

Activities for *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*: Introduction and Instructions

Caryl Showalter, Elizabeth Sorensen, Carter Synhorst

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

Published: June 3rd, 1969

Publisher: World Publishing Company (US)

We decided that our activity/ies would be best suited for a kindergarten class. We want the children to learn more about the life cycle of the butterfly and the different stages of metamorphosis. Children at this age will be old enough to understand about what is going on, but they won't already know everything about insects. This would be a great activity to take on for a summer program or during the spring semester right before the children go to summer break.

The activity involves purchasing a butterfly life cycle kit and setting it up in the classroom. The teacher can order the eggs or caterpillars online and have them ready to go for when the project starts. The goal for the children is to learn about the eating habits and developmental stages in the caterpillar as it changes into a butterfly. The children should be able to keep track of what type of food from the book that the caterpillars enjoy and which ones they refuse. The students will also learn about the butterflies' development during the chrysalis stage. They will learn how the different body parts develop and change between caterpillar and butterfly. When the adult butterflies emerge, the kids can learn about their behavior and feeding habits.

In the book, the caterpillar eats many different things including apples, cheese, cake, lollipops, leaves, etc. We want the children to learn about what real insects eat, and by introducing the food items from the book, the kids can see what caterpillars really eat in the wild. The children can keep a very simple food log and mark a "Yes" or "No" if the caterpillars ate each item. Hopefully they realize that the green leaves that the caterpillar ate were the best choice. The teacher can explain to the class why the caterpillars preferred the green foliage instead of the human food.

The book does not go into much detail about the chrysalis and butterfly life stages, but we also want the children to learn about these different life stages. They can observe the caterpillars changing into a chrysalis and then emerging as a butterfly. If the children record how many days it took the caterpillars to go through the metamorphosis process, then they will see that its not as fast as some of them might think. We want to teach them a very basic demonstration of how the caterpillar turns into the butterfly. By using pipe cleaners, the kids can see that the caterpillar goes through a very substantial change inside the chrysalis. We also want the children to learn more about what the adult butterfly does after it emerges and flies away. The teacher can put fruit and flowers in the enclosure to help the children learn about the adult butterflies' feeding habits as well. By using *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* as a guide, the children will learn all about the stages and feeding habits of butterflies.