



GREEN EXPLORERS CLUB
STAY AT HOME PROJECT

LESSON: URBAN BIRDS



How fast can a hummingbird fly?

A

30 MPH! But they can also stay completely still in the air as well!



DIRECTIONS

These quick projects are designed for you to do at home with your kids in an hour or less with materials that you likely already have in your cupboards. The book suggestions are available digitally so you can read them on a hand-held device if you do not have a relevant book on your home bookshelves. These home projects do not go into the level of detail we do in our studio classes, but they are a great way to introduce new topics and have fun at home!

BOOKS

[“Have You Heard the Nesting Bird”](#) by Rita Gray

[“National Geographic: First Big Book of Birds”](#) by Catherine Hughes

[“A Nest is Noisy”](#) by Dianna Hutts Aston

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

STEP 1: Start by talking about the topic of the day - CHICAGO BIRDS!

Read a favorite bird book from your shelf, or try one of the books above to get into the mood for learning about birds.

STEP 2: Hand your child a blank piece of paper and markers. Set up an observation space near an open window, or go outside and sit on the front step. Have your child set a timer for 5 minutes and watch without talking (like a real-life birdwatcher). In this time have them count the number of birds they see flying by the window. Draw a picture of the birds you see. How are they different? How are they the same? Can you identify the birds flying around your neighborhood? (sparrows, robins, pigeons, etc).

STEP 3: Next you will need to go outside with your kids and gather some materials. Take a little walk around your street and pick up a handful of dry grass, some small twigs, a leaf or two, etc. You are pretending to be birds and gathering helpful bits to build a nest to lay your eggs.

STEP 4: Go back inside and gather your indoor project materials. Be sure to wash your hands, and have the kids wash their hands before getting started on the project.

BIRD'S NEST

PROJECT TIME - 1 hour

CLAY BAKE TIME - 15 min

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Clay, Play-Doh, Model Magic, etc.
- Twigs
- Leaves
- Dried Grass
- Cotton Balls
- Cut Pieces of String
- Markers
- Pan to Bake Clay (optional)
- Ruler

NOTE: We typically use Sculpey Oven Bake Clay for our bird eggs and Model Magic for our nests, but any type of clay or modeling dough can work for this project.

MAKE YOUR EGGS

STEP 1: MAKE YOUR BIRD'S EGGS. Look in your book and/or do some online research as a team to examine different kinds of bird eggs. For example, robin eggs are a lovely shade of blue, and sparrow eggs are small tiny white eggs with grey speckles.

STEP 2: PREHEAT OVEN + BAKE BIRD'S EGGS. If you are using sculpy clay, preheat your oven and begin baking your eggs until they harden. Follow the instructions on the package. If you are using a non-bakable clay or Play-Doh, skip this step.

MAKE YOUR NEST

STEP 3: MAKE YOUR NEST. Using a larger piece of clay/model magic to hold everything together like mud, have kids use their sticks, leaves, grass, etc that they collected outside to build their bird's nest. They can also use cotton balls, string, etc to give it an authentic look -- birds are resourceful and use whatever they can find to build the most durable nest possible.

STEP 4: ADD YOUR EGGS. Have your child add their eggs to the nest and discuss how birds might use their new homes (ANSWER: to keep their babies safe, to sleep at night, to hold something interesting they might find, etc).

EXTRA ACTIVITY - WALK LIKE A BIRD

STEP 1: Have your child stand with his/her feet about 12-inches apart and with their hands at their sides.

STEP 2: Have your child bend their left knee so that their left foot is lifted about 4 inches above the floor. Use the ruler and measure each foot at 4 inches to have them balance and feel the position. Tell the students that this is a very similar way that birds move – notice how your body leans to the right as you lift your leg.

STEP 3: Next, have your child return their foot to the floor and move next to the wall.

STEP 4: Now have students stand with their feet about 12 inches apart again with their hands at their side, but have the right side of their bodies next to the wall so it is touching their shoulder.

STEP 5: Now have your child lift their left foot so it is lifted about 4 inches above the floor. Observe what happens. In real life, a bird leans one way or the other when lifting it's leg to walk – if a bird can't lean it will fall over. Keep this in mind when you are finding a location for a bird house!

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE - Tag us in a picture of your seed bomb's adventure. Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We would love to see your bird's nest!