, a feather, a bone etc. The objects are tied to the stick as you find them.

**As you walk or afterwards...** share your finds and use the finished sticks to tell the story of your walk. Discuss the variety of things found, the memories they evoke and how they link to the life of the place you have visited.

*... the story of a short walk. through the woods... a twig for the quiet gathering in the camp circle; a leaf for when kind companions asked me if I was OK (I was)...*



*... a feather for beauty; a beech nut, a sad reminder that we aren't planting beech in Harmony Woods because climate change means they will no longer thrive in the south; grass for gentle movement in the breeze; another feather... the memory of a conversation about how swimming can help aching limbs and aid mobility problems; a small purple flower picked where we met (and kissed!) a baby frog.*