Lesson: “Why are baby birds so loud?”

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

EXPLORATION VIDEO 1

Hi. It's Esther from the Mystery Science team. I love watching the birds in my neighborhood. They're always busy doing something, like finding food. I've even seen birds build a nest in my yard, and I got to see their babies. I'm a big fan of birds, but the other day, I saw a picture of a bird that had me confused. Check it out. Birds usually have two legs. Right? But this one seems to have way more. I was curious to know why. Watch these extra legs here. See that? The legs actually belong to these baby birds. The babies are underneath the bigger bird's wings. He's their dad. This family was out finding food when the dad noticed a crocodile lurking. Watch what happens next. There go the babies underneath his wings. And now there goes the dad. I've never seen birds in my neighborhood do this, so I'm still curious. Why do you think the dad is carrying the babies under his wings?

EXPLORATION VIDEO 2

These fluffy baby birds are just starting to explore the world. Walking is still new to them, and so is spotting danger. They might not notice that a hungry crocodile is getting close. Good thing a parent is watching out for them. Their dad chirps when danger is near. As an adult bird, he's bigger and stronger, so he can help the babies get away faster and stay safe. Other animals do things to help their babies stay safe too. Even baby elephants need help staying safe. Watch

what these adults do when a hungry hyena gets too close to the babies in their herd. That's the hyena here in the grass. Woah. A hyena is no match for a charging elephant. And here comes the whole herd. It's like they're saying, “Stay away.” The adults all work together to keep the babies safe. See the babies here in the middle? It's like the adults are making a wall around the babies to protect them. All animals need to stay safe to survive. Survive means to stay alive. But to survive, animals have other needs too. Imagine if you were caring for a baby animal. Think about what it would need to stay alive and healthy, and what things you would do to take care of it. Some animal parents do similar things. What else might animal parents do to help their babies survive?

ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION VIDEO 1

In today's activity, you're going to use your imagination and pretend to be a bird parent. You've seen that bird parents help protect their babies from danger, but they also help their babies get the food they need. You'll be a bird parent with a nest of hungry baby birds. Your job is to find food for your babies. You'll need to find worms and bring them back to the nest so that each baby bird can eat a delicious worm for dinner. Are you ready to bring food to your baby birds to help them survive? We'll show you how to get started, step by step.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 1

Get your supplies. When you're done with this step, press the arrow on the right.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 2

Take a minute to color your baby birds. I'll set a timer in case that's helpful. Okay. Time's up.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 3

Your teacher has hidden worms around the room. Don't worry. They're not real worms. Just pretend worms. In a moment, you're going to search for them. They'll be on top of things or maybe peeking behind things, but they won't be inside of things, so don't take anything out. You're going to pick up worms with your beak. So let's practice being parent birds together. Hold your hand like this so it looks like a beak. This is how you'll pick up any worms that you find. Practice picking up something on your desk with your beak like this.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 4

We recommend that you watch this whole step first so that you'll know what to do. You have a nest with three baby birds to feed. Listen for the sound of your baby birds. When you hear them, slowly go find a worm. Pick it up with your beak and then walk back to your baby birds. You'll have to walk slowly so that you don't drop your worm. When you get back to your desk, feed the worm to one of your baby birds like this. Okay, now that you know what to do, go to the next step.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 5

Go ahead and stand up next to your desk. Imagine you're a parent bird. Show everyone your beak. Remember, you can only carry one worm at a time with your beak. So you'll find one worm, pick it up with your beak, bring it back to your babies to feed one, and sit down. Okay. Listen carefully for the baby birds. When they start chirping, slowly start looking for one worm.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 6

Great job. You found one worm to feed one of your baby birds, but you have two more babies that are hungry. When you hear the baby birds chirping again, you can search for two more worms. Remember, you can only carry one worm at a time in your beak, so you'll have to go back and forth a few times. Okay. Listen carefully for the baby birds. When the baby birds start chirping, slowly start searching for worms.

ACTIVITY PART 1 STEP 7

Great job. Make sure you're back at your desk and sitting down. Then discuss this question as a class. Write down your answers on your worksheet. How do animal parents help their babies?

EXPLORATION VIDEO 3

To survive, all animals need food, and these parents help their babies get the food they need. You pretended to be bird parents and copied what they do, like listening for your babies, finding food to bring them, and putting that food in their mouths. Scientists have a special word for something an animal does. They call that a behavior. Other animal parents have behaviors that help their babies get food too, like this mother lion. See how she stretches out so the babies can reach her belly? That way, they can drink the milk she makes to feed them. And check it out. This mother cat does something similar to feed her babies. Now take a look at what her babies are doing. It's a little harder to see, but notice this one here with his paw out. This kitten is drinking the mom's milk. That's a behavior too. Baby kittens can drink to get the food they need. And listen to this. Kittens sometimes meow to let their mom know they're hungry. That's another behavior. And see how mom comes right over? Soon, it's time to eat. It's like the baby's

behavior and the parents' behavior go together. These baby birds don't drink milk, but they can do something else. They chirp loudly. It's like they're telling their parents, hey. I'm hungry, and their parents bring them food. Their behaviors go together to help these babies get fed. But what if that sound got the attention of other animals, like a predator that eats baby birds? Imagine if the parents were away getting food and there's a hawk near the nest. These babies are too small to fly away. So what could they do to stay safe? I wonder if you have any ideas.

ACTIVITY INTRODUCTION VIDEO 2

In the last part of the activity, you were an adult bird. This time, you're going to be a baby bird. You're too young to fly, so you'll need to stay sitting down in your nest. As a baby bird, you have two important needs: food and safety. You need to make sure you get food from your parents, and you need to stay safe from predators like hawks. But you have to do all that while staying in your nest. Can you get enough food and stay safe from predators? We'll show you how to get started step by step.

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 1a

You first need to know what your bird parents look like. Here are the parents. They'll both bring you food, but how will you get their attention? Discuss. Imagine you're a baby bird. What can you do to let the parent birds know that you're hungry?

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 1b

Here's what we thought. We noticed that baby birds make their beaks big and wide when they're hungry. So you can pretend to have a big wide beak like this. We also noticed that baby birds

make lots of noise when they're hungry. So we thought we could do the same and chirp like a bird. Chirp, cheep, cheep, cheep, cheep. Yay.

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 2

Okay. Let's practice being baby birds together. When you see one of the parent birds nearby, chirp for food and open your arms wide like a beak. Cheep. Cheep. Ready, set, go. Great job. Go to the next step.

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 3a

Your bird parents won't be the only ones visiting your nest. Hawks are predators of baby birds, and other animals like raccoons and even squirrels are predators too. If you're a baby bird, you need to be careful. They want to eat you. Discuss. Imagine you're a baby bird. What can you do to make sure predators don't notice you?

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 3b

You have to stay in your nest, but you can stay very, very quiet when you see a predator. You can also stay low like this so they don't see you. Okay. Go to the next step.

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 4

It's time to pretend to be a baby bird. Remember, when you see one of the parent birds, chirp loudly and open your beak wide. When you see a predator, like a hawk, raccoon, or squirrel, stay low and quiet. Ready, set, go. Great job. Go to the next step.

ACTIVITY PART 2 STEP 5

Being a baby animal can be a tough job. Discuss this question as a class. What behaviors do baby animals have that help them survive?

WRAP-UP VIDEO

It can be a dangerous world out there for baby animals. There are predators that want to eat them. You pretended to be baby birds that are too small to fly away from danger, but you can do something else. You can be extra quiet. Being quiet and still is a behavior that helps baby birds stay hidden in the nest. And check this out. Can you find any birds hiding here? Maybe you spotted the adult bird, but there are also several baby birds. Like here, here, and here. To stay safe, the babies curl up on the ground and stay quiet to be even more hidden. Before, you saw what these parents do to keep their babies safe. But if you watch again, you'll see that the babies do something important, too. They stay close to the adults when there's danger. It's the babies and the adults working together that help them stay safe. All animals have needs, like safety and food, and all animals have behaviors that help them meet those needs and survive. We can notice a pattern with the behaviors of many animal parents. These parents all do things to help their babies survive. There's a pattern with the baby's behavior too. These babies all do things that help them survive. And sometimes baby behaviors and parent behaviors go together to help babies survive as they learn and grow. You are still learning and growing too. You might not be able to do everything an adult can yet, but there's so much you can do, like making observations and asking questions. So the next time you see a baby animal and its parents, notice what they're doing and think about how those behaviors might help them survive.
Have fun, and stay curious.