Woodsy Owl's Curiosity Club- Creatures of the Night (Owls)

Safety Disclaimer: This program is designed for children WITH their parent or caretaker. Please review this program and designate a safe place for you and your child to participate. Woodsy Owl's Curiosity Club usually takes place at the Cradle of Forestry in America during the summer, weekly from 10:30am to 12pm. Since the Corona Virus we are designing new ways for children to learn about nature and stay safe. For 2020 we are offering these Digital Woodsy Owl programs for adults to be able to lead at home. Please enjoy and we hope to see you and your child for our 2021 programs at the Cradle.

About Woodsy Owl:

Caring, friendly, and wise, Woodsy Owl is a whimsical fellow and he's got his heart set on motivating kids to form healthy, lasting relationships with nature. As Woodsy flies across our land, he encourages youngsters to marvel at and explore the natural world, even in the city. His motto "Lend a Hand - Care for the Land!" encourages everyone to make a positive difference in their world. Woodsy Owl was created by the US Forest Service and these educational programs are brought the you by forest service partners- FIND Outdoors.

Story Time: Out of Sight, Until Tonight by Tish Rabe

Info about Owls & other nocturnal animals:

Nocturnal animals are mostly active at night. They have special adaptations to be able to get around and find food in the dark.

Crepuscular animals are mostly active early in the morning and late in the afternoon/early evening.

Diurnal animals are active during the day.

What are Adaptations? An adaptation is a special physical feature or behavior which helps an animal to survive and do everything it needs to do. Adaptations can be physical changes to the animals body or behavioral changes in how an individual animal or a society do things in their daily lives.

Owls have lots of neat adaptations to help them hunt at night:

- Large eyes that take in all available light
- Satellite dishes on their face to focus sound to their ears
- Fly silently due to fringed feathers
- Sharp hooked beak for holding & carrying prey
- Sharp & strong talons (feet) to catch & kill prey

Activity: Owl and Mouse- Hunting by Sound

As humans, we primarily rely on our eyesight to get through most daily tasks. However, as we have learned, raptors have a very heightened auditory system. They are capable of picking up sounds that we aren't, from the far-off sounds of a stream to the slight rustle of a mouse in the leaves. Raptors use this amazing hearing ability to help them locate their food. This adaptation of hunting by sound is one of the reasons that raptors are such amazing predators. In this activity, we will put our own hearing and ability to hunt by sound to the test!

Material List:

- Family (you need a few people to play)
- Quiet setting
- Blindfold
- Scrap paper balls

How To Set Up:

1. Arrange the participants in a circle, all facing center. If it's just you and your child, play around each other in a circle pattern. Toss the scrap paper balls all around the middle of the circle, mice will be collecting them.

2. Select one volunteer to enter the center of the circle and play the role of the owl. The volunteer should wear the blindfold securely so he or she cannot see.

3. Select a second volunteer to play the role of the mouse. Explain that they will collect a piece of paper (food) and travel around the circle once. The owl will "hunt" for the mouse, relying only on sound to pinpoint the target. The owl should point in the direction they hear the mouse. If they are right, they win! If the game is too easy, have the children forming the circle make slight movements or noises, such as swaying and the "shhh" of the wind, in order to mask the sound of the sneaking mouse. This will make it harder for our owl to track the mouse!

After all the kids have had a chance, have them discuss what they learned. Can they come up with any reasons to why hunting by sound is an important adaptation for nocturnal owls?

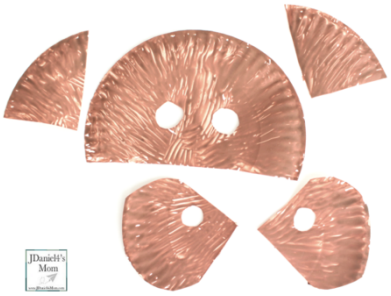
Craft: Owl Eyesight Viewer

Craft idea and photos from JDaniel4's Mom:
http://jdaniel4smom.com/2016/10/owl-eyesight-stem-exploration-for-kids.html

Materials:

- 3 paper plates
- one long card board tube or 2 toilet paper tubes
- scissors
- glue
- brown and gold paint
- two plastic forks

Directions:



Cutting Out the Paper Plate Sections- Start by cutting out the main head piece by removing the bottom fourth of two of the paper plates. The top fourth will be used for your viewer. Then cut eye holes in one of the paper plates. Trace the location of those eye holes onto the second head piece paper plate. Next cut out all the eye holes. You will cut the third paper plate into fourths. Two of the sections will be used to create the eye sections for the viewer. The position of the eye holes in main head piece will need to be traced onto them and then cut out. Finally you will cut a beak and two ears out of one of the remaining paper plate sections.

Painting the Paper Plate Sections- Use a fork to paint the beak section of the plate gold. The remaining sections will be fork painted brown.

Getting the Cardboard Tube Ready-If using a paper towel cardboard tube, you will need to cut it in half. One end of each of the tubes will need to have three or four slits cut into it. These slits will be folded backwards so the tubes can be attached to the plates.

Constructing the Owl Eyesight Viewer- Start by gluing the eye sections and the beak onto the front of the paper plate. You will place the long end of the tubes through the eye holes in the unpainted plate. Then you will glue the flaps onto the front of that plate. Next you will glue the painted paper plate to the side of the unpainted plate that has the flap section on it. Finally you will glue on the beak and the eye sections to the painted plate.

Stem Exploration:

Your children can use the owl eyesight viewer to look around them. They will notice that they have to turn their heads, rather than their eyes the same way an owl does to see things that are not right in front of them. Owls have very large eyes to allow in as much light as possible. This lets owls see on very dark nights. These larger eyes do not allow the space for increased muscles to move the eyes about in the socket like ours do. Have your child try to look in different directions, only moving their eyes. Explain that owls cannot do this. Instead they must rotate their heads to look in different directions. They can rotate their head 270 degrees, that's about ¾ of a circle!