

## Hide the Acorn, Plant a Tree? (squirrels or jays)



This game can be used during discussions of squirrels or jays (scrub or blue, or Steller's), autumn, and/or food storage. These animals collect nuts, bury them for future use, then retrieve them later. But they often do not remember them all, so that forgotten acorn (for example) might sprout into a new oak tree.



**Prep:** Collect local acorns, about 10 – 12, depending on class size. If none are available, you can use marbles, or pennies.

Describe how squirrels or jays bury their acorns for future use, to hide from other animals, and even to help to leach out some of the bitter tannins in the nut, if it's an acorn. They are very clever in finding most of them when they return, but they sometimes forget some.

Select one "squirrel" or "jay" from the class. Ask the rest of the class to put their hands on their desks held in a loose fist (1). Have the selected child make a rapid pass around the room and place the acorns, one at a time, in any of 10 to 15 fists (2). Have all children close their thumbs, whether they have an acorn to cover or not (3). Then ask the child to make another rapid pass (because other animals are watching!) and tap each closed hand where they think they put an acorn. Any child who has an acorn but whose hand was not tapped will raise their thumb (4), to indicate an un-found acorn. Explain that each raised thumb represents a possible tree sprouting from an un-found acorn. Select a new "squirrel" or "jay" and repeat.



1



2



3



4



5