



Know how. Know now.

## INSECT CATCHER'S SAFARI

### Goal of this lesson:

Youth will:

- Know and learn about the **habitats** (homes) of insects.
- Learn where and how to look for insects.

### What You Need to Know:

- Insects can be found just about **everywhere** you might look: in the city and country, inside buildings and outdoors, in woods and infields, in water and in sand, and on pets and animals.
- Insects can be found by looking up and looking down and looking all around. Then when you've finished looking in one area, look again— insects are always on the move.
- Most insects have a favorite place to live (**habitat**). Insects usually live in one kind of place because they find the things they need to live there. This might be on a special plant they like to eat or in an area with lots of sunlight, flowing water or sandy soil.
- Some insects build special homes for themselves. Two kinds of insects which do this are ant (build ant hills) and wasps (build nest).

### Materials Needed:

- Plastic bottle with lid
- Magnifying glass
- Insect net (optional)

(If you want to have a net, they can be purchased or constructed from the pattern below. This activity is too complicated for children so parents will need to do it.)

#### Make an Insect Net

1. Bend the triangular part of a wire coat hanger until it forms a circle.
2. Carefully straighten the wire hook.
3. Sew, safety pin, staple or tape netting, cheesecloth, or sheer curtain material to form a bag with a tapering end.
4. Sew a hem at the top end of the bag leaving an opening for the wire hanger.
5. Thread the wire hanger through the hem of your bag & then twist the wires together.
6. Use plenty of heavy gray tape to tape the twisted wire securely to the end of a broom handle or wooden dowel.



### Learning Activity:

1. Choose a site for your insect **safari** such as a backyard, park, or field. Ask the children what they think a safari is. A safari is a trip and on this trip they will be looking for insects
2. Share that insects are everywhere but they often cannot be seen because people don't know how to look for them. Insects can be "shy" and hard to see in their own environments. It takes practice to see all of the insects around us. Have the youth look up and down, side to side, and all around to find all of the insects.
3. Have them look around in one spot and then when they have finished, look again because insects are always on the move. Have them look under logs, rocks, leaves, in water, in the air, and on plants and trees.
4. So they can get a closer look, have them collect some insects in their plastic jar. (Tell them not to pick up centipedes, large spiders, spiny caterpillars, bees or wasps. Find pictures of these to show them if possible.)
5. As they collect their insects in the jar remind them to include a small piece of plant, keep out of sunlight, and return the insects back to their natural habitat.
6. Ask them question to help them think about what they have learned.
  - How do you find insects?
  - In what different **habitats** did you find your insects? What are some other kinds of homes where insects might live?
  - Why do most insects usually live in one kind of place?
  - What are the differences in the insects? What color, size, and shape are each of the insects?
  - If you were an insect, where would you like to live?



**Other Fun Things to Do:**

- Have the children choose an insect they would like to be.
- Using their imagination, have them draw a home to live in. Encourage them to be creative
- Ask questions to help them think about their insect home.  
What kinds of insect homes would you like to live in?  
Would there be room for families and pets?  
Where would the home be?

**Read a Book:** Read a book about insects together and talk about what they have learned. Some book suggestions include:

*Where Do Insects Live?* By Susan Canizares and Mary Reid

*The Great Bug Hunt* by Bonnie Dobkin

*Have You Seen Bugs?* by Jeanne F. Oppenheim

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