

House of Salmon

Objectives

Children will:

- learn what it means to live in “the house of the salmon” through a second reading of *A River Lost*, discussions, family participation, and by creating a river habitat or “home”
- explore some of the many pieces to a healthy river habitat and the impact of pollution on this habitat and the living things connected to it
- have a better understanding of why the salmon’s home is important to humans, nature, and other living beings
- begin to develop a sense of place, in relation to where and how they live today

Materials

Water/ Sensory Table

Water

Rocks

Twigs/ Wood

Moss

Salmon Rocks

Items collected on nature walk

Plastic sandwich bags

Animal Figurines

People Figurines

Sand

Cornstarch

Pollution Materials/ recycled: plastics, paper, wrappers, rubber, oil, etc. (please make sure they are nontoxic and nonhazardous)

Book

A River Lost (2010 2nd Edition) Written by Lynn Bragg. Illustrated by V. “Smoker” Marchand.

Supplemental reading: *Salmon Stream* written by Carli Reed-Jones. Illustrated by Michael S Maydak

Vocabulary

Introduce these words and phrases and use them in the explanation of the activity, during the process of making the rivers, and during play. Reflect back on the elements of water and salmon and their significance in the story related to Toopa and her family.

River

Estuary

Life Cycle

Habitat

Dam

Riverbed

Animal Names

Restoration

In-tee-tee-Huh (salmon)

Pollute

Recycle

Garbage

Anadromous

Preparing for the Lesson

- Watch the video *Through Salmon Eyes* <http://nwifc.org/publications/video/> *Through Salmon Eyes* is a short video of a traditional story about Salmon Woman and the promises made to get salmon to return to their rivers of origin.

- Customize the *Letter to Families* template explaining the activity and send it home with a plastic sandwich bag. The letter will ask parent guardians to take their child on a nature walk to collect pieces they think would be a part of a healthy river habitat for salmon, other life, and people. You can also invite parent guardians to come to the classroom and experience the project with their child during class. Be sure to include a date and time on the letter if you do invite parent guardians in to participate.
- If you do not receive enough materials from students, gather additional materials. You can either gather the pollution materials or ask parents to send those in with their students as well. Make sure pollution materials are washed and clean before introducing to students and activity.
- Make salmon life cycle rocks. Collect six large rocks of varying sizes representing the changing size of salmon through their life cycle (flat rocks will work the best), and then rinse and dry them. Print out pictures of the salmon life cycle and cut to fit the rocks. You will need a non-toxic waterproof sealant and a paintbrush. Cover rocks with a thin layer of sealant, then apply a picture to each rock and cover the pictures with a second coat. Allow the stones to dry. You may want to make more than one adult salmon rock to show the abundance of salmon in a healthy river. *This activity can also be done as a project with your students.*

Let's Get Started

- Students will be creating a river and salmon habitat in the water/sensory table in your classroom. If you do not have a water/sensory table, any tub or tray will work. Once the river is complete, students will be able to engage in rich ecological play and explore the habitat with its many different elements, such as: salmon, assorted animals living around and in the river, the organic materials that make up the river (water, rocks, wood/ twigs, moss, grasses, sand etc.), and even a dam if you wish to create one.
- After reading the Second Read of *A River Lost*, explain to students that “We all live in the House of Salmon, or the salmon’s house, and that means that wherever the salmon are in the river or ocean, what we do impacts their home, and how happy and healthy they are. We honor, or respect and take care of, the salmon because they give us great gifts like yummy food for us and other animals. It is important that we work together and share how we can make the rivers healthier for the salmon to live in. We call this “restoration”, which means making or fixing something so that it is good to use again.
- Let’s make a river habitat! Place all materials on a table adjacent to the filled water table. Ask a small group of students (2-4) “What do you think would help make a healthy river habitat for salmon and other animals and people?” Have students discuss their thoughts and offer assistance in rationalizing what materials would be best if they need help.
 - Have students place all materials in the river. Next name and introduce the salmon rocks to the students for them to place in the river, then the animal figurines, and lastly the

human figurines. *Note on animal figurines: When selecting animal figurines, make sure to use only animals that are Native to your specific area and region. For example you wouldn't want to include safari animals or any from different continents. If possible, gather multiples of animals to represent the different life stages like mother and child, and to show family or herd dynamics.*

- Allow students to play freely and create whatever narrative they wish. Engage in conversation with students as they request. After free play, you can begin to ask guiding, open ended questions and phrases like:
 - ✓ **I'm In-tee-tee-huh. I'm swimming. Where do you think I'm going?** Say while moving the salmon along the river*
 - ✓ **I see you made a great home for the salmon, can you tell me what items you chose to put in the water?** Point to items as you ask about them
 - ✓ **How do you think the salmon feel being in this clean water with all of these nice things?**
 - ✓ **Who else in this environment enjoys the water being clean and healthy?**

During conversations re-voice children's words, ask them to say more and to make additional connections. Ask children to think why something is or how it might impact things.* Help make the connection that all living things, including humans, need the river to be clean and in balance if necessary.

**Note: Adapted from "Foundation Practice in Early Learning about the Natural World," Presented by Dr. Megan Bang University of Washington, August 2014*

- Optional: Explain to your students that salmon are constantly swimming from one place to the next (they are anadromous) and need to be able to get up and down the river freely at all times. Encourage students to create a dam or block in the river with lots of rocks to where the salmon could not get through without help. Explain that if the salmon cannot get past the river block/ dam, the salmon will die. Ask them "How do you think the salmon feel if they cannot swim to the top or the bottom of the river? How might this affect Toopa and her family if the salmon get stuck on one side of the dam?" After discussing the impact, ask students to come up with ideas on how to fix the problem (remove the dam, create fish ladders, etc.).
- After a day or two of students being able to explore the river habitat, introduce the pollution items to put in the river. At a small group table, show several different kinds of trash and recyclables to your students (including items that students use or are familiar with works best, i.e.: snack wrappers and containers, juice boxes, plastic utensils, etc.).
- You might say, "A lot of times when we go to the river, ocean, or the lake, we see trash in the water or on the beach. I collected some of the things I have found in the water that shouldn't be there. We are going to put these things into our salmon's home and see how this might change what the water looks and feels like."
- Have students place trash/ recycling items into the water table. Lastly, have students add the oil and cornstarch to the water. Ask students:

- ✓ **How do you think all of these pieces of garbage make the salmon feel?**
- ✓ **What if a salmon ate this, or got stuck in this?** Point to a particular pollution item
- ✓ **What if the salmon got sick from all of the garbage in the water? How would that affect the eagles, bears, or us humans?**
- ✓ **Would you like to have these kinds of things in your home or in your bed?**
- ✓ **Would you like to have these kinds of things in your home or in your bed?**

Encourage conversation about keeping the river and other waters clean.

- Next, ask students to help clean up the river and remove all of the trash and waste from the water. You can give students tongs or gloves or a strainer to remove the items and have children recycle if possible afterwards. Make sure students attempt to strain or spoon the oil out of the water. Help lead them (if needed) to the conclusion that sometimes you cannot always take the trash out that goes in water, and that it will stay in the water forever. Ask them again how they think the salmon feel about this.

Nature Extension

The House of Salmon river habitat activity can easily be done outside! If you have access, bring your sensory table outside and set up the activity there. If you do not have much success with having students bring in natural items for the habitat from home, you can take children on a nature walk around your campus.

Movement Extension

Salmoncatcher Game Activity

Take children outside. Have one child be the salmon. Have four children be the salmoncatchers (they can be bears, otters, human, eagles). Catchers join hands and try to close a “net” around the salmon. Salmon get a 20’ start but can’t slip through net. Catchers can’t touch or trip salmon. Catch is complete when ring closes and salmoncatchers join hands. Once salmon is caught, everyone cheers and thanks the salmon. There can be 1 to 3 salmon and 4 to 12 salmoncatchers. Each time, count out loud how many salmon and salmoncatchers there are. Play slowly and gently, like you are in the water. Try with few salmon, many salmoncatchers or with many salmon and few salmoncatchers. Talk about how the differences when you have more salmoncatchers or more salmon.

Mural Extension

Children can create an art project of a river with salmon to add to the mural. Give each child a thick piece of white paper and squeeze some corn syrup onto it (students can apply their own if you’d like too). Add blue powdered tempera paint or blue food coloring on top of corn syrup. Make sure to tell your students that the syrup and paint are not safe to eat! Students can use a paintbrush, stick, or their fingers to mix the corn syrup and paint/ food coloring together. Ask your students what they see happening. Let the paintings dry overnight. When dry, ask students to touch their paintings and describe how it feels and looks. Next have students cut a river shape out of the blue shiny painting. Have pieces of fabric cut into salmon shapes for your students to glue onto their river. Be sure to document

some of the conversations students are having to display around their finished pieces. Add the rivers to the cedar mat display.

Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Alignment

(Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines Birth through 3rd Grade 2012)

Ages 4 to 5 years

1. About me and my family and culture

Family and culture

- Take pride in own family composition and interest in others'. Understand that families are diverse.

Self concept

- Describe what he or she likes and is interested in.

Self management

- Associate emotions with words and facial expressions.
- Express one or two feelings in role playing life experiences. Adopt a variety of roles in pretend play.

Learning to learn

- Use imagination to create a variety of ideas.
- Enjoy pretend play (such as using dolls or stuffed animals, or playing "house" or "explorers").
- Use play as a way to explore and understand life experiences and roles.

2. Building relationships

Interactions with adults

- Seek emotional support from caregivers.

Interactions with peers

- Play with children the same age and of different ages.

Social behaviors

- Cooperate with other children, share and take turns

Problem solving, conflict resolution

- Observe that others may have ideas or feelings that differ from the child's own.

3. Touching, seeing, hearing and moving around

Using the small muscles (fine motor skills)

- Spend time practicing skills that are difficult. Be aware of what he/she finds difficult and try to do it better.

Using the senses (sensorimotor skills)

- Delight in playing with materials of different texture (such as sand, water, fabric) and conditions (wet, dry, warm, cold).

4. Growing up healthy

Daily living skills (personal health and hygiene)

- Participate easily and know what to do in routine activities (such as meal time, bed time).

Nutrition and health

- Know what self-care items are used for (such as comb and toothbrush).

Safety

- Follow safety rules indoors and outdoors.

5. Communicating (literacy)

Speaking and listening (language development)

- Use words to describe actions (such as "running fast") and emotions (such as happy, sad, tired and scared).
- State own point of view, and likes and dislikes using words, gestures and/or pictures.

Reading

- Tell you what is going to happen next in a story. Make up an ending.
- Use actions to show ideas from stories, signs, pictures, etc.
- Retell more complicated, familiar stories from memory.

6. Learning about my world

Knowledge (cognition)

- Apply new information or words to an activity or interaction.
- Build on and adapt to what the child learned before. For example, change the way of stacking blocks after a tower continues to fall.
- Be able to explain what he or she has done and why, including any changes made to his/ her plans.
- Seek to understand cause and effect (“If I do this, why does that happen?”).

Math

- Compare size (such as, “I’m as tall as the yellow bookshelf.”) Describe objects using size words (big, small, tall, short).
- Compare two objects using comparison words such as smaller, faster and heavier.
- Follow simple directions for position (beside, next to, between, etc.)

Science

- Predict what will happen in science and nature experiences. Consider whether these predictions were right, and explain why or why not.
- Use one sense (such as smell) to experience something and make one or two comments to describe this.
- Investigate the properties of things in nature. Begin to understand what various life forms need in order to grow and live.
- Participate (with adult direction) in activities to preserve the environment, such as disposing of litter properly, saving paper and cans to be recycled, etc.

Social Studies

- Adopt the roles of different family members during dramatic play. Plan what each role does and then enact it.
- Enjoy taking the roles of different jobs in pretend play.

Arts

- Show creativity and imagination.

K-12 Since Time Immemorial Alignment

Elementary Washington State History

Being Citizens in Washington-Boldt Decision

Living in Washington: Celilo Falls

Elementary U.S. History

Legacy for Us Today-Elwha

Middle School Washington State History

Contemporary Washington State – Boldt I and II

High School U.S. History

Our Foundations-Foundational Documents & the Boldt Decision

High School Contemporary World Problems

Environmental Issues-The Boldt Decision