

Fish of Minnewashta

Objective: Students will be able to identify fish that live in Lake Minnewashta and other local bodies of water by their distinguishing features like size, body shape, and habitat.

Age: 8+

Time: 10-20 minutes

Materials: Two or more sets of laminated fish pictures, open playing area

Directions:

1. Use the pictures of the fish to teach the group the different types of fish that live in Lake Minnewashta. In addition to showing the group the fish, point out distinguishing features and tips for remembering each type. You may also want to share other information, like where in the lake the fish live, what they eat, and how big they get.
2. When going through the fish make sure to point out similarities and differences between the species. Show multiple examples of each fish to show natural variation.
3. After the group feels confident about their identification skills break the group into two or more teams. Spread the fish at one side of the playing area and have the teams line up on the other side. You should stand by the fish pile.
4. Explain that this will be a relay race, with one person from each team participating at a time. When you say go, the first person from each team will run to the pile of fish, choose one, and try to correctly identify it. If they correctly identify the fish they should take it back to their team, add it to their team pile, and the next person in line may go. If they guess wrong they should return the fish to the pile, return to their team, and then the next person in line may go.
5. When all leaves have been collected have the teams count how many they collected. The team with the most fish is the winner.
6. Encourage the group to practice their new fish identification skills the next time they go fishing.

Variation:

1. Have the kids identify the fish using dichotomous keys and field guides before doing the relay race. Add 20 minutes or so for this step.
2. Explain that some of these fish are native to the lake from before Euro-American contact, and others only arrived recently, either through deliberate human action or by accident. Have the kids guess which fish are native and which are later additions. If there are any invasive species, point them out and discuss what effects they have on the native population with the kids.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which fish were easy to identify? Why?

2. Which fish were difficult to identify? Can you think of any tricks to help you remember these fish?
3. Did some of the fish look similar to others?
4. Do you think you would be able to identify these fish if you caught them while fishing?
5. Have you ever seen any of these fish while fishing?
6. Why do the different species look different? Do they live in the same parts of the lake? Do they eat the same things? How do the different characteristics help each species survive?

Standards Addressed

Science: 0.2.1.1.1, 0.4.1.1.1, 0.4.1.1.2, 1.1.1.1.2, 1.4.1.1.1, 3.4.1.1.1, 3.4.1.1.2, 5.4.1.1.1, 7.4.3.2.2, 7.4.3.2.3

Language Arts:

Math:

Social Studies:

Art:

Physical Education:

Sources:

Author/Date:

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