

Mission Monday Activities

AMAZING ADAPTATIONS!

Plants and animals are uniquely adapted to survive in their habitats. Adaptations can be physical characteristics or unique behaviors that help a plant or animal succeed in finding food, defending itself, reproducing, or surviving extreme environmental or climate conditions.

INDOOR

ADAPT A MODEL

Models are tools scientists and engineers use to represent ideas and explanations.

Using any materials you may have at home, design a plant or animal model that has a unique physical adaptation. Choose the specific habitat that your plant or animal lives in and explain how that unique physical adaptation helps it survive better.

Supplies: *(Below are a list of sample supplies. Use whatever you have available at home)*

- craft foam sheets
- yarn or string
- pipe cleaners
- aluminum foil
- wax paper
- paperclips
- stapler
- cardboard
- scissors
- tape
- modeling clay or play dough
- pencil and paper

What to do:

- To begin, choose a plant or animal.
- Next, choose a specific habitat and decide what adaptation will be helpful and explain how it will help that plant or animal survive.
- Draw a design for the model showing the adaptation.
- After settling on a design, use the supplies you have to construct your model.
- Take a picture of your model and post to social media #MissionMondays and tag Wonders of Wildlife

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OUTDOOR

WEEDS! MASTERS OF ADAPTATION

A great way to observe adaptations is to investigate the less desirable plants growing in your yard, weeds! Those pesky plants that you can't seem to get rid of are successful because of their adaptations!

What to do:

- Venture out into your backyard and find some weeds. Have a parent point them out to you if you're having trouble finding one.
- Look for any of the following adaptations and ask yourself how it might help the plant survive and even out-compete the other plants around it.
 - Prickles, Spines, or Thorns: these specially adapted plant structures help keep animals from eating the plant so it can survive and reproduce.
 - Flower or Seed structure: some weeds have many tiny flowers and produce hundreds of seeds at a time! This design ensures that some seeds will survive to make new weeds.
 - Sticky or Clingy Seeds: some weeds have seeds with special hooks or barbs that get caught in an animal's fur or even on your socks or pants! This allows the seeds to be transported or dispersed to whole new habitats where the plant can colonize and spread.
 - Hardy, Tough Seeds: feel the individual seeds of a weed with your fingers. Are the seeds hard, difficult, or almost impossible to crush or smash? Some weeds have very hardy, tough seeds that can survive in the soil for years until the conditions are just right to germinate.
 - Climbing & Creeping: do you see any weeds that are growing in unusual ways? Some weeds will out-compete other plants for sunlight by climbing up or creeping out horizontally to find open patches of sunlight. This allows them to increase the amount of sunlight their leaves can absorb to make the plant grow faster.
- Take a picture of a weed from your yard, post to social media #MissionMondays, and tag Wonders of Wildlife!

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LET'S MOVE!

CAMOUFLAGE HUNT

One beneficial physical adaptation is camouflage. Some animals use camouflage to hide from predators, while some predators use camouflage to hide from the prey they are trying to catch! Whether you are predator or prey, the ability to blend into your surroundings is a fantastic adaptation that gives an animal a tremendous advantage for surviving in its habitat. Follow the instructions below to play a fun game of Camouflage Hunt!

Supplies:

- Construction paper (multiple colors- a mixture of bright and dark colors is best)
- Scissors
- Pencil or markers
- Notebook paper

What to do:

- First, choose an animal for each color of construction paper. (4-5 different colors)
- Next, draw 2-3 of each animal on each of the different colored pieces of paper.
- Cut out each animal with scissors.

How to play:

- Go outside and find three different areas where the ground is a different color. For example, one area could be green with all grass, the second brown with dead leaves or dirt, and the third a mixture of colored gravel or rocks.
- Beginning in the first area, have one person hide the animals around the area by scattering them loosely on the ground while the players have their eyes closed.
- Once the animals are scattered, have the players turn around and open their eyes.
- Give the players 1 minute to hunt for as many of the colored animals as they can find.
 - Count the paper animals before you begin so you can find all the animals in-between rounds.
- At the end of 1 minute, record how many animals were found of each color in that area.
- Collect the remainder of the animals and repeat this process at the other two areas.
- When finished, look at the data for what colors were found at what hunt areas.
- Were some colors easier to find in one hunt area than another? Why?

Camouflage only works in the right conditions. For example, a green frog will only blend into a green environment. If a green frog lived in the Arctic full of snow and ice, its camouflage wouldn't work at all!