

Tadpoles and Frogs

Materials

From Tadpole to Frog by Wendy Pfeffer • large paper • crayons • paint • paintbrushes • paste • green paper • aquarium with tadpoles, optional

What to do

1. Read *From Tadpole to Frog* to the children. Point out all the times the text says, “Where are the (tadpoles, frogs)?” Then ask, “Where are the frogs in winter? In spring? In summer? In the fall?” Talk about the word “hibernate.”
2. Ask the children questions about the book. For example, “How are the frogs and tadpoles different?” “Are the frog’s eggs like bird’s eggs?” “What animals eat tadpoles?” “How do tadpoles/frogs swim?”
3. Talk about all the sounds that frogs make, such as “ribbet,” “ba-ra-room,” “croak,” and so on. Then encourage the children to hop around like frogs, making frog sounds.
4. With the children, paint a big pond on large paper placed on the floor. When the pond is dry, let the children draw, paint, or paste frogs on the pond. Decide which season it will be and draw appropriate flowers, animals, fish, and so on.
5. If possible, set up an aquarium with a few tadpoles in it. Leopard or grass tadpoles are good to have because they are large enough for the children to see, but don’t take too long to change into frogs. (Leopard tadpoles take a few weeks; bullfrog tadpoles take two years!) Watch the metamorphosis take place.
6. If you don’t have frogs in your classroom, take the children to see frogs, perhaps at a local pond, lake, or aquarium.

★ Wendy Pfeffer, Pennington, NJ

Polar Express Day

Materials

Polar Express by Chris Van Allsburg • hot chocolate mix, cups, and spoons • small silver bells (one for each child) • ribbon

What to do

1. Send a note home to parents asking them to let their child wear pajamas to school on the designated Polar Express Day. Teachers should wear pajamas, too!
2. When the children arrive at school, read the book *Polar Express*. Have a variety of activities in each center that relate to the story.
3. Set up a table for making and tasting hot cocoa. Supply this center with cocoa mix, cups, plastic spoons, and mini marshmallows. Have an adult help with the hot water.
4. Using the chairs in the room, set up a pretend train. Encourage the children to dramatize the story.
5. Let the children make snowy pictures in the Art Center. Put out black or blue paper and white chalk. Use a die-cut machine or scissors to cut out trains. Encourage the children to glue the trains on the paper and add “snow” using chalk.
6. Present each child with a silver bell on a piece of pretty ribbon as a keepsake of your Polar Express Day.

★ Gail Morris, Kemah, TX

It Looked Like...

Materials

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw • white paint • black paper • dropper or spoon • pen

What to do

1. Read *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw to the children.
2. Give each child a piece of black paper. Ask them to fold it in half.
3. Show them how to drop white paint on one side of the paper.

A tadpole (also called a pollywog) is the larval stage in the life cycle of an amphibian. Most tadpoles are fully aquatic, though some species of amphibians have tadpoles that are terrestrial. Tadpoles have some features that may not be found in adult amphibians such as a lateral line, gills, and tails. As they undergo metamorphosis, the diet of tadpoles changes and they will start to breathe air.