Dickinson County Nature Center
Grade 3 Field Trip — "Life Cycles Scavenger Hunt"

Supply List

Life cycle pictures

Tape

Activity Time

30 minutes

Core Expectations

- 3-LS1-1

Investigative questions

- What is a life cycle?
- Do all organisms have the same number of phases in their life cycle?
- What are the different life cycle phases for various organisms?

Background

A life cycle is the series of changes that an organism undergoes from birth to maturity to death. Mammals, birds, reptiles and fish all have simple life cycles. A simple life cycle has three stages: Before birth, young and adult. Amphibians, on the other hand, are a little different. They are born and spend their childhood under water, using gills to breathe. To become adults they undergo metamorphosis, or changing their form, and develop lungs and spend their adult life on land.

Insects also have unique life cycles. They will also undergo metamorphosis to become an adult. Insects that undergo complete metamorphosis have four stages in their life cycle: Egg, larva, pupa and adult. Some insects, about 10 percent, undergo incomplete metamorphosis, meaning they do not have a pupal stage. These insects include grasshoppers, dragonflies and cockroaches and only have three stages in their life cycle: Egg, nymph and adult.

Plants have a very different life cycle from animals. They have five stages: Seed, seedling, mature plant, flower, fruit. This cycle is used by flowering plants, however, plants such as ferns and mosses have a different life cycle. Instead of producing seeds these plants produce different reproductive cells called spores.

Program Outline

1) The teacher will lead students outside to the Nature Playscape and explain that they will be doing a life cycles scavenger hunt.

2) The teacher will start off by reviewing what a life cycle is with the students. Students will then need to be split into **six** groups.

3) Each group will be assigned an animal (**salamander, dragonfly, snapping turtle, swan, fish, musk-rat**), and the students will search the area for their animal's life cycle phases. If the group agrees that the picture they find is for their animal, they will collect the picture. If the group decides the picture they found is not showing a phase of their animal's life cycle, please leave the picture where it is and allow another group to collect it.

4) Once the group has found all the phases of their animal's life cycle, they will go back to where the teacher is and put their life cycles in order. The teacher will use the key to see if the students have gathered all phases of their lifecycle and put them in the correct order.

5) If time allows, students may go place their life cycle pictures where they found them, switch animals, and then repeat the activity looking for their new animal's life cycle phases.

6) Before heading back to the nature center please put all the life cycle pictures back in their hiding place for the next group. If the students cannot remember where they found it, choose a new hiding place for the life cycle picture; however, please do not hide the pictures in too difficult of a location.

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Dickinson County CONSERVATION BOARD