

My, What Sharp Claws You Have!

Welcome to the natural world of Fontenelle Forest and Neale Woods Nature Centers! Below is a guide to pre and post field trip activities that you can do with your students either indoors or on your school grounds. These activities will greatly enhance your students' field trip experience and are also a lot of fun!

We look forward to your students' arrival and are excited to provide them with a fun and educational experience. If you have any questions, please call us at 731-3140.

Suggested Grade Level(s): 4th - 6th

Program Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the term *adaptation*.
- Students will be able to distinguish between both *physical* and *behavioral* adaptations.
- Through several activities and observations, students will discover specific ways plants and animals have adapted in order to survive.

Pre- and Post-Trip Activity Suggestions

Moving Meals Game

Suggested Timing: Pre-Trip

Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors or Outdoors

Materials: none

Background: Ask your students what specific physical adaptations they think frogs have that allows them to survive in a variety of habitats and temperatures. Tell them that frogs, like most predators, eat moving prey. In fact, a frog's eyes only function when there is movement within their field of vision.

Procedure: One child is chosen as a frog, and the rest of the class are insects. Similar to the game *red light, green light*, the frog stands at one end of the field with his back to the insects. The frog then says "1-2-3, food for me" and turns toward the insects. Anyone seen moving is "eaten" and has to sit down. The object is for the insects to make it safely past the frog. The first insect across the imaginary line is the frog for the next round.

Create a Critter

Suggested Timing: Post-Trip

Time: 1 hour

Location: Indoors

Materials: paper, pencils and crayons, a variety of craft supplies (optional)

Background: Ask your students what defense mechanisms plants and animals have that help them survive predators. Defenses may include stinging (bees and nettles), tasting bad or being thorny (toads and greenbrier), itching (poison ivy and mosquitoes) and having a hard outer surface (turtles and nuts).

Procedure: Tell students to create and then draw an imaginary plant or animal that has such a good defense that no one would try to eat it. They may either do this on paper or use a variety of craft supplies to create a 3-dimensional plant or animal. Have the students write a description of the animal or plant adaptations that help it defend itself.

Bird Beak Demonstration

Suggested Timing: Post-Trip

Time: 30 minutes

Location: Indoors

Materials: table, eyedropper, vase, egg carton, rice, tweezers, container with peanuts or sunflower seeds (in the shells), pair of pliers, container filled with water and wood shavings (or similar floatable object like Styrofoam packing peanuts) and a strainer.

Background: Brainstorm as many different kinds of birds as you can. Explain that different types of birds eat different foods and that their beaks are suited to those specific foods.

Procedure: Set up a table with four accessible stations. Have all the utensils off to one side. Participants will come up and try to match the proper utensil to the appropriate station. The object is to find the utensil that will work best for the different types of food that birds eat. One way to set up "feeding" stations is described below:

1. Hummingbird - vase filled with water (representing nectar)

*correct beak utensil is the eyedropper

2. Woodpecker - egg carton filled with rice (representing small bugs inside bark)

*correct beak utensil is the tweezers

3. Cardinal - container with peanuts or sunflower seeds

*correct beak utensil is the pliers

4. Duck or Goose - container filled with water and floating wood shavings (representing aquatic plants)

*correct beak utensil is the strainer

Fontenelle Forest Nature Center has a Feet & Beaks interactive display in the downstairs Habitat Hollow Gallery. If you took time during your field trip to explore this, you may refer back to it during this activity.

Sources

Acorn Naturalists: Resources for the Trail and Classroom. To order this educational resource catalogue for environmental and science education call 1-800-422-8886. To look at these resources on-line go to <http://www.acornnaturalists.com>.

Lingelbach, Jenepher, ed. Hands-On Nature. Woodstock, VT: Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 1986.

National Wildlife Federation. Ranger Rick's NatureScope: Trees are Terrific. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

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