

Our Feathered Friends

OBJECTIVES:

To develop an interest in local birds and their habits.
To develop an attitude of caring towards birds and all animals.

GROUP SIZE:

6 to 8 children per adult volunteer.

TIME FRAME:

This lesson is designed for a group meeting between 30 and 60 minutes.

BACKGROUND:

Help children become familiar with local birds and develop an attitude of caring toward them. Have the children take a hike to identify birds by appearance and song. Encourage an interest in avian feeding habits by making bird feeders.



LIFE SKILL AREAS

Social skills and decision making will be developed through group games and discussions. Gross motor skills will be developed by playing group games.

Fine motor skills will be developed by tearing paper for the collage and using their fingers to manipulate nesting materials.

HELPS TO THE VOLUNTEERS

Try these suggestions:

- Choose one or two of the following activities from each section.
- Try to create appropriate atmosphere by decorating the room with posters and props, using costumes related to the activity, pre-meeting preparation by the 4-H members, thinking about special seating arrangements, and playing background music.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

I. GETTING STARTED

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "What's Missing?" (4 - 6 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: a tray with a Field Guide to Birds, a piece of bread, sandwich bag of bird seed, a feather, piece of string, an eggshell, any other item related to birds, and a dish towel.

Let the children examine the tray. Identify the objects by name and ask if anyone knows what the items have in common. If necessary, tell them the items are all related to birds. Encourage them to play a game to see how good their memories are. Let them study the tray for a minute or so and then "secretly" take away one item. See if anyone can remember what it was. Let the children take turns removing the objects.

Application: Ask the children to think of other items they have seen that are also related to birds.

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Bird Identification Hike" (4 - 6 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: a bird identification book such as "Peterson's Field Guide to Birds," binoculars, paper, pencil.

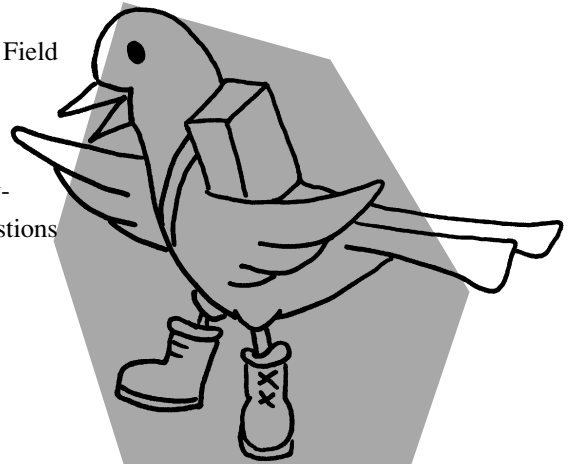
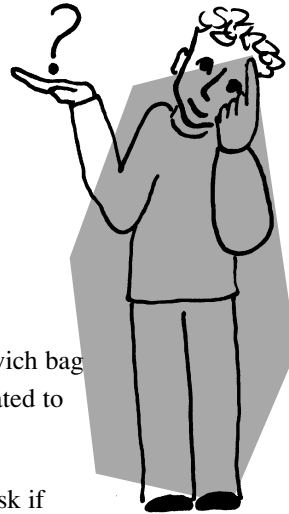
Ask the children to think of all the birds they see every-day. Can they identify them by name? Help out by showing pictures of common birds in the field guide. Ask questions about what they know about these birds such as:

- Where do you see them?
- Where do they live?
- What do they eat?
- Do you know their song?

Share information from the book on a few of the birds the children know.

Take a walk outside, looking for some of the birds you have talked about. Let the children take turns looking through the binoculars. Record the kinds of birds you see.

Application: Ask the children to see how many different kinds of birds they can identify the next time they go for a walk.



II. DIGGING DEEPER

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Pinecone Bird Feeders" (7 - 9 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: large pinecones, peanut butter, mixed bird seed, scissors, string, wax paper.

Birds will love this treat! Give each child a pinecone and instruct them to cover it with peanut butter, inside and out. Make sure they roll up their sleeves since this can get messy! When the pinecone is covered with peanut butter, roll it in the bird seed, taking care to cover it with as much seed as possible. Help the children tie a string to the end and it's ready to hang outside! Wrap in wax paper for the trip home.

Application: Encourage the children to watch the birds in their yards. What kinds of things do they eat? Do animals other than birds come to their bird feeder?

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Cardinal Collage" (6 - 8 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: white, red, black, and yellow construction paper, glue and cardinal pattern.

Ask if anyone knows anything about cardinals. Ask what color they are, what they eat (berries, seeds) and what the pointed thing is on their head (a tuft). Point out that the cardinal is the state bird of Ohio. That means it's a symbol of that state. Encourage the children to make a cardinal collage by tearing bits of red paper into pieces about the size of a nickel. Show them how to spread the glue on the outlined cardinal and stick the little pieces of paper to it. Help them finish their picture by tearing tiny pieces of black for the eyes and area around the bill. Use one piece of yellow for the beak, and long thin strips of yellow for the legs.

Application: Ask the children to be on the look out for cardinals anytime they are outside and see if they can hear his "song."



☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Duck, Duck, Goose" (5 - 7 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: none.

Have the children sit in a large circle on the floor. Select one child to begin the game by going around the outside of the circle, saying "duck" as he taps each head. At some point he will say "goose" instead of "duck." This will be the signal for the "goose" to get up and chase the "duck" around the circle. If he makes it around the circle and back to the "goose's" place, he may sit and the new "goose" continues the game; however, if he is caught, he must try again. Encourage the "tappers" to choose a "goose" who has not been chosen yet. Play until everyone has had a turn.

III. LOOKING WITHIN

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Where They Live: Make a Bird Nest" (7 - 9 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: dirt or potting soil, straw, small twigs, grass, string, dryer lint, dried leaves, other natural materials, water, newspaper, large pan.

Birds live in a variety of settings and build many different kinds of nests. One of the most common is known as a "cup" nest because of its shape. Many familiar birds build this type of nest, including robins and cardinals. Encourage the children to try building a nest, just like the birds do. Help the children mix the soil with a small amount of water to make thick mud. Let them choose from the other materials to mix with the mud. Help them form their nests into the shape of a cup. As they work, share these fun facts about birds:

- Woodpeckers dig out nesting holes inside dead tree trunks.
- Robins finish the insides of their nests with a layer of mud, smearing it around with their breasts.
- Goldfinch nests are woven so tightly that they can hold water.
- Orioles and titmice line their nests entirely with animal hair.
- A hummingbird can build an entire nest in three hours.

Note to the Volunteer: Have the children make extra examples to use in the Art Exhibit and Cloverbud Display lessons in the subject area of Community Expressive Arts.

Application: Ask the children to look for bird nests near their homes. Can they identify who lives there?

☀ **ACTIVITY:** "Feeding the Birds: They Like Peanut Butter Too!" (7 - 9 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: several one cup measures, mixing bowl, wooden spoons or spatulas, large sauce pan, hot plate or stove, empty tuna fish or small cat food cans and the following ingredients:

- 2 cups ground white beef suet (available from the butcher)
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 2 cups yellow corn meal
- 2 cups fine cracked corn (available at feed or pet stores)

This recipe will fill 4 to 6 cans; double or triple the recipe as needed.

Birds enjoy special treats, particularly in the winter when food is not as plentiful as in other times of the year. This recipe will help provide nourishment necessary for winter survival. Chickadees and cardinals are two birds you are likely to attract to this bird banquet! Ask the children to measure the suet into the sauce pan. Carefully assist them in stirring and mixing as it melts over heat. Add the peanut butter, stirring to mix it thoroughly. Have the children measure out the corn meal and cracked corn into the bowl. When the heated mixture cools and thickens a bit, pour in the dry ingredients, mixing well. Let each child pour some into their can. Let them cool until hardened. Let the children place them in their backyards and see who comes to dinner.

Application: Ask the children to observe what kinds of birds enjoy this peanut buttery treat!



IV. BRINGING CLOSURE

☀ **ACTIVITY:** Finger Play "One Little Birdie" (7 - 9 minutes)

Grade Level: K - 3

Materials: none.

Share the following finger play with the group. Try leaving off the last word of each couplet to see if they can guess it!

One little birdie who knew just what to do	(hold up one finger)
He called to his friend, then there were two!	(two fingers)
Two little birdies happy as could be	
Another came to join them, then there were three!	(three fingers)
Three little birdies wishing there were more	
Along came another, then there were four!	(four fingers)
Four little birdies so glad to be alive	
They invited one more friend, then there were five!	(five fingers)

Application: Ask the children to see how many birds they can count in one tree or on one telephone wire when they are outside.

V. GOING BEYOND

1. Invite a 4-H member to bring a pet bird to share. Have the children observe it. What does it eat? What does it like to do? Is it tame? Encourage the owner to talk about having a bird for a pet and what care needs to be given on a daily basis.
2. Visit a pet shop. Ask the owner to show you birds that are commonly purchased for pets. What kinds of supplies are needed to keep a bird? What is the cost involved? Is it easy to raise baby birds? What kinds of "exotic" birds can be sold? Where do they come from?

Reading Adventures

This listing of reading materials can be used by you as background, or for sharing before to set the stage for the lesson or for sharing afterwards to reinforce the lesson.

The Wish Workers, by Aiki

Baby Birds and How They Grow, by Jane McCauley

Horton Hatches the Egg, by Dr. Seuss

Bird's Nest, by Barrie Watts

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