

Craighouse Woods

Friends of Easter
Craiglockhart Hill



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- Document the trip in a journal, poster, or report.
- Research the different types of shelters that are traditionally built around the world.
- In a creative writing session, imagine living in the woods in the shelters you built.

About the area

The Craighouse Woods are to the east of the hill-top. At the south end of the woods is a clearing between the holly bushes. There are plenty of sticks for shelters and other activities. Several trees including larch, horse chestnut and sycamore are scattered around, making it a perfect space for erecting tarpaulin shelters in poor weather. There are plenty of logs for seating in the area.



How to get there

The easiest way to access the Craighouse Woods is from Craiglea Place. The 23 or 36 buses take you to the end of the road. Take the path up the hill alongside the Craighouse development community park, a large open meadow. Turn right along Pine Walk and the clearing is just behind the small natural play area.



Photo credits: Simon Hart



Activity Guide: Shelters

Shelter building is a fantastic team activity and can be easily adapted to suit group sizes and available materials. If you have a large group and limited materials each group can work on making a solid one man shelter. For a small group you could try making a single shelter that is big enough for the whole group to fit in!

Start by building a frame with long strong sticks. Use one of the ideas below to get you started. Once a solid frame is in place, you can add smaller sticks to fill in the gaps. These can be added vertically or woven in horizontally.

Once you have enough sticks on your shelter, you can add leaves to create a waterproof layer. Dead leaves are best rather than taking parts of living plants. Push handfuls of them into gaps in the sticks. Why not test this when you're finished with a bottle of water!

Once you are finished, remember to take down your shelters so that other people can use the same materials.

Feel free to experiment, and use whatever natural features you have available to create your shelter.

SafetyCheck!

Make a few ground rules to avoid injury by heavy sticks.

- Long or heavy sticks should be either carried by two people with one person at each end or by one person at one end and the other dragged along the ground.
- No sticks should be added to the shelter with anyone inside the shelter in case any sticks fall through

Tepee

Tepeeshelters can be supported by a central tree or be free-standing.



Tree: Find a tree with branches at chest to head height. Build a frame by leaning long strong sticks against the branches at one end and splay the other ends out in a circle.

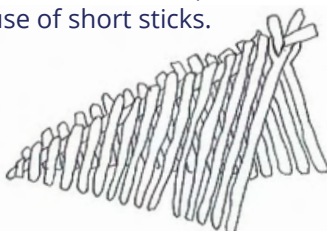
Free-standing: Find 3-5 long, strong sticks with a y-shape at the end. Lock the y-ends of the sticks together at chest to head height and splay the other ends out in a circle. Tie the top ends of the sticks together to secure them. Pick a gap between sticks to use as an entrance and add sticks between the other gaps to build up the walls.

Bivvy

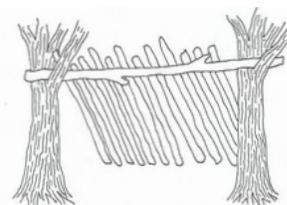
These are designed to be emergency one man shelters. To create the frame you need a central pole that is about 1.5 times the height of the person using the shelter. You then need to support it at one end with either two y-shaped sticks or a low branch on a tree.

The entrance to the shelter will be at the supported end of the long central pole. Make two walls by leaning sticks against the central pole on either side.

This is a great shelter for limited resources, as it makes use of short sticks.



Lean-to



These are the simplest shelters to build.

For the frame, you either need a branch of a tree that is horizontal and at chest to head height or you need to create one. Do this by attaching a long strong stick between two trees - either wedge it against branches, or tie it at height. Make sure the stick is completely secure before adding to it.

Then lean sticks against the frame bar to create a wall. Do it along one side for a simple lean-to or along both sides for an a-frame shelter.

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Activity Guide: Sticks

Playing with sticks can provide lots of opportunity for team building games and challenges. Lots of these activities are particularly flexible as they don't require especially big sticks that can be harder to come by.

Stick Jenga

To complete the Stick Jenga challenge, stack sticks up like a jenga tower, and try to get the biggest tower! For the first layer, lay two or three sticks of similar sizes on the ground alongside each other. For the next layer, get another two or three sticks of similar sizes and place them on top of the first layer, but at 90 degrees. Top tip: start at the bottom with bigger, thicker sticks, and build up to smaller thinner sticks. Your top layers can be made with sticks the size of a match! Your tower can be measured in height, or number of layers.

Stick Tower

This is a simple exercise in problem solving. Using sticks, try to make the tallest free standing tower. You can add in extra rules or restrictions such as:

- Use only 3 sticks (or pick another number)
- Give each team a piece of string to use.
- Once the towers have been built, they must stay standing for at least 1 minute.

Stick Bridges

This challenge is a fun take on "the floor is lava!". Pick two spots in the woods. Tell the teams that they have 20 minutes to build a bridge from one side to another. At the end of 20 minutes, the floor will become lava, and the whole team must be able to travel from one side to the other without touching the floor. Experiment with different ways to place and walk along sticks for the most stability.

Stick Strength

This is a chance to experiment with shapes and structures. Each team must build a structure made of a limited amount of sticks that is able to support a heavy item such as a rock or filled water bottle. You can give extra points for the structure that can support the item furthest for the ground, or the structure made of the fewest sticks.



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Activity Guide: Woodland Games

Meet a Tree

Work in pairs. One person is blindfolded. Their partner should lead them towards a tree.

The blindfolded person should get to know the tree - feeling the texture of the bark, the shape and size of the trunk, feeling for branches, maybe even smelling it!

Their partner should then lead the blindfolded person away from the tree - try taking them on a longer, winding route, and spin them round a few times!

The blindfolded person can remove their blindfold and they then need to see if they can work out which tree is theirs!

123 I'm a Tree

One person is it, and stands at a designated tree. They close their eyes and count to 20, while everyone else hides at least 5m away.

Once they open their eyes, the person who is it must try to catch the other people before they get back to the tree.

If anyone gets back to the tree they must shout "123 I'm a tree" to be safe. Anyone who gets caught is out for that round.

Once everyone is either at the tree or caught, start a new round. Anyone who was caught in the last round should now join the person who was it at start at the tree. Carry on until everyone is caught!

Invent your own game

Give kids the challenge of inventing their own game!

They must come up with appropriate rules to teach the rest of the group.

They can make use of any natural materials as props for their game.



Salmon-Wildcat-Midgey

In this game Wildcat beats Salmon, Salmon beats Midgey, and Midgey beats Salmon. As a group, work out a gesture to represent each animal.

Split the groups into two teams. Each team should quietly decide which animal they will all be - the whole team must be the same animal.

The teams stand in two lines, facing each other, 2m apart in the middle of the woods. The teams simultaneously make their animal gesture.

The losing team must run to their side of the woods and the winning team chases them and tries to tag them. Anyone who gets caught joins their team.

Carry on until everyone is on one team.

Stag & Doe

Pick one person to be a doe and two to four people to be stags. Everyone else is a wolf.

The wolves are trying to catch the doe. The stags protect the doe by catching the wolves. If a wolf gets caught by a stag, they swap sides and become a stag. If any one asks a player if they're a stag or a wolf, they must answer quickly and honestly.

The wolves win if one of them catches the doe. The deer win if all of the wolves get turned into stags.

