



OVERVIEW

Moonbeams observe animals and understand their place in creation, express feelings about animals through art and movement, and distinguish the difference between wild and domestic animals.

OBJECTIVES

To earn this emblem, Moonbeams need to complete at least one activity from each section and the Bible lesson.

WORD BANK

- Habitat
- Pet
- Wild
- Camouflage

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS SUPPORTED BY THE ACTIVITIES

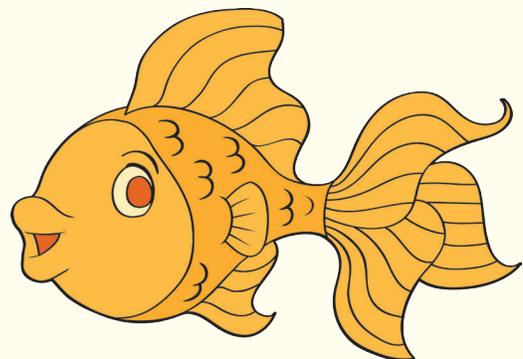
- Play and Creative Activities
- Engagement in Learning Experiences

BACKGROUND FOR LEADERS

Children are born with a sense of wonder toward animals. Watch as they admire a puppy or fuzzy baby chick and you'll see them connect with nature and the Creator.

This emblem builds on that natural attraction to help children understand the similarities and differences between species and learn about God's wonderful plan to care for all living creatures.

If possible, bring in living creatures for children to observe and care for. A goldfish named Fred or caterpillar named Sallie can provide many opportunities to teach about the animal kingdom. Of course, be careful of allergies.



GROUP ACTIVITIES

FUZZY BUDDIES

SUPPLIES:

- Materials with various textures that mimic an animal's fur/skin
- Pictures of animals with a variety of skin covering textures
- Box with a hole cut for a hand to reach in or paper bags (optional)

Some animals are soft and cuddly like a cat or a bunny while other animals are hard and rigid like an armadillo or turtle. In this activity, Moonbeams will explore the unique textures of the animals inhabiting our world.

Before the Moonbeams arrive, gather an assortment of materials that may identify with the textures of a variety of animals—scales, feathers, hard, fuzzy, slimy, etc. If you choose, put each item into a box or small paper bag to provide an opportunity of which animal would be in the bag.

Ask Moonbeams to touch one material at a time and identify which animal it feels like. Do they like this animal? Would they want to hug this animal? As each child touches each texture, help them determine additional animals that share this fur or skin covering.

Show Moonbeams the pictures of animals you've prepared. Have them sort the pictures by textures. If there is an animal who's texture was available for them to feel, discuss what they think that animal feels like.

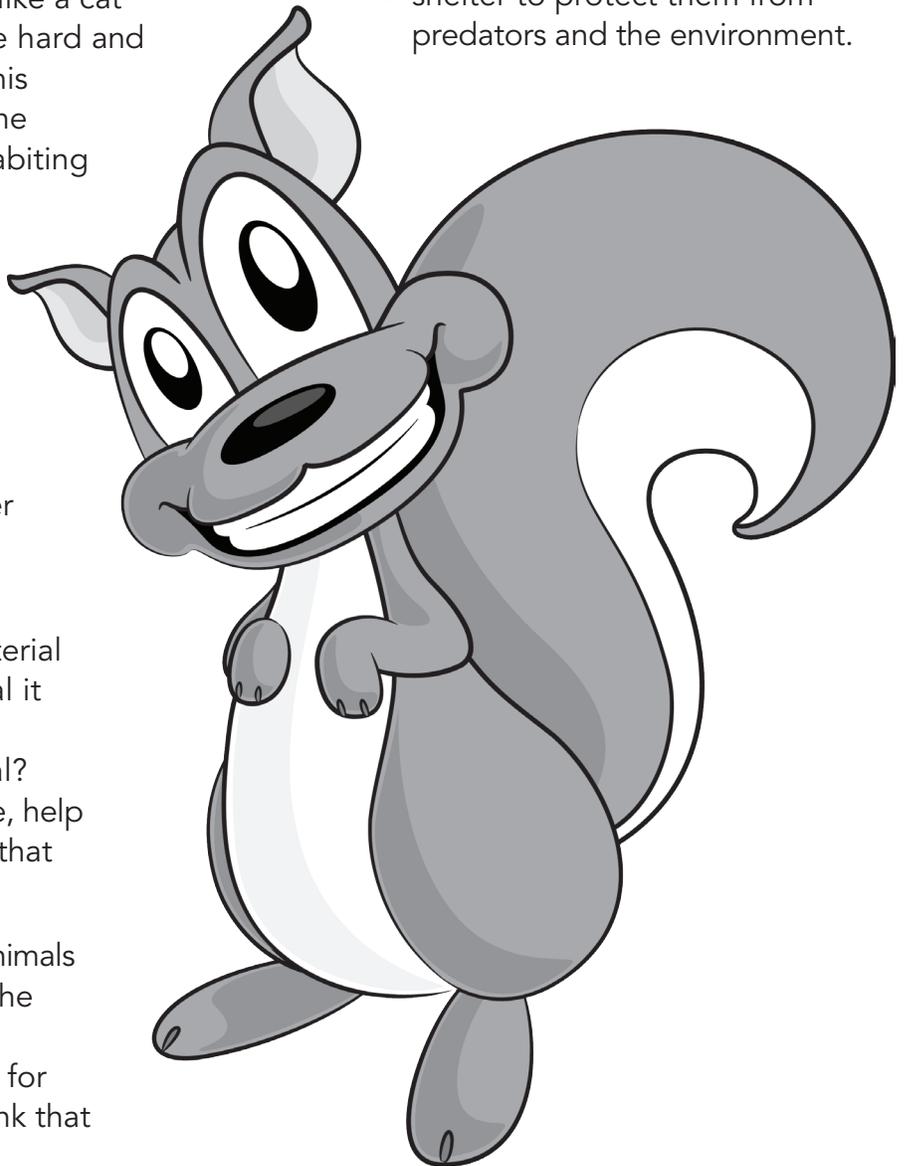
HABITAT SWEET HOME

SUPPLIES:

- Squares of paper or poker chips in three different colors (enough for each child to have several) to use as markers

Explain that all animals have things in common. In order to survive they need:

- food to eat,
- water to drink, and
- shelter to protect them from predators and the environment.



Say: All of these make up a home, or habitat. Does a fish need the same habitat as a squirrel? No. A squirrel lives in a tree, but a fish would die if it tried to live in a tree. God gave fish everything they need to live in water and He gave squirrels the right habitat to be safe and happy in trees.

Ask the children to form a circle and pretend to be squirrels. Show the markers (three colors of squares or chips) and tell them the colors represent food, water and shelter. Randomly spread the markers in the circle.

At the signal, the Moonbeams grab as many markers as possible and then return to their spot and sit down. Ask the following questions: **Does everyone have each color? What would happen to a squirrel who couldn't find enough food? Or water? It wouldn't survive.**

Repeat the activity, asking Moonbeams to think of ways to ensure all of the squirrels will survive.

CAMOUFLAGE

SUPPLIES:

- Bean bag animals or plastic animals

Say the following as written or in your own words: **God gave animals special ways to stay safe. One way animals are protected is by using camouflage. Camouflage is when animals use colors and patterns to blend in with their surroundings. Some of nature's most colorful creatures are designed by God to hide in plain sight. Why do you think a tiger or zebra has stripes? The stripes help them blend into the background and hide.**

Use bean bag animals or plastic animals to play a game of camouflage hide-and-seek. Half of the group hides animals while the other half hides their eyes. After all of the animals have been tracked down, let children switch places.



THAT'S WILD ✱

SUPPLIES:

- Copies of *That's Wild* handout from *Leaders' Resource Pages*
- Crayons or pencils

Complete *That's Wild* handout.

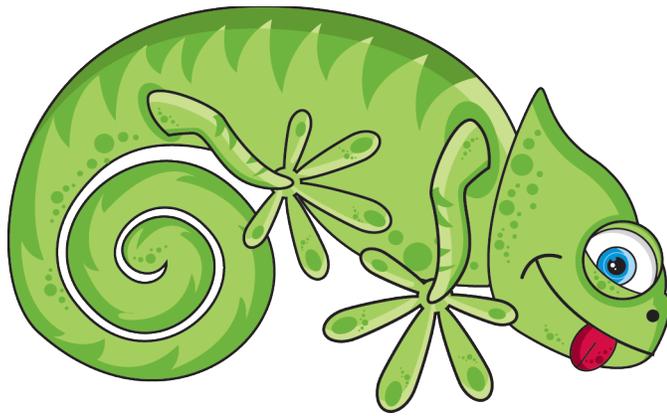
Ask: **Does anyone have a pet? What kind of pets do you have? Pets need people to care for them. Who takes care of their pet?**

Explain that wild animals don't have people to care for them. Wild animals take care of themselves.

Ask: **Are there any animals that wouldn't make good pets? Discuss which animals shouldn't be kept as pets (skunks, tigers, etc.). Why are those animals better living in the wild?**

ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

Visit a zoo, farm, nature preserve or pet store to observe animals and discuss their habitat needs.



CRAFTS

IMAGINATION STATION

SUPPLIES:

- Modeling clay
- Crayons and paper or finger paint and finger painting paper

Have the Moonbeams use modeling clay, crayons, or finger paints to create an animal and its habitat.

After finishing the creations, have them tell about their designs, what kind of food their animal eats and where it lives.

ANIMALS ON PARADE

SUPPLIES:

- *Animals on Parade Masks* from *Leaders' Resource Pages* printed on cardstock (one mask per child)
- Scissors
- String

Allow the Moonbeams to cut out the masks and add strings. When all have completed a mask, have an animal parade.

SONGS & RHYMES

(To the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?")

I wish I were a monkey, a monkey, a monkey.
I wish I were a monkey, I know what I'd do.
I'd swing and I'd swing and I'd swing and
I'd swing.
Oh, if I were a monkey, now that's what I'd do.

I wish I were a bunny, a bunny, a bunny.
I wish I were a bunny, I know what I'd do.
I'd hop and I'd hop and I'd hop and I'd hop.
Oh, if I were a bunny, now that's what I'd do.

I wish I were a lion, a lion, a lion.
I wish I were a lion, I know what I'd do.
I'd roar and I'd roar and I'd roar and I'd roar.
Oh, if I were a lion, now that's what I'd do.

I wish I were a bear cub, a bear cub,
a bear cub.
I wish I were a bear cub I know what I'd do.
I'd sleep and I'd sleep and I'd sleep and
I'd sleep.
Oh, if I were a bear cub now that's what I'd do.

GAMES

"SIMON SAYS"

Play Simon Says with Moonbeams. Rather than giving actions to be completed, Simon will say an animal. Moonbeams then need to act out that animal. If an animal is named without Simon saying and the Moonbeam still acts out the animal, they are out.

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

SUPPLIES:

- Plastic Easter eggs
- Gather pictures of adult and young animals

Using pairs of plastic Easter eggs, add pictures pairs of adult and young animals.

Give an egg to each child, who will look inside to learn which animal they have. Then have them try to find their matching parent.

NOTE: Hints are encouraged. Cats may purr, dogs bark, etc.

ANIMAL MEMORY GAME

SUPPLIES:

- Two sets of the *Animal Memory* cards (from the *Leaders' Resource Pages*) printed on cardstock and cut apart

Mix the cards and lay out on a table face down. Have the Moonbeams try to match up the pairs of cards by selecting two cards. If the cards match, the player keeps them. If they don't match, they're placed back on the table, face down. A second player attempts to find matching cards in the same manner. Play continues until all matching cards have been found.

SNACKS *

Serve Animal Crackers or Teddy Grahams or provide round crackers, cream cheese spread, raisins and veggies. Ask the Moonbeams to make wild animals out of their snack.

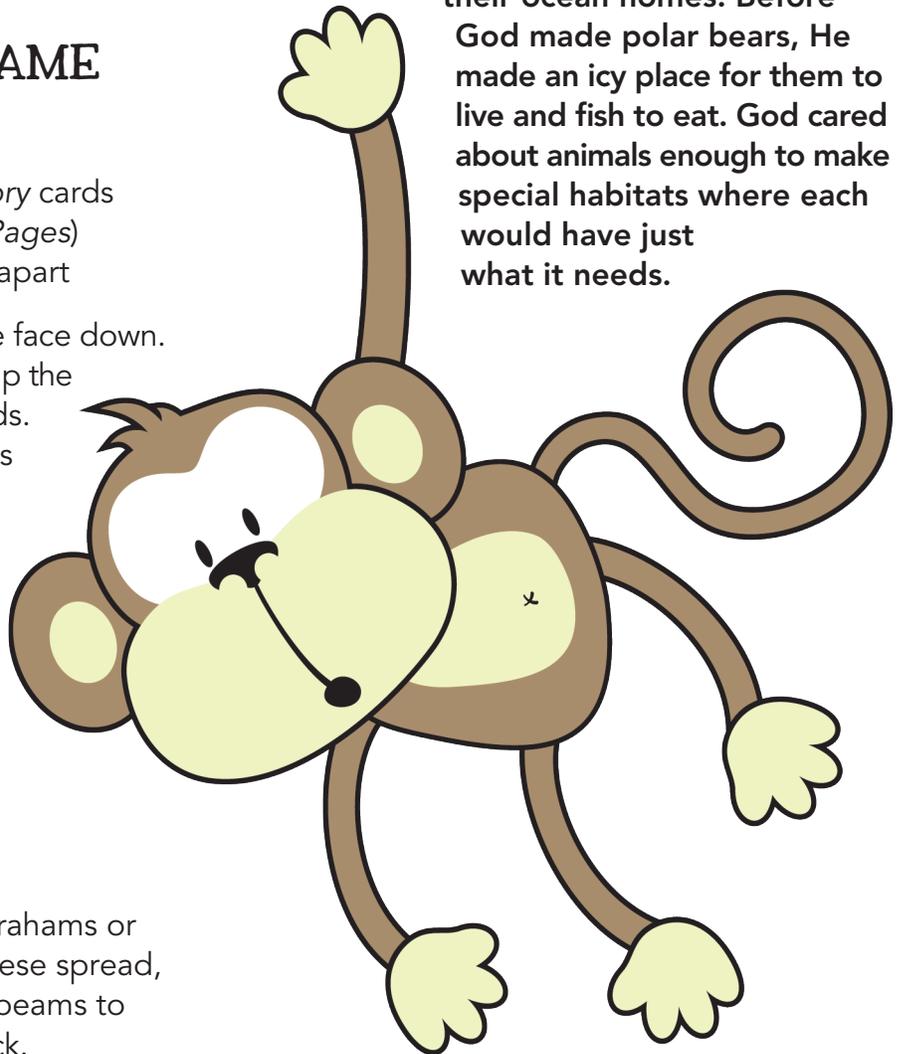
BIBLE LESSON

GENESIS 1

Read the creation story, found in Genesis 1, from a children's Bible or Bible storybook. Talk about the plan God had to provide for the needs of each animal before He began creation. Finish by saying the following or put it in your own words.

When God made the world and all living things, He made a plan. Before He made monkeys, He first designed their jungle homes and made bananas for them to eat.

Before He made fish, He made their ocean homes. Before God made polar bears, He made an icy place for them to live and fish to eat. God cared about animals enough to make special habitats where each would have just what it needs.



God cares for you, too. Before God made people, He made a beautiful earth with lots of good food to eat, water to drink and air to breathe. Let's pray and thank God for our wonderful habitat.

LEADERS' RESOURCES

BOOKS

All Kinds of Animals (It's Science)
by Sally Hewitt

Animals in Camouflage
by Phyllis Limbacher Tildes

Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing
by Judi Barrett

Can I Keep Him? by Steven Kellogg

I Want a Pet by Lauren Child

DVDS/VIDEOS

From *The Nature of God Series* by Zonderkids:

Wilderness Discoveries, Volume 1: Sand, Snakes, and Screeching Birds

Wilderness Discoveries, Volume 2: Forest, Frogs, and Feisty Critters

Wilderness Discoveries, Volume 3: Bugs, Bogs, and Spiky Beasts

WEBSITES

National Geographic's website has a link for children. You can find lots of animal pictures and facts that will prove interesting and helpful at:

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/>

www.kidsblogs.nationalgeographic.com/littlekids

www.kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/brown-bear

Growing Up Wild's website has many activities relating to this activity. Check out their site at: www.projectwild.org/growingupwild.htm.

