Quick & Easy Habitat Education Activities

Homes in the Habitat Walk
Developed by Starflower Foundation

Description: Students take a walk in a habitat area, and look for evidence of wildlife homes of all kinds, including those of insects, birds and mammals. Students demonstrate good outdoor etiquette including not disturbing these wildlife homes. Students draw a picture of a wildlife home, and the animal they think may use it.

Objectives:
- Students increase their understanding that wildlife homes have many shapes and forms.
- Students practice outdoor etiquette skills while visiting a habitat area.
- Students use their observations to record information about wildlife homes.

Print Materials:
- Images: ‘Animal Homes in the Habitat’

Teacher supplied:
- Paper and pencils/crayons

Vocabulary
- Evidence: something that provides proof
- Habitat: the environment where a plant or animal naturally lives and grows
- Observation: an act of noting a fact or occurrence, often involving a measurement, a record or description
- Wildlife: animals which are neither human nor domesticated

Washington State EALRs
Communication 1.1, 1.2 Students will focus attention, listen, and observe to gain and interpret information.
Civics 3.2.1a Provide examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals and groups.

Seattle School District Standards
1.4 Recognize the components, structure, and organizations of systems and the interconnections within and among them.
1.4 Living things respond to the conditions around them.
Essential 1.1 Animals eat plants or other animals for food and may also use plants for shelter and nesting. Essential 2.2 People can often learn about things around them by observing those things carefully.

Before activity: Locate a nearby habitat area to take students to look for wildlife homes. Any urban park or natural area will provide ample examples of wildlife homes, especially those areas that have been preserved or restored for wildlife habitat.

Activity
- Gather students at the entrance of the habitat area. Remind students of the ‘Everybody Needs a Home’ story. Ask, “What is the most important message of this story?” Tell students that they are going to go into the habitat area to make observations about animal homes.
- Ask, “Who has seen an animal home?” Share stories. Say, “You don’t have to see wildlife in their home to know that some place might be a home. What are some examples of evidence of animal homes?” (Mole hill, hole in a tree, curled up leaf, hole in the ground or wood, nest in branches)
- Show images: ‘Animal Homes in the Habitat’ to expand discussion.
- Review the student list of appropriate behavior when visiting a habitat area which should include the following:
  ◊ Use quiet voices.
  ◊ Walk quietly, keeping feet on the path.
  ◊ Stay with an adult.
  ◊ Be kind to all of the living things in the forest (plants and animals).
  ◊ Leave natural objects right where they are.
- Ask students why these behaviors are important for wildlife. Seek feedback from all students.
- Walk through the habitat and look for evidence of wildlife homes. Look for spider webs, mole holes, holes in trees, decaying wood, cocoons, etc. Also look for dense shrubbery, rock piles, brush piles, ponds or creeks that provide many places for animal homes.
- Model good outdoor etiquette, and commend students who practice it themselves.
- Stop and discuss evidence or sightings of wildlife homes. Guess what kind of animal might use these homes.
- Find an outdoor classroom area, or return to the classroom. Pass out paper and pencils/crayons.
- Tell student that they are going to record their observations of animal homes. Ask students to draw one example each of a wildlife home they saw in the habitat area. Ask students to draw the animal they think might live in this home.