Unit 5 Lesson 2: Itsy Bitsy Spider

Focus Areas: Pest Control – Biological; Science, Language Arts
Focus Skills: comparing and contrasting, observing, understanding the balance in nature

Objectives

- To recognize the differences between insects and arachnids
- To understand why spiders are beneficial

Essential Questions

- How do spiders differ from insects?
- Why are spiders considered beneficial (helpful)?

Essential Understanding

Spiders have eight legs while insects have six. However, spiders, like some insects, help control certain pests such as flies.

Background

Spiders have an exoskeleton like insects, but they are arachnids and have eight legs, not six. Spiders have only two body parts. Although spiders make many people afraid or turned off, these creatures are actually more beneficial than harmful to humans. While a small minority of spiders are poisonous to humans, most spiders help control insect pests. Spiders capture insects by hunting and trapping and can be classified by the method they use for capturing food (webs, traps, or hunting). Whatever method the spiders use, they suck nutrients from their prey and leave the exoskeleton behind.

Vocabulary

- arachnid: a living thing that has eight legs and an exoskeleton
- beneficial: something that helps people
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Logistics

Time: two sessions of 30 minutes each  
Group Size: 2 to 30  
Space: an area for comfortable seating

Materials

Spider video (33 minutes), entire video needn’t be shown *  
The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle *  
Overhead 1 “Spider and Ant” *  
black/white board or chart paper for group viewing  

* single copy provided

Preparation

Preview the video Spider, and select the portions to present (focus on capture of prey).  
Preview The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle.

Activity

Introduction

1. Show the diagrams of a spider and an ant.  
2. Brainstorm the similarities and the differences. (six vs. eight legs, three vs. two body parts)  
3. Tell the children that spiders are arachnids, not insects. Print ARACHNID on the board or chart, say it, and have the children repeat it.  
4. Show the video Spider.

Involvement

1. Sing the song “Itsy Bitsy Spider.”  
2. Ask the group why the spider “went up the spout again”. (to get food)  
3. Ask what spiders like to eat. Display the responses.  
4. Recite the poem “Little Miss Muffet.”  
5. Brainstorm the reasons why Miss Muffet’s reaction was not the right one. (most spiders are not dangerous to humans. Spiders kill other pests.)
6. Write a new “Little Miss Muffet.”

Example:  
Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet  
Eating her curds and whey  
Along came a spider  
And sat down beside her  
She wished him  
A wonderful day

Follow Up

Read Eric Carle’s story *The Very Busy Spider.*  
Act out the story.