



Cardinal Adventures

Introduction

In the book ***Jo MacDonald Had a Garden***, author Mary Quattlebaum introduces children to the plants and creatures in a garden and shows how to create gardens that benefit people and wildlife. In this activity, children focus on the cardinal and dramatize, draw, and write about its growth cycle and garden experience.

Materials Needed

- ◆ Several pieces of paper
- ◆ Colored markers or crayons

Procedure

1. Ask children to find the cardinal in every picture in the book. What is it doing?
2. Explain that the book's pictures mostly show the adult cardinal but that its life cycle includes three stages of growth: eggs, nestlings, and adults.
3. Show children pictures of these three stages from other books or on the internet. How do the eggs, nestlings, and adult cardinals move? What body parts allow them to move that way? What do they eat?
4. Have children act out the different stages (still eggs, baby birds in a nest, flying adults).
5. Ask children to draw a picture of each growth stage.
6. Invite children to write and illustrate a story about the adult cardinal. What does it see at the garden? What other creatures does it meet? What does it do when it's winter?

Key Concepts

- ◆ Environments are the space, conditions, and factors that affect an individual's and a population's ability to survive and their quality of life.
- ◆ The environment must supply the needs of organisms.
- ◆ Plants and animals have life cycles.
- ◆ Each organism has different structures for different functions.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Invite children to write and illustrate a story from the perspective of a cardinal nestling that is hungry. What does it see in the garden? What does it do when its parents arrive with an insect for feeding? How does it learn to fly?

Additional Resources

Cardinal Life Cycle and Song

http://www.squidoo.com/naturally_native_cardinals_nest#module9587180

State Bird

The cardinal is the official state bird of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.

http://statesymbolsusa.org/Illinois/bird_cardinal.html

What is your state bird?

