

First Grade / Spring Walk / At A Glance

Birds and Animals in Spring ⌚ 60 minutes

Goals

- Observe changes in schoolyard since the winter and how these changes affect animal's survival needs
- Look for and listen to birds and their nests, specifically the robin
- Explore for signs of animals at various spots around the schoolyard

Activities

Observe Signs of Spring

⌚ 2-3 minutes

- *How has the school yard changed since winter?*
- *Is it easier or harder for animals to find the things they need to survive?*
- Review the Basic Elements of life: Air, Food, Water, Shelter, Warmth, Protection
- Recall the 4 ways animals survived winter. Animals that hibernate wake up hungry. Animals that stayed active can find food & shelter easier. If the animal died and left eggs those eggs are hatching into larva. Animals that migrated south are coming back.

Look and Listen for Birds

⌚ throughout walk

- Look for: Robins, red-winged blackbirds, chickadees, sparrows, blue jays, crows, swallows, hawks
- *Why have the birds who migrated south returned now?* (Warmer days bring better shelter and protection, more food sources, including insects as well as seeds, fruits, and nectar in flowers.)
- Listen: *Why are they singing?* Mating/danger/territory *Do you hear these songs in winter? Can you tell the different calls?*

Find and Discuss Robins

⌚ 5 minutes

- *What are they doing? Why do they tip their heads to the side? Where are their eyes? Where are people's eyes?*
- Look for worm castings/poop (little piles of dirt in the grass).
- Pretend to be a Robin: show the children how to put on "Robins Eyes" and have them collect worm strings. *Is it easier or harder to see with the "Robin Eyes?"* Have children use their beaks to collect worms/

Build a nest

⌚ 5 minutes

- All birds build their nests from materials in their environment, some even use trash! Birds usually build a new nest every spring.
- What building materials can we find to make a bird's nest? Gather some tall grass or grass clippings and form a nest with them. Would this be easy to do with a beak? How long would it take?

Explore Various Sites around the School

⌚ 30 minutes

Look for signs of animals

- *What kinds of food are being eaten?* (look for chewed leaves, Berries, nuts, seeds, acorn, pine cones, holes in grass, tree bark and galls)
- *Where are they getting Water?* (Melting snow, puddles, brook)
- *What kinds of shelters can they find?* (Burrows, holes in trees or ground, brush piles, nests)
- Scat: *Based on size what animal is it?*
- Owl Pellets: not scat; regurgitated hair & bones, found under trees.

Look for bird nests

Wrap up

⌚ 2-3 minutes

What did you discover about changes to plants and animals in the spring?

This Guide is a supplement, not a replacement, to the full Big Back Yard Guide. Activities, their order, and duration will vary depending on your group's dynamics and weather