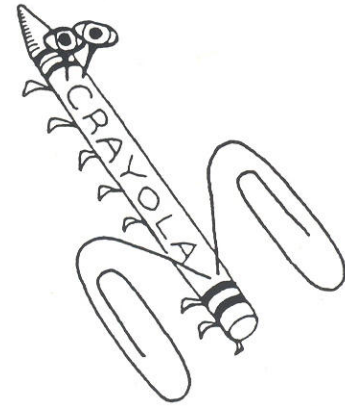


CREATE A CREATURE

Activity 19

AGE LEVEL = 9-11 (8-12)
DURATION = 45-60 min.
LEARNING STATION = Schoolyard/Park,
Anywhere
RELATED ACTIVITY = ← Too Munch or Not
Too Munch

WHEN =



UNDERSTANDING: Animals have many types of adaptations that help them survive.

MATERIALS:

- Predator Device Cards (see below)
- Junk box (e.g., rubber bands, paper towel rolls, pins, paper clips, tape, scissors, cardboard, string, twine, wire, cutters, foil, staplers, tweezers, bowls, small boxes)

PREPARATION: Gather materials and prepare Predator Device Cards. You may want to review adaptations and predator-prey relationships in the Leader's Guide.

LESSON:

Warm-up: Review predator-prey concepts and have the children give examples. Ask them to list methods predators use to capture their prey. Use this as an introduction to the concept of adaptation. Give them a working definition of adaptation (a built-in tool or behavior that an animal has to help it survive). Challenge the group to create "human adaptations" that would help them capture some prey animals.

Activity: Explain to the group that they will use the junk box materials to create adaptations. Hand out (or have the children select at random) the Predator Device Cards. (You may wish to have the children work in groups of two or three.) Remind them that predators employ different strategies (some set traps, some chase, etc.).

Wrap-up: Have each group member demonstrate their device. After each description, ask the group to think of animals that use the same principle in capturing their prey. For example, a choke snare may be likened to a constricting snake; a drill used to get insects from logs is similar to a woodpecker. Emphasize that although the children's designs may be unique, the principle behind them often already exists in nature.

PREDATOR DEVICE CARDS: On blank 3 x 5 cards write:
"Make a predator device that could..."

- catch a slow-moving land animal.
- be used for hunting mammals at night.
- find, pick up and break open an egg.
- break open hard-shelled animals, like turtles.
- eat animals living in rotten logs and stumps
- catch a flying insect.
- dig up roots and search for grubs.

- get animals that live underground.
- capture a porcupine.
- pick up leaves and find animals living underneath.
- get at insects living underneath tree bark.
- catch an animal swimming in a lake.
- catch an animal running 20 miles per hour.

OPTIONS AND FURTHER EXPLORATIONS:

1. For each “adaptation” created, have the children come up with a counter adaptation that the prey animals could use. Have them discuss or draw it.
2. Give the group additional prey situations, and have them develop new predator adaptations using paper, crayons and their imagination.
3. This activity focuses on physical adaptations for predation. Have the group research behavioral strategies as well (i.e., courting, grooming, calling or singing).
4. Lead-in to discussions on other types of adaptation; e.g., reproduction, winter survival, etc.