

Birds

Dancing Birds

Pre-Visit Activity, Grades K-3

Adapted from Naturescope, "Birdbop"

Objective

Students will experience and discuss some of the ways birds move.

Materials

- Recordings of the five types of music, about 2-3 minutes of each (optional, but fun!)
 - In the Mood (or a big band sound)
 - Blue Danube Waltz (or something slow, calm, graceful)
 - The Entertainer (or another ragtime selection)
 - The Flight of the Bumblebee (or another fast, darting piece)
 - Mexican Hat Dance (or another rhythmic tune)
- Pictures of pigeon, vulture, penguin, hummingbird, and sparrow

Procedure

1. Show your students a picture of a pigeon. Ask if they have seen pigeons along the highway near overpasses or around town. Do any of them know how a pigeon looks when it walks? These birds jerk their heads in and out as they walk.

To do the "Street Pigeon Strut," have the children form a large circle. Play a big band sound. Students should clasp their hands behind their backs, bob their heads forward and back and take short, quick steps as they walk around the circle.

2. Regroup and look at a picture of a turkey vulture. Explain that this type of bird can be identified by the way it flies. Vultures can soar for hours on rising warm air. They have broad wings held in a slight V-shape and tilt from side to side on the air currents, only flapping their wings occasionally.

Have children form a large circle. Play a slow, graceful waltz. Have them imitate the vulture's flight by holding their arms out and slightly back. This dance is the "Turkey Vulture Twirl." Have them take long, slow steps while moving in a circle and slowly and infrequently tilting their bodies right and then left.

3. Regroup and look at a picture of a penguin. Penguins are fun to mimic. Although they are graceful in water they must waddle on land and hold their flippers (under-water wings) out partway for balance.

To do the "Penguin Shuffle Parade" children should form a large circle and hold their arms out at an angle to their bodies, take short steps and sway back and forth. Play ragtime music.

4. Regroup and look at a picture of a hummingbird. Hummingbirds can do many things other birds cannot. Hummingbirds can hover, dart up and down or from side to side, or even fly backwards during their search for flower nectar.

Have students stand facing a partner with plenty of room between pairs. Play "The Flight of the Bumblebee" to dance the "Hummingbird Hustle." Students must flap their wings as quickly as possible. Call out commands such as, "Dart to the left! Fly forward! Hover in place!"

5. Regroup and show students a picture of a sparrow. Sparrows spend a lot of time hopping around on the ground looking for food. Sparrows prefer food such as seeds and berries.

The "Sparrow Hop" can be performed to the "Mexican Hat Dance" with the students hopping about pretending to search for seeds.

6. Play music selections again without interruptions and have students do all the bird dances.
7. Discuss how birds move and see if the students can think of any other special movements birds make. (Woodpeckers pecking on trees, peregrine falcons diving for another bird, penguins swimming under water, etc.)

Extension

Take a walk around your school and look for different kinds of bird movements.