

SUSAN EDWARDS RICHMOND: BIRD COUNT ACTIVITY PLANS

Flying South: A Migration Game (Social Studies/Geography)

Description and Goals

Children will play a game in which they imitate a migrating bird, following a series of instructions as they fly south to their winter home. This activity will give children a kinesthetic experience to help them understand a migrating bird's journey and the importance of its environment. Children will also learn or review terms for direction and location. *Note: This activity is best performed after reading, *Welcome, Brown Bird*.*

Developmental Areas and Skills: Physical and Cognitive Domains

Curriculum Standards and Guidelines

Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences (MA Department of Education):

Learning in History and Social Science Standard 4. Engage in activities that build understanding of words for location and direction.

Next Generation Science Performance Standards

2-LS4-1: There are many different kinds of living things in any area, and they exist in different places on land and in water.

ESS3.A: Living things need water, air, and resources from the land, and they live in places that have the things they need. Humans use natural resources for everything they do.

Objectives

- Children will demonstrate their understanding of at least two directional words by correctly performing two instructions given in the game.
- Children will carry out gross motor activities from at least half (5) of the cards in the game.

Materials

- A map of the Western Hemisphere, clearly showing North and Central America.
- Chart paper or whiteboard and writing implement.
- A large, open room where children can move freely. (Or adapt for outdoors.)
- Ten cards with written instructions. (See attachment.)
- Four cards written and illustrated with the four directions: North, South, East, and West.
- Tape to secure compass direction cards. (Use a compass to place them accurately.)

Introduction

Review the definition of **migration**—the movement of animals from one place to another in search of food. Remind them of the thrushes' journey in *Welcome, Brown Bird*. Call on a volunteer to point out on a map of the Western Hemisphere where the thrush migrated. Reiterate that the bird's journey started in the **North**,

or upper, part of the United States. Point to the northeast. Write North with an arrow pointing up on the chart paper. Then explain that the bird flew to a country that is **South** of the United States, or on the lower part of the map. Point to Central America. Write South with an arrow pointing down. Ask:

- *Has anyone ever flown South on vacation to Florida, or another state or country?*
- *How was the weather there? Cold or warm?*

Tell children they will pretend to be a flock of migrating birds. Invite them to name the kind of bird they wish to be, offering a choice of migrating birds, such as thrushes, geese, ducks, blackbirds, or swallows.

Procedure

1. Advance Preparation: Tape up the four directional cards on the walls that correspond to the compass directions. Use a compass to place them appropriately. Cut out the instructions on the Flying South Instructional Cards, or write and prepare your own set of 10 instruction cards.
2. Introduce Activity (above).
3. Point out the four directional cards—North, South, East, and West—taped to the four walls. Review with children that their migration will take them from North to South. Help children understand where they live and locate it on the map. Indicate the four directions. Invite children to share if they think they have traveled in any of them before and where they have gone.
4. Invite children to fly to the North to start their journey.
5. Read the cards created in Step 1, one at a time, and help the children follow the instructions as they fly from the North side of the room to the South side.

Conclusion

The game ends when the class arrives in the “South,” as indicated by the South directional card. Ask children which direction they would fly at the end of winter. Invite children to reverse the game, and fly back North. Or have them return to North quickly and repeat the flight South, using a different card order.

Accommodations

To reinforce the concepts of North and South, offer magazines with pictures of cold weather and warm weather winter climates and encourage children to make collages to decorate “North” and “South” ends of the classroom. If a child is not mobile, allow him or her to select and read the instruction cards. If a child has hearing challenges, create cards with visual instructions as well as written ones.

Evaluation

The activity will be successful if the majority of the children are able to understand and accurately respond to at least two directional instructions. A second measure of success will be if the children can perform the physical movements described in the majority of the instructions.

Family/Community Engagement

Write about the game in your weekly newsletter, and encourage families to create instructional games of their own when on a walk or family outing.

Flying South Instructional Cards

1. The water is frozen on your pond. Stamp on the ice to try to break through!
2. Time to start migration: Flap 10 strong wingbeats toward the South.
3. The wind is strong: Your flock is blown slightly toward the East. Move 3 steps sidewise toward the East.
4. You are hungry—Time to eat: Land in a Farmer's cornfield and eat the ears off the stalks.
5. Time to continue your journey: Flap 20 strong wingbeats toward the South.
6. There's a blizzard! Land in the snow. Huddle together to keep warm and safe!
7. A coyote is prowling through the flock! You take off and fly through the snow, but get pushed toward the West. Move 3 steps toward the West
8. The Skies are clear. Continue your journey. Fly 5 wingbeats South.
9. The winds are in your favor! Glide 10 steps ahead.
10. Congratulations. You have reached your Wintering Grounds! Fly down and find our own place in the marsh to swim.