Unit 5 Section 4 Lesson 1: To Catch a Leprechaun

Focus Areas: Pest Control: Mechanical; Science, Language Arts
Focus Skills: critical and creative thinking, using problem solving techniques, working cooperatively with other age groups, listening to learn information, presenting orally

Objectives

• To investigate the criteria for a successful trap
• To design and create a trap with a younger child

Essential Question

What is needed to make a good (leprechaun) trap?

Essential Understandings

• Before you build a trap, you have to learn about the creature you are trapping! A successful trap:
  • must be the right size
  • must use the right bait
  • must provide no way to escape
  • must be placed in the right location
  • may need to hold, but not harm the creature

Background

Traps are a mechanical device used in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for pest control. Whether capturing mice or leprechauns, the criteria for a successful trap are the same. The trap must attract the prey, be large enough to hold the captive, and finally prevent escape. The correct location is also important.
The principals and purpose of traps can be discussed within the context of “Let's pretend.” Designing a trap for a fanciful creature will delight the children while providing opportunities for both critical and creative thinking.

While an obvious choice as a project for March, this lesson may be done at any time. Leprechauns are always nearby, if you believe!

**Vocabulary**

- **bait**: a color, smell, or thing that will attract the desired prey
- **leprechaun**: according to the Irish, a magical wee person who likes to play tricks on people but if captured will either grant 3 wishes or give you his gold!
- **mechanical control**: a device (thing) and/or physical action used to control someone or something
- **prey**: the creature being hunted
- **trap**: a mechanical device (thing) used to capture prey

**Logistics**

- **Time**: two 30 minute sessions with a kindergarten or first grade group
- **Group Size**: 5 to 30
- **Space**: an area with comfortable seating and a work area for teams of two or three
Materials

*Tim O’Toole and the Wee Folk*,
Puffin Press, 1990 **
drawing materials
chart paper or comparable surface for
  large print display
gold glitter

** a copy of this book is provided in the K-1 IPM
curriculum kit

Preparation

1. Contact a kindergarten or first grade teacher and make
   arrangements for the project.
2. Borrow a copy of *Tim O’Toole and the Wee Folk*.
3. Read the *Background* section.
4. Gather art supplies.

Activity

**Challenge:** Help a younger child design an effective trap!
*(Display for group viewing)*

Introduction (Day 1)

1. Tell the children they will become mentors for a younger child, and
   explain that their goal is to build a leprechaun trap.
2. Brainstorm what criteria are needed for a successful trap (see
   *Background*).
3. Join with a primary group and pair your children with younger
   partners.
4. Introduce the term **leprechaun** with the following riddle:

Dressed in green and small in size  
If you catch him, you win the prize!  
Don’t look away or he’ll be gone  
It’s hard to capture a ____________! (leprechaun)

5. Select several children to read the story *Tim O’Toole and the Wee Folk* aloud to the other children.

6. Discuss why someone might want to capture a leprechaun. (gold, 3 wishes)

7. Speculate on how one would go about catching a leprechaun.

   a. Would we spray him with chemicals?  (No, chemicals could make him sick)
   b. Would we send the dog or cat to get him?  (No, they might hurt him)
   c. Introduce the concept of a trap.

8. Discuss the vocabulary word **Trap**.

   a. What is a trap?
   b. For what are traps used?
   c. Brainstorm what makes a “GOOD” trap. (size, what's used as bait, escape proof, location, [if children are developmentally ready] hold vs. harm)
   d. As each criteria is mentioned, print it on the display board.

**Involvement (Day 2)**

**Preparation**

1. Place leprechaun evidence (gold glitter) in several obvious areas of the younger children’s space.
2. Combine the older and younger children in assigned teams. Call the children’s attention to this evidence.
3. Display the criteria from the first day’s discussion.
4. Tell the children they are going to design (draw) a leprechaun trap.
5. Brainstorm: possible baits, correct size, how to make sure the leprechaun can’t escape, and where to place the trap.
6. Provide drawing materials, and allow children time to formulate a plan for their trap.
7. Provide materials and allow time for integrated teams to build their traps.
8. Share designs and discuss.
9. Place traps.

**Follow Up**

Reward participants with gold foil-wrapped chocolate coins placed in their traps. Review the criteria of a successful trap.

**Assessment**

An overall grade for mentoring can be given for each participant.

**Follow Through**

Share the children’s experiences and feelings about being a mentor. Brainstorm other opportunities and/or projects the two groups could share.
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Notes