



SeaWorld/Busch Gardens Bird Bonanza K-3 Classroom Activities

Melody Merrymakers

OBJECTIVES

The student will identify various bird songs and name two reasons why birds sing.

ACTION

1. Introduce birds to students. Ask students what sounds they think birds make? Why do birds make these sounds? Explain how birds use sound to locate others, signal danger, find nest mates, establish territories, and identify chicks.
2. Clear an area in the classroom for movement or go to an open area on the playground. Play one bird song and have students listen. Most bird recordings are short, so stress quiet listening.
3. Ask students to move apart with enough room to move arms and feet. Play recording again and have students move to the sound. Does the recording sound like a little bird? Big bird? Does the call sound soft, loud? angry, urgent? Can students imitate call?
4. State again that bird calls and songs have different meanings. Can they guess what the call might mean? After discussing, give the name of the bird that made the call.
5. Play at least four or five bird songs repeating motion and questions. Can students remember previous songs?
6. Back in classroom, have students draw and then color a bird of their own. Ask students to make up a song for their bird. Students may show their birds to the class and explain the meaning of the song.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Birds vocalize (make sound) for a variety of purposes. Some reasons may be to locate others in the flock, find mates, give an alarm call, identify young, recognize others of same species when with other birds, and defining and defending territories.

The passerines, or perching birds, are the most common backyard birds and include more than 5,000 living species such as larks, wrens, thrushes, warblers, sparrows, and swallows among others.

We often hear their energetic singing in spring when the breeding season begins and they are attracting mates.

Songs are usually made up of several notes that the bird sings in a regular pattern, over and over again.

On the other hand, calls used to denote danger, food location (food here!), or individual location (I am here!), are usually shorter with fewer notes.

MATERIALS

For each class:

- bird vocal tape (The Peterson Field Guide series has editions with bird songs on CDs. Check with local bookstores or order on-line through booksellers like <Amazon.com> Cost is about \$15 to \$20)
- pictures of birds copies from local area field guides (available on Internet or at bookstore)
- tape or CD player



The voices of songbirds, like this sparrow, are familiar to many backyard birders.