

## **Insect Sound Orchestra**

(age: Preschool/Kindergarten)

*This lesson is designed to help children relate to nature through listening to and imitating insect sounds*

### Supplies:

- Felt board (at Walden just outside the office door)
- 12 Felt insects (at Walden on the shelf with insect supplies): house fly, red ant, mosquito, beetle, grasshopper, butterfly, dragonfly, ladybug, bee, praying mantis, cricket, wasp/yellow jacket
- 12 insect sound buttons (at Walden on the self with insect supplies – they are in a soft black computer case that holds all 12 of the 3” sound buttons)
- If time permits, household items for imitating insect sounds (see extra activity below)
- If time permits, printed template and supplies for teaching insect body parts (see below).

### Setup:

Note, this station works best if the felt board is laid flat on a raised surface. Before the children arrive to your station, turn all insects face down on the felt board. Have the sound buttons near you to pass out when appropriate.

When the kids arrive, ask the kids if they like insects and show your excitement for how much YOU like insects too. Since they do not talk, they use their bodies to make sound. Have the kids rub their hands together back and forth quickly and listen to the sound, then clap their hands and listen to the sound. All Insects make cool sounds by using parts of their bodies!

Go around the table, one child at a time, and have them turn over an insect. Then hand them the appropriate sound button and let them listen. If the sound is very soft, show them how to hold the button up to their ear. EVERY child will want to listen to EVERY sound and it takes a while to pass each button around the table. But the children stay amazingly engaged listening to the same sound as it moves around the table. At the end, give each child a button and have them all push their button at the same time to image being an insect in the grass hearing so many other insects around the yard!

### Tips for success:

If you have six or less children at the station, allow them to each turn over two insects (taking turns). If you have seven or more, choose that number plus one or two extras. You can start by turning over one to demonstrate, and finish by turning over the last one so the kids get to hear more sounds. It does NOT work for some kids to turn over more than other kids! You can talk to the children about how the insect makes the sound, or get the kids to imitate the sounds. But they love the listening so leave plenty of time for listening. *If time allows, chose one of the following additional activities.*

## 1. Insect orchestra:

Take things from home that could imitate sounds. For instance:

- A Campbell's soup can and a pencil – just lay the can down on the side and rub the pencil across its ridges
- A marble inside one of the insect viewing boxes at Walden (there are TONS in the back room in one of the drawers). Shaking that clear box mimics many insect sounds and the kids love shaking them
- A heavy-duty comb drawn down across the edge of a table
- Two emery boards (rub the coarse sides together quickly)
- A dog clicker/trainer, which makes the same sound as a click beetle (or use a clipboard to make the sound)
- A small cleaning brush (like the ones a manicurist uses to clean under fingernails), just rubbed quickly against the table sounds like ladybugs or ants crawling.

Tips for Success: for younger kids, use fewer instruments, because everyone will want to make every sound – one or two can take a full five minutes for everyone to try!

## 2. Create an insect and insect body parts song (insect body parts):

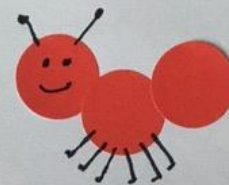
You can teach the children about insect body parts by teaching them a song using the same tune as the popular children's song, "Head, Shoulders, Abdomen." Demonstrate as you sing by touching your head, chest/thorax, abdomen, eyes, mouth, using your fingers to make two antennae, and finally either holding up six fingers or inter-linking your thumbs & forefingers together and wiggling your six outside fingers like an insect crawling! The kids will all sing along and act out the song with you:

**head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen), head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen)  
2 eyes, 1 mouth & 2 antenna too; add 6 legs & there's an insect for you!**

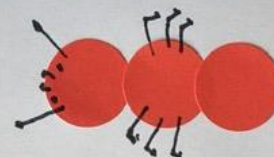
If time allows, use the template on the next page and make enough copies so each child gets a quarter page with the words to the song on it, which helps the teachers and parents be able to sing along with them later. Take pencils and peel-off dot labels with you (some are usually available at Walden in the insect box).

You can either choose to apply the three dots on each page for very small kids and let older kids apply them. Then they use pencils to add eyes, mouth, antenna and six legs.

Tip for success: ask the kids to write their names on the page – there will be 20 pages that look just alike, and the kids will want to take home their own! Leave a few extras for the teacher.



head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen)  
head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen)  
2 eyes, 1 mouth & antenna too  
add 6 legs & there's an insect for you!



head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen)  
head, thorax, abdomen (abdomen)  
2 eyes, 1 mouth & antenna too  
add 6 legs & there's an insect for you!