

IN THE SMALL, SMALL POND

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by Denise Fleming

(Henry Holt and Company)

Themes: Animals, Growth and Change,
Nature and Seasons

Grade Level: preK-1

Running Time: 5 minutes

SUMMARY

Based on a Caldecott Honor Book, this program is a visual poem to nature. The pictures are in bright, bold colors. The few words appear as part of the art. But what words they are! Children will love how the words and pictures wiggle, waddle, shiver, quiver, sweep, scoop and splash. The poem begins with tadpoles and follows the gradual changes of the seasons from the viewpoint of the frogs. It ends with the frog safely hibernating for the winter. Nature comes alive with beautiful close shots of plants and animals, the play of words on the page and all the sights and sounds of a small pond.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will watch and listen to a visual poem about life in a pond.
- Children will match action words (verbs) to actions seen in pictures.
- Children will identify animals that live in or around ponds.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Show students the cover of the book or video, and ask them to discuss the title and art. Have them identify the two characters on the cover, a child and a frog. Explain that the child stands for them, the viewers, and that most of the program will show life from the frog's point of view. What is a frog's life like, up close? Ask students what they think they will see. Encourage them to pay close attention to the program to discover if their ideas were correct.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Review the story, from the viewpoints of both the frog and the child, who stands for the viewer. What sights and sounds did the child see in the small, small pond? What was the frog was doing and seeing in each scene?

Connect the story to science by introducing the words "habitat" and "environment." On the chalkboard, list other animals and plants the frog saw. Notice and list the clues to the changes of the seasons. If possible, make a field trip to an actual small pond, and have children make similar lists of the animals and plants they saw.

Connect the story to reading and literature by having children memorize and then act out the poem. They'll have fun making all the animal actions, while at the same time learning the importance of using colorful verbs in good writing.

Connect the story to art by having children play with similar art techniques. (Denise Fleming created the illustrations by pouring colored cotton pulp through hand-cut stencils.) Cotton pulp is available at art supply stores and can be colored with classroom powder paints. The pulp can be used with or without stencils. After the pulp dries, the art can be further enhanced with watercolors, crayons, colored pencils or markers.

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