



Theme: Animals (Grades K-2)

Post-Visit Activity #2 Predator and Prey

Overview:

Students will participate in an activity that will help them understand the concept of predator and prey among desert animals.

Objective:

- Students will examine the difference between predator and prey.

Materials:

- Bandana
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Some pieces of paper cut into small pieces (3"x3")

Activity:

1. Have the group of children stand in a large circle (this activity works best if done on a softer surface, such as grass). Explain that you are going to choose one child to be your "predator" (a desert animal, such as a coyote), but do not give a definition of a predator. The predator is to stand in the center of the circle.
2. Explain to the rest of the students that they are the "prey."
3. Place the bandana around the eyes of the "predator" and make sure that they cannot see. Hand him/her the spray bottle of water but instruct him/her not to do anything with it yet.
4. Take the cut pieces of paper and strew them all around the inside of the circle. Instruct the students that they are very thirsty desert animals and that these pieces of paper represent water, maybe in a small spring or oasis in the desert. The students' job is to get down on their hands and knees (like a jackrabbit or other desert animal) and try to obtain as much water as possible (for survival) without getting "caught" by the predator in the middle.
5. The predator is to LISTEN for the sound of his/her prey while moving very slowly around the center of the circle. If the predator HEARS one of its preys, the predator may spray the water at it. If the prey feels ANY WATER whatsoever on his/her body, he/she must STOP moving and pretend to be dead (having been "eaten" by the predator).

6. The prey will continue to try to get water, crawling along the ground hoping not to be sprayed (or eaten).
7. When the facilitator sees that most of the paper is gone, call an end to the game and have the predator remove the bandana to see what happened.

Conclusion:

Lead the children in a discussion of the predator/prey activity, focusing on the following:

- Why were so many animals (the prey) eaten by the predator?
 - Possible answers might be that the prey were greedy or not careful enough and got too close or were too noisy.
- Why did some of the animals survive?
 - Perhaps they “hid” when they could, or they were careful. They might not have gotten as much water, but they survived.
- What would you do differently if you played again?

This may lead to a discussion of animals in the desert. Name some predators in the desert and their prey. Do they always survive? What are some of the things they do to protect themselves?

The students can then write in their science journals about their own definitions of predators and prey, about their experience with the activity, and what they learned.

Suggested Reading:

1. ***A Tomas the Tortoise Adventure—One Hot Day*** by Mike Miller. Readers join Tomas the Tortoise as he travels from Red Rock to Lake Mead, meeting many of his desert friends along the way.
2. ***Meet the Wild Southwest*** by Susan J. Tweit. Provides many different facts about plants and animals of the Southwest.
3. ***Kissing Coyotes*** by Marcia Vaughan, Kenneth J. Spence. Readers get a glimpse of different desert animals as Jackrabbit brags about his bravery.
4. ***My Five Senses*** by Alike. Learn more about how you use your own senses.
5. ***The Magic School Bus: All Dried Up*** by Joanna Cole. Mrs. Frizzle’s class learns about desert animals.
6. ***Animal Senses*** by Janine Scott. Readers learn about how animals use their senses.
7. ***Voices from the Wild*** by David Bouchard. This winner of a 1997 Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award features poems about how animals use their senses.
8. ***Alejandro’s Gift*** by Richard E. Albert. A lonely man living in the desert builds an oasis to attract the desert animals around him. Inspires children’s appreciation for the desert’s beauty.
9. ***The Desert Is Theirs*** by Byrd Baylor. This beautifully illustrated 1976 Caldecott Honor Book depicts animal life and adaptations in the desert.

10. ***Draw Desert Animals*** by Doug DuBosque. Inspires creative kids to draw animals like the ones they see in Desert Discovery.