



Make a Waterscope!

Introduction

This is a fun way to discover what goes on under water without getting wet! You can observe dragonfly nymphs, tadpoles, salamanders in action in the shallows of a pond or creek, with this simple crafts project. And if getting to water is as likely as bringing your children to the moon, you can still use the waterscopes to observe and identify life cycles at home or in the classroom.

Materials Needed

- ◆ Large plastic container (yogurt tub)
- ◆ Scissors
- ◆ Plastic wrap
- ◆ Large rubber band and/or duct tape

Procedure

1. Cut off the tub's bottom with scissors. Stretch the plastic wrap over the tub's bottom and secure it in place with a rubber band and/or duct tape to keep it tight as a drum.
2. Insert the bottom (the plastic-wrapped end) about an inch into the water and look through the top. The water pressure pushes the plastic wrap into a concave magnifying lens and you can see tadpoles, minnows, dragonfly nymphs, salamanders and many small lively creatures in action!
3. Have children identify what they see. You could make a checklist with with images and have them check off what they find and with what adult species they belong. The children can practice being quiet and moving, slowly in order to see the most number of creatures (the key word is practice!)

Key Concepts

- ◆ Models can be used in explanations.
- ◆ Tools help scientists make better observations, measurements, and equipments for investigations.

For standards correlation please see our website.

Nature Connections

- ◆ If getting to a pond is unlikely, try this fun activity with a clear plastic bin filled with water. Copy images of ocean (hermit crab), pond (dragonfly nymph), and land creatures (caterpillar) on paper placed under the shallow bin. You can also do images of life cycle stages. Ask the children to move the scope over the objects and indentify what adult species they belong to and whether they belong to an ocean, a pond or on land.
- ◆ Find more images through the internet or old magazines and create a collage on the bottom of the bin. See how many water creatues students can locate and identify in one minute.

Additional Resources

Resources for guided outdoor exploration:

- ◆ **EEK! Environmental Education for Kids**
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/eeek/cool/h2scope.htm>
- ◆ **National Wildlife Federation**
<http://www.nwf.org/get-outside.aspx>
- ◆ **Children & Nature Network**
<http://www.childrenandnature.org>
- ◆ **Fish and Wildlife Service: Let's Go Outside**
<http://www.fws.gov/letsgooutside/>
- ◆ **Kids Discover Nature**
<http://www.kidsdiscovernature.com/>