



## Nature Nuggets: Animal Hide-n- Seek

**Audience:** 3-7 year olds and parents/guardians.

**Theme:** Animals use their coloration to hide for safety or to warn other animals away.

**Materials:**

Blankets for sitting  
Squirrel puppet  
Skunk puppet  
Hare puppet  
Coyote puppet  
Monarch Butterfly puppet  
Puppet show script  
Animal photos, some camouflaged, some brightly colored  
Colorful worms – Hide before the program starts  
Animal shapes (white)  
Crayons/Markers  
Colorful construction paper  
Tape or Glue Sticks  
Scissors

### INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself and thank the kids and parents for being there.

Ask the children:

- *Do you like to play hide and seek?*
- *Do you like to be the hider or the seeker?*
- *What makes someone a good hider?*

Explain that animals play hide and seek too, when animals are good hiders it is called camouflage!

Tell the children you are going to tell them a story about animal hide-n-seek!

### Puppet Show

Put on the camouflage puppet show. (See puppet show script.)

### Why play hide and seek?

Review what they learned from the puppet show. So animals do play hide and seek, but it's not about fun, it's about survival. Many animals get hunted by other animals, but if they can hide well then they are safer.

Ask the children:

- *Which animals were good hiders in the story? (hare and squirrel)*

Animals that hunt can be better at catching food if they are able to sneak up or hide from who they're hunting (e.g. foxes and coyotes). Staying still can also help animals camouflage. Remind the children how hare and squirrel stayed very still to surprise monarch. Some animals have markings and colors that warn others to stay away.

Ask the children:

- *Which animal in the story scared away the coyote? (skunk)*
- *What other animal in the story had bright colors? (monarch)*

Let's learn more about how animals use their colors for camouflage and safety.

## **Photo comparisons**

So, we know that animals use their coloration to either hide for safety or warn other animals away. Show camouflage photos, one at a time, and ask kids to say whether the animal in the photo is hiding or warning other animals away. Allow some time for the kids to find the animals that are well camouflaged in the photos. Start by standing or holding the photo farther away (just a few steps) from the group and bringing it closer with each photo.

Ask the children:

- *Are all animals camouflaged?*
- *Why are some animals camouflaged and others not?*

Talk about each animal and how it camouflages itself or why it doesn't.

## **ACTIVITY**

### **Hide and Seek Worms**

Prior to the start of the program, hide the colored "worms" around the area. Make some blend in and be tough to find and make some very obvious. Use the colors of the paper to help. Be sure to explain the boundaries and possible hazards to the kids.

Tell the kids they are going to see how camouflage can help an animal hide. Have the kids go and find as many worms as they can. Give them a few minutes to search, and then call them back. Now, ask the parents to cover their eyes and have the kids take their worms and go hide them for their parents to find (remind the kids that the worms have to be visible, they cannot be buried or completely covered up). If parents need to go with their kids, that's fine. Once the worms are hidden in the same area, have the parents go and find the worms. Give them a few minutes to search and then ask the kids to go help if there are still worms to find. If they've been mostly found, call everyone back. Talk about how camouflage made it harder or easier to find the worms.

Ask the children:

- *Which colors were easiest to spot? Which were hardest?*
- *Did you have a hard time finding good places to hide them?*

## **CRAFT**

Now the kids will use their knowledge of camouflage to create their own critters to take home. Give each child an animal to cut out and have them pick a piece of colorful paper. Ask them to color their animal to camouflage with their paper. They can then cut out their animal and tape or glue it to the colored paper and take it home.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ask the children:

- *Do you think it's helpful to blend in to your surroundings? Why or why not?*
- *What are some ways that animals can camouflage themselves? What if they don't blend in?*
- *How can you use your knowledge of camouflage to help you spot animals when you're outside?*

Thank everyone for coming and learning about camouflage. Encourage kids and parents to come to other programs and remind the parents of up-coming programs with the Natural Areas.

**\*\*You may choose to do the conclusion before starting the craft while the kids are more focused, up to you!**