

Outline for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Activity

This project is intended for kindergarten age classes as a summer activity. The children will be able to learn about the life cycle of Butterflies and the eating habits of caterpillars. The entire project is based on the book by Eric Carle.

1. Order a butterfly cage and caterpillars in advance of starting the project.
2. Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle to the kindergarten class.
 - a. Discuss all the food that the caterpillar eats.
 - b. Have the students take the pretest with the food that you want to test listed on it.
3. Place the caterpillars in their habitat and set up the cage with everything they need so they will survive.
 - a. Make sure there is plenty of their natural food in the enclosure.
 - b. You can discuss why the caterpillars are wanting to eat leaves instead of the cake or cheese, etc.
 - c. Also, you can discuss how much food a caterpillar needs to eat in a day to survive.
4. Each day place a new piece of food from the book in the cage to see if the caterpillars will eat it.
 - a. The book mentions that the caterpillar ate apples, pears, plums, oranges, strawberries, chocolate cake, ice cream, a pickle, swiss cheese, salami, a lollipop, cherry pie, sausage, a cupcake, watermelon, and some leaves.
 - b. Make sure to remove the uneaten food from the previous day.
 - c. Two separate cages might have to be set up to test all the food items.
5. When the caterpillar has made its chrysalis, you can do the metamorphosis activity.
 - a. Follow the attached instructions to engage the children in learning which parts of the caterpillar become part of the butterfly. This will likely only take one day, so it can either be done right after the cocoon is made, or before the butterfly emerges.
 - i. We suggest doing it right after the cocoon is made, then sometime before the butterfly emerges go over it again to give them the connection to both the caterpillar and the butterfly.
6. At the end of the book and with the live specimens in class, the caterpillars will change into butterflies.
 - a. There are at 100 different types of butterflies near a person in the U.S. at any point in time.
 - b. Butterflies like to do several activities during the day: eating, basking, puddling, and even patrolling to name a few. Here you can discuss these activities and have the kids even draw their butterflies doing different activities. You can even expand this into an activity a day to discuss and draw.
7. Butterflies, while basically having the same diet of nectar, do have different flower choices. Use the worksheet to connect each different butterfly to their flower of choice.
 - a. Here you can discuss that in the wild butterflies use their proboscis, which is like a long tongue, to drink nectar from flowers.

- b. You can use the class butterflies to determine what they like to eat by placing out sugar water on a sponge and orange slices and discuss what type of butterflies are being kept and what they like to eat.
- 8. References:
 - a. North American Butterfly Association. (2017.). Retrieved from <http://www.naba.org/qanda.html>
 - b. University of Kentucky. (June, 2018). All about butterflies. Retrieved from <http://www.uky.edu/hort/butterflies/all-about-butterflies>