

## **Blackacre Preschool Song and Story Hike**

Support Material: Blackacre Homestead Map, Wee Sing Children's Songs and Finger Games, Barn Dance by Bill Martin Jr., and John Archambault

The purpose of this hike is to engage the students in their outdoor surroundings using music, creative movement, and story-telling. Each stop on the trail focuses on identifying one concept and developing oral language that will enable the child to communicate about his/her experience.

At each location use simple, clear language to identify the concept being presented. Ask students to share what they know. If another adult is present, have him/her record a vocabulary list that can be transferred to chart paper for use in the classroom as follow-up. Then, do the corresponding song, story, or movement game.

After the activity ask the students:

Where are we?  
What do you know about this place?  
Name something you see or hear.

It is helpful to have a couple of blankets to spread at some of the stations for the children to sit on as they make quiet observations. This also allows for rest breaks to be worked into the hike.

### The Hike

Station 1: Start at the Nature Center

Concept: Characteristics of Birds

Vocabulary: bird, beak, feathers, wings, seed, bird feeder

Watch the bird feeders. Identify seeds as the food. Have students describe the birds they see. Lead them to the generalization that birds have beaks, feathers, and wings.

Sing "Baby Bird" and do the movements.

Quickly recap. Move to the Spring House Pond.

Station 2: Rock Area by the spring house, overlooking the pond.

Concept: What lives in and around a pond? What is a pond?

Vocabulary: pond, water, fish, frogs

Ask students to name what they see and hear. What are some things that they might not see, but could be in the water?

Sing "Little Green Frog" and listen for frogs.

Do the finger play, "Five Little Fishies".

Quickly recap ideas, and move on to the barn.

Station 3: The Barn

Concept: What is a barn?

Vocabulary: barn, hay, animals, farm

Tell students that a barn is a building on a farm. Tell how it is used ( as shelter for farm animals, a place to store hay to feed the animals, a place for the farmer to keep tools and do work.

Read Barn Dance. Have students tell how the barn in the story is like the barn they are visiting. Make sure students understand that the story is make believe. Which animals in the story might be kept in a barn?

Depending on the energy level of the students, this is a fun place to sing "The Farmer in the Dell" or "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"

Recap ideas. Move on to the Beehives.

Station 4: The Beehives

Concept: Where bees live on a farm. Bees make honey.

Vocabulary: bee, hive, honey, flowers, nectar

Keep children back from the fence. Have them observe the bees flying in and out of the hives. Explain that their home was built by the beekeeper. Ask if anyone has eaten honey? Very simply explain that bees make honey from flower nectar and store it in the hive. The beekeeper comes every so often to get the honey, and the bees start over filling the hive with honey.

Students can get a close up look of a bee hive in the Nature Center.

Do the finger play, "Here is the Beehive"

Recap ideas. Move to garden.

Station 5: The Garden

Concept: What is a garden? What grows in a garden?

Vocabulary: garden, soil, vegetables, flowers, weeds, water, sun

Have children share what they know. Do they have a garden where they live or at school? What do the plants need to grow?

Have students pretend they are a seed in the ground (Stoop down in a tiny ball.) Pretend it rains, and the sun shines. Start slowly unfolding and getting taller, little by little, as if they were a plant growing. Finally stretch on tip-toes reaching for the sky. How would the movements be different if there is not much rain? Recap ideas. Anybody ready for a nap?