

OWL PROGRAM for Children ages 3-5

1] **Introduce VNs and Program**

Owls are awesome -- let's all become owls and learn about them: hoot, hoot... **(play owl sounds from phone app to get their attention)**. Have kids make owl sounds with you.

- Show pictures of owls and/or use owl puppet to familiarize children with owls.
- There are many types of owls—some are big and some are pretty small.
- Ask if they've seen an owl before or heard an owl.

2] **Owl Characteristics and Behavior**

Use the owl tri-fold display from the Walden Ponds VN Center to share photos of owls and their characteristics. Important points to bring up are:

- Most owls fly and hunt at night when we're asleep
- What do you think they eat? Talk about some of their prey but don't get too detailed. Kids this age, for instance, might be really disturbed if they think about an owl tearing apart a rabbit. Emphasize that owls eat a lot of mice and that helps us not have too many mice!
- Ask the children if they've ever played hide-n-seek. Owls are really good at sneaking up on their prey because they have special wings. Show children an owl wing compared to the wing of a goose. Demonstrate how the ruffled feathers help them fly silently.
- Where do they think the owl's ears are? Show them the location of the ears and share that it's important for owls to listen very closely since it's dark when they are active. If you use an owl skull, have the kids feel their own heads to see if they can feel the bone underneath—that helps them understand what a skull is.
- Look at the owl's talons. Compare them to our hands. Can owls pick up things with their talons? Why is that important?
- Owls don't have teeth! If they eat a mouse, they just swallow it whole. Their stomachs pull out the bones and then they cough it up, in a little pellet. Kind of like when a cat coughs up a hairball. It seems gross to us but it's the way owl stomachs work. Show pellets and bones inside pellets.

3] **Owl Activities:**

- Have kids take turns measuring their "wing-spans" against the laminated great-horned owl silhouette (Walden VN Center)
- Have kids walk/fly around room hooting. They can "call" to each other.

- Dim/turn off lights and have kids “fly” silently hunting for prey. You can also make a soft mouse squeak to see if they’re listening for it with their “owl ears.”

4]. Summary/Conclusion

- What is your favorite thing you learned about owls?
- Any questions?
- Leave **owl coloring pages** with teacher (Walden VN Center)

(revised October 2020 by Deborah Price)