

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS TO USE WITH:**

***“OVER IN THE OCEAN, IN A CORAL REEF”***



*by Marianne Berkes*

## PaperBag Octopus

**Book Connection:** Count the baby octopus' tentacles in the book, then make the puppet, making sure there are eight "arms."

You will need: Paper lunch bags, paper scraps, large wiggly eyes, scissors, yarn and paint (optional).

Art Activity: Stuff a paper bag with wrinkled up paper scraps about half way up the bag. Tie a piece of yarn around it. Then cut eight strips in the bag up as far as the yarn for the octopus' arms. Paint the octopus (optional) and glue on wiggly eyes.

## Octopus – "squirt"

**Book Connection:** How an octopus uses ink to hide from predators.

You will need: Water table or small tub, water balloon, food coloring and a plastic toy shark or other large predator.

Science Activity: Fill a water balloon with water and then place seven or eight drops of dark food coloring into the balloon before tying it closed. Fill the water table or small tub with water and place a toy shark in the water. Then place the water balloon in the tub (This is the octopus that is the prey.) Show the children that the shark can see the octopus (water balloon). Remove the water balloon and carefully put a tiny hole (The end of safety pin is good to use) near the knot and put it back in the water. The children will see how the ink helps hide the octopus from the shark (predator.)

## Clownfish –Using Model Magic Clay

**Book Connection:** In the back of the book, under "Tips from the Illustrator" you can see how illustrator, Jeanette Canyon, used netting to make the scales of the clownfish. Learn more about Jeanette's art on her web site: [www.ChristopherandJeanetteCanyon.com](http://www.ChristopherandJeanetteCanyon.com) Click on "Our Art" then on the "fishy" and you can view a movie showing how she uses polymer clay.

You will need: Orange, white and black Model Magic Clay. Netting from a bag of oranges, or onions. Wiggle eyes. Craft sticks.

Art Activity: Help children form a fish shape with orange clay. Roll out thin pieces of white clay and press into front of fish shape and toward the back.. Roll out even thinner pieces of black clay and line that along the white strips. Add a wiggle eye in the front. Press netting onto the fish to make the scales. Use craft sticks to shape a mouth, fins and a tail. Model Magic Clay (also called "Fusion") by Crayola, will harden.

Children can sculp with "Model Magic Clay" to form into almost any shape. See [www.Crayola.com](http://www.Crayola.com) for hundreds of art techniques and Lesson Plans.

## Clownfish – “dart”

**Book Connection:** Clownfish “dart” in and out of sea anemone. Why do they do that?

Discuss: Anemones are not flowers. They are predatory animals that sting fish with their tentacles and then eat them. But clownfish have special defenses on their bodies that prevent them from being stung, and they help the anemone catch other fish. Tell the children that they are going to play a game to learn about the relationship between a sea anemone and a clownfish.

Movement Activity: Children stand in specific spots with their feet planted on the floor. They can only use their arms which are the tentacles of the anemones to wave back and forth. Choose two or three other children to be clownfish that dart in and out of the anemone. (You might pin something orange on them so the anemones know who they are.) Then choose two of three other children to be fish who will chase the clownfish into the sea anemone. The sea anemone catch the other fish and hold onto them as the clownfish dart back out into the ocean.

## Seashells

**Book Connection:** On the sting ray page there are four seashells “on a sandy sea floor.”

You will need: A variety of seashells that are in the book (both bivalves and univalves), Sand table or large tub filled with sand.

Math Activity. Ask the children which two are the same and which two are different in the book. Later let them sort shells finding matches buried in the sand table.

## Seashell Fingerplay

Math Activity: Raise your left hand showing five fingers. (These are the five shells). Make a big wave on heavy paper and attach it to a tongue depressor. Hold wave stick with your right hand and on the word “whosh” put the wave in front of your left hand showing only four fingers...and so on.

Five different shells on the sandy seashore  
WHOOSH, comes a big wave  
Now there are four!

Four lovely seashells lying by the sea  
WHOOSH, comes a big wave  
Now there are three!

Three pretty seashells by the ocean blue  
WHOOSH, comes a big wave  
And now there are two!

Two little seashells sleeping in the sun  
WHOOSH, comes a big wave

Now there is one!

One fragile seashell feeling all alone  
WHOOSH, comes a big wave  
And now there are none!

### **Pufferfish – “puff”**

**Book Connection:** Why do pufferfish puff?

Discuss: Pufferfish balloon up when they are hurt or frightened. Puffing up and getting larger is their defense mechanism. Ask children what they might do when they are hurt or frightened. What kind of defense mechanisms do humans use? Examples: Running away, or crying or pouting.

You will need: Large Paper bags, stapler, crumpled pieces of newspaper, paint or crayons.

Art Activity: Draw a fish design on a large paper grocery bag. Cut through the double layered bag. Decorate on both sides with crayons, magic markers or paint. Line sides up and staple around the edges, leaving the mouth end of the fish open. The pufferfish is still flat. Now, stuff it with crumpled pieces of newspaper. Finish stapling and hang the stuffed fish from the ceiling.

### **Ocean Commotion**

#### **Making Waves**

**Book Connection:** Count the wave tips on the Dolphin page. There are six! Did you know there is something extra to count on every page?

You will need: Water table filled with water, straws.

Science Activity: Give each child a straw and let him/her blow into the water. This is one way to make waves, from the wind. And when there is more wind, the waves will be higher.

#### **Salt Water vs. Fresh Water**

You will need: Two containers, one filled with fresh water, and the other with sea water. Salt. Small Paper cups, Plastic cups.

Science Activities: Make the seawater ahead of time. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of salt to every cup of hot water and stir. When it has cooled, pour it into the container marked “seawater.” Prepare another container filled with tap water and mark it “fresh water.”

Activity 1: Explain to the children that although ocean water covers almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the earth, and many creatures live in the ocean, we can’t drink it. Let them discover why by pouring a tiny amount for each child into a small paper cup and let them taste it on their tongues.

Activity 2: What does the salt do to the water? Children can observe as you pour some of the salt water into a plastic cup. Then pour from the freshwater container the same amount into another plastic cup. Take the two cups and put them on a balance scale. Children will see that the sea water makes is heavier.

### **Angelfish and Crabs**

**Book Connection:** After the children count the baby angelfish, see if they can find the seven crabs clinging in the “sea fan heaven.”

You will need: Colored Tissue Paper, clinging crabs, angelfish cut outs, construction paper, and glue sticks. For Angelfish pattern see:  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/fish/printouts/>

Art Activity: Paste seven little crabs you have cut out ahead of time, on blue construction paper. Then fold tissue paper into a square and cut little holes (like making snowflakes). Open the tissue paper and paste over the crabs over them so they look like they are hiding in the sea fans. Then glue angelfish onto the paper, so your picture looks almost like the one in the book.

### **Sea Urchins – Needle fish page**

**Book Connection:** The extra things to count on the Needle fish page are sea urchins.

Discuss: Sea urchins are spiny ocean creatures with tube-like feet to grab their prey. Like a porcupine, their spines protect them in danger.

You will need: Black Model Magic Clay and toothpicks.

Art Activity: Children can roll clay into balls and then add the toothpicks for the spines.

### **Starfish**

**Book Connection:** Beginning with the first page of the book, children can count the number of starfish, one to ten.

You will need: Pencil, paper, scissors, heavy paper, sandpaper, star fish cut out.

Art Activity: Teacher cut out star fish patterns using heavy paper. Children can then trace different starfish onto sandpaper and then cut them out with scissors. You can glue them to a large sheet of paper to make a collage with your own sea of starfish.

### **Starfish – Flannel Board Story**

Language Arts and Math Activity: Use the sandpaper star fish with the poem I wrote, on a flannel board. You might ask the children why I used the word “walked.” That is because star fish are not really fish ; they are related to sea urchins and use their tube-like feet to “walk” on the ocean floor.

One little starfish in the ocean blue  
Along came another, then there were two

Two little starfish, living in the sea  
Along came another, then there were three.

Three little starfish on the ocean floor  
Along came another, then there were four.

Four little starfish, all of them alive  
Along came another, then there were five.

Five little starfish on the ocean floor  
One walked away, and then there were four.

Four little starfish living in the sea  
One walked away, and then there were three.

Three little starfish in the ocean blue.  
One walked away, and then there were two.

Two little starfish having lots of fun  
One walked away and then there was one.

One little starfish, he was all alone.  
He walked away and then there were none.

### **Seaweed Tag**

**Book Connection:** There are ten pieces of sea grass (also called turtle grass) on the seahorse page. Here's a movement activity for kids to enjoy:

**Movement Activity:** Mark off a large area to serve as the "ocean." One child, acting as "seaweed" stands in the middle of the area, with the rest of the children (the fish) lined up on end of the ocean. At your signal, the fish try to cross the ocean. If tagged by the seaweed, they also become seaweed and must keep one foot planted on the ground at all times. Those fish who make it to the other side now try to cross again. The game continues until all the fish have become seaweed!

### **Parents and Babies**

**Book Connection:** On every page there is a mother (or father, on the last page), using an action verb. Ask the children if they remember what each baby does.

**Language Arts and Math Activity:** Copy the pictures in the book of the parents and babies and have the children put them on a flannel board, matching the mothers to the babies, and the seahorse father to his babies.

## Seashore Touch and Tell

**Book Connection:** Start out by using some of the seashore items in the book.

You will need: A pillowcase or other type of bag in which to put the treasures.

Science Activity: Children should reach in without looking and tell what they feel. It could be a shell, a piece of seaweed, a starfish, a sponge, a piece of driftwood, a shark's tooth, a claw from a crab, etc.

## Fish in a Fishbowl

You will need: Poster board, Resealable plastic bag, Easter grass, staples, glue, gravel, different colors of construction paper to cut fish from.

Art Activity: Cut out two fish bowl shapes from poster board. Put a window in one of the bowl shapes and have children color one side of the other poster board bowl blue. Older children can then cut out fish shapes from construction paper, or you can have them ready ahead of time. Ask children to choose their fish along with some Easter grass, and a small handful of gravel. Put all of that into the plastic bag and seal it. Ask children to arrange the fish the way they want and place it over the poster board that they colored. Then place the other piece of poster board with the hole in it over the plastic bag with the fish and staple the whole thing together.

## Creative Dramatics

Ask the children to act out what each sea creature does as you sing the song. The music is in the back of the book. I have also recorded an audio CD that is available by going to my web site: [www.MarianneBerkes.com](http://www.MarianneBerkes.com).

You can also use different finger or hand movements for each fish's action, like this:

**Octopuses SQUIRT** – Squeeze both hands as if you are squirting something.

**Parrotfish GRIND** – Place thumbs under other fingers and move back and forth in a grinding motion.

**Clownfish DART** – Place hands together as if praying and move quickly back and forth.

**Stingrays STIR** - Make fists with both hands and stir in a circular motion.

**Pufferfish PUFF** - Touch fingertips together to make a ball and open and close.

**Dolphins JUMP** - Shape hands like dolphins and make them jump. At end of this verse, roll hands as if doing a somersault.

**Angelfish GRAZE** – Put hands together again as you did with darting, but this time move very slowly.

**Needlefish – SKITTER** – Put arms way out straight. Then separate arms and wiggle fingers in skittering motion.

**Gruntfish GRUNT** - Place thumbs under other fingers and open and shut in a snapping motion; Then point fingers together as if kissing.

**Seahorses FLUTTER** – Move fingers as if playing piano in fluttering motion.

## A Coral Reef “Storysong”

Children can draw and cut out their own sea creatures and make them into stick puppets.  
<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/fish/printouts/>

As you sing the rhyme, each child can act out the story with his/her sea creatures. At the end, all the sea creatures are raised up and then “swim away” creating a coral reef filled with the sea creatures in this book. If you have a puppet stage, you may want to use long strips of blue fabric that two people can hold (one at each end) to make ocean waves.

## Reproducible Bookmarks

Colorful bookmarks for four of the creatures in this book (octopus, parrotfish, angelfish and seahorse) can be downloaded at [www.dawnpub.com](http://www.dawnpub.com). Click onto “Teaching Tools,” Then “Downloadable Activities.” Scroll down to the cover of “Over in the Ocean, in a Coral Reef” and click onto “Over in the Ocean Bookmarks.”

Please check out my website [www.MarianneBerkes.com](http://www.MarianneBerkes.com). and click onto “Over in the Ocean” to learn more about the wonderful awards and endorsements this books keeps receiving. Also learn about all of my nature-awareness picture books and school visits.

Best “fishes,”

*Marianne Berkes*

