



# Forest Drama

## Introduction

In the book *Jo MacDonald Hiked in the Woods*, author Mary Quattlebaum introduces children to the trees, plants, and creatures of a forest ecosystem and models safe, courteous behavior in the wild. In this activity and its connections, children draw pictures and make the creatures' sounds and movements.

## Materials Needed

- ◆ Paper
- ◆ Markers or crayons
- ◆ Large brown blanket or fabric (optional)

## 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.

## Procedure

1. Assign each child to a creature in the book (squirrel, owl, etc.).
2. Have students draw a picture of their creature using the book's illustrations as a guide. Or provide a large photo of each creature. Create a "forest" by asking children to stand or sit on the fabric on the floor.
3. Sing the song, with each child making her creature's sound and holding up her picture at the appropriate time. The sounds get softer and softer till the owl's loud "Hooo!"
4. At the end of the song, have children make their noises all together. What a wild lullaby!

## Nature Connections

- ◆ During the reading/song, have children make the movement as well as the noise of each creature.
- ◆ Act out as well as sing the song by assigning children to be trees, creatures, or Jo and her grandfather. What movements and sounds might the trees make?
- ◆ The book progresses from day to night, with the final illustration showing all nine creatures at night. Ask children to find them and to draw a forest. What changes do they notice from day to night? Which animals are nocturnal?
- ◆ The book shows a forest at one point in the year. How might the forest and weather change over the four seasons? What happens to the trees? Guide children to look for seasonal changes in the natural world. Every month have children examine a nearby tree and discuss/record the changes in the tree and surroundings over time.
- ◆ Visit a wooded area in person or in a book or on the Internet. Are there creatures that aren't in Jo's woods? As a class, list these missing animals, birds, and insects and their noises, and then add them when you sing the song again.

## Additional Resources

- ◆ **A Tree for All Seasons** by Robin Bernard
- ◆ **The Tree in the Ancient Forest** by Carol Reed-Jones, illustrated by Christopher Canyon
- ◆ **Explore the Deciduous Forest** by Linda Tagliaferro
- ◆ **American Forests Kids Page**  
<http://www.americanforests.org/resources/kids>

