

Growing Up WILD Lesson

Participant Name: Janna Helton

Current Teaching situation: Homeschool mom

Activity: Wildlife as Symbols (p. 60-61)

Identify opportunities within current program or curriculum to integrate lesson plan.

This activity would work for a winter unit. During the winter months there are many places in Iowa which have Bald Eagle Watch events. Also, the awareness of wildlife as symbols could be centered around November's election and government units since many national symbols relate to national emblems. I must add that this lesson seems to be for older children, but very adaptable for many age groups. This lesson plan is written so as to be able to be used in my homeschooling or co-op classroom, or for a traditional classroom.

Outline use of activity components

1. Begin with questions: For a younger group of children I would focus on wildlife in general along with the bald eagle unit. This would allow for success during the hike out of doors. I would also discuss with them our national symbols and how they relate to wildlife, specifically the bald eagle. The older group of children I would specifically hone in on the national wildlife symbols. For both of these groups I would pose these questions: "What types of wildlife do we see outside? Have any of you ever seen a bald eagle before? What bird is America's national symbol? Do you think there are any bald eagles in Iowa? Where do you think we would most likely see a bald eagle? What traits of the bald eagle make it a great bird?"
2. "Take me Outside:" <http://www.iowadnr.gov/news/10jan/eaglewatch.html> has a schedule for Bald Eagle Watch events around Iowa. Also, the symbols of Iowa could be discuss in preparation for a hike out of doors to look for state symbols – either the real animals, plants, or pictures on flags, signs, buildings, etc. (A planned route in advance could make a class's hike "successful.") An added reward would be locating symbols in our community, i.e.- businesses or agencies, which have wildlife symbols. An Animal Trait Trek could be taken within the school yard to locate ants, squirrels, robins, etc. to identify their specific traits and what each could symbolize.
3. Procedure: Discuss what a symbol of the United States is and why people might use wildlife as a symbol. Children could be shown pictures of our national symbols and read books (listed below) about bald eagles and their traits which symbolize our country. Pictures of several items that include wildlife symbols can be identified by the children.
4. The children can be challenged to look for wildlife symbols at home, at the store, or in the neighborhood. The children could share what they found at these places during class time the next day.
5. Explain traits and what the different traits various animals have and why people sometimes use wildlife as symbols to show certain traits – either traits that are real or that people imagine. Animal Cards could be use to help the children to describe the animal and their visible traits.
6. The book *The Bald Eagle* by Lloyd G. Douglas can be read and pictures shown as symbols and traits are discussed. An emphasis of our great nation can be given to the children in appreciation to the fact that America is the greatest nation on earth. *Tom Turkey and Erik Eagle: Or How the Eagle Became the American Symbol* by Sandra Calder Davidson would also be read for the different wildlife in our country.
7. At snack time, animal crackers or cookies will be shared.
8. A continued awareness of wildlife outdoors can be encouraged each time a hike is taken, a book is read, or an activity done. Design a Mural is a project each student could do. An outline of our state could be printed on card stock paper and given to each child. Provide art materials or pictures to cut out to make a mural of our state's mammal, bird, fish, reptile, insect, and so on. Children may choose to add the state tree, flower or other state symbols.

9. *Fly like a Bald Eagle* is a music and movement activity that could be done. Learning and singing the Iowa state song, with possible dance moves, could be a fun energy releasing activity.
10. The home connection is to have the parents look for Wildlife Symbols Everywhere. A note could be sent home explaining what we are doing and the goals of identifying wildlife in the community, on business signs, etc.

Description of the outdoor exploration:

This lesson would begin in the classroom then move to the outdoors. A pre-determined path would be taken for optimal locating of wildlife. However, if only a school yard is available, a determined effort would be made for **optimal** locating of wildlife.

Once outside, the children will be able to explore the walking path for different wildlife, whether it is birds in trees, snakes in the yard, furry animals scurrying around. Photos could be taken to add to a class book.

Identify additional preparation needed for exploration. With a younger class I would try to prepare the path for needed items such as a sign or picture of wildlife place in various places. Locating these would give the children a success of finding “wildlife” on the hike. I would make my expectations very clear as to how they need to behave and what they will be looking for, making sure they look “high and low.” Bird Cards could be use to help the children identify different birds.

Draft 2 open – ended questions to encourage further student investigation. I would pose these questions before going outside: “What types of wildlife do we see outside? Have any of you ever seen a bald eagle before? What bird is America’s national symbol? Do you think there are any bald eagles in Iowa? Where do you think we would most likely see a bald eagle? What traits of the bald eagle make it a great bird?”

List activities that could be used as pre and/or post learning opportunities.

The questions listed above would be my pre-activity questions preparing the children for the activity. Many of these questions could encourage further discussion adding to the fun of learning about wildlife. Post learning activities could be the note home for the Home Connection discussing what we did at school and how they can continue the learning and identifying at home. If the situation allows we could plan a field trip to the Saylorville reservoir in Des Moines, Iowa to further identify and watch for bald eagles.

Indicate any modifications you will make to the activity or components within (classroom usability).

Modifications will be made as listed above according to the age group of the children. Additional modifications may be needed after we’ve tried it out in the classroom to see what will and won’t work as written.

Indicate modifications/considerations for children with special needs.

I would enlist the help of mothers to assist with their own children allowing this activity to be successful for all who would participate in the hikes or field trips.

List age appropriate literature (books, periodicals, websites) that can be used as part of the activity.

The Bald Eagle by Lloyd G. Douglas (read during class)

Tom Turkey and Erik Eagle: Or How the Eagle Became the American Symbol by Sandra Calder Davidson (to emphasize other wildlife in our country)

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/news/10jan/eaglewatch.html>

<http://www.statesymbolsusa.org/>

Identify local natural areas, parks, or guest speakers that could be included in activity.

Missy Smith, Naturalist – Warren County Conservation – 515-961-6169 – for wildlife presentations and their habitats and traits.

Lake Ahquabi State Park, Indianola, Iowa – for an exploring and field hike option

Emily Vant Hul – Naturalist/Education Coordinator – 515-250-8274

Pammel State Park, Winterset, Iowa

Local parks or playgrounds could also be used for hikes.

Saylorville reservoir in Des Moines, Iowa

List standard/benchmarks/concepts that were met using components taught.

2.A.02 clearly stated curriculum providing a coherent focus for planning children’s experiences, allowing for adaptations and modifications, 2.B.01 facilitate social competence and ability to learn through interacting with others; 2.C.03 varied opportunities and materials that support fine-motor development; 2.D.04 varied opportunities to develop vocabulary through conversations, experiences, field trips, books; 2.G.05 varied opportunities and materials to collect data and to represent and document their finds (art project); 2.J.04 varied opportunities to learn new concepts and vocabulary related to art, music, drama, and dance; 2.L.05 varied opportunities and materials to learn about the community in which they live.