



## Nurture the Wonder

### Preschool Inquiry Lesson Plan

#### Animals and People Share

**Lesson Summary:** This is a preschool inquiry lesson that utilizes exhibits and themes found within African Elephant Crossing at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The lesson pairs observations and experiences that students have at African Elephant Crossing with classroom materials and inquiry skills to capture the curiosity of young learners to understand the natural world around them.

**Goals and Objectives:** Students will use observational skills to explore African Elephant Crossing exhibits and analyze the resources that both people and elephants need to share in Africa. Students will also use critical thinking skills to come up with predictions and further inquiry investigations while thinking of things that need to be shared in their own environment.

#### **Cleveland Metropolitan School District Scope & Sequence:**

##### **Pre-kindergarten**

**Strand:** Science Inquiry and Application

**Topic:** Inquiry

- Explore objects, materials and events in the environment.
- Make careful observations.
- Engage in simple investigations.
- Describe, compare, sort, classify, and order.
- Share findings, ideas and explanations (may be correct or incorrect) through a variety of methods (e.g., pictures, words, dramatization).
- Record observations using words, pictures, charts, graphs, etc.
- Make Predictions.
- Make inferences, generalizations and explanations based on evidence.

**Strand:** Life Science

**Topic:** Explorations of Living Things

- With modeling and support, identify and explore the relationship between living things and their environment (e.g., habitats, food, eating habits, etc.)
- With modeling and support, recognize similarities and differences between people and other living things.

## **Kindergarten**

**Strand:** Life Science

**Topic:** Physical and Behavioral Traits of Living Things

**Content Statement:** Living things are different from non-living things.

- Living things include anything that is alive or has ever been alive. They have specific characteristics and traits. Living things grow and reproduce.
- They are found almost everywhere in the world. There are different kinds of living things that are found in different places.
  - There are different kinds of living things.
  - Animals need food, plants make their own food.

**Materials:** “Living Things Need” picture checklist sheet

**Possible Comparative Question:** Do elephants and people need the same or different things to survive in an African savanna?

Extension: How are these needs the same or different to ours where we live in Cleveland, Ohio?

## **Questioning**

Pre Field Experience Procedures:

- In the classroom before coming to Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, ask students if they can give some examples of what living things (plants/animals/humans) need to stay alive.
  - Note: A lesson on living/non-living things before starting this lesson would be beneficial. Consider using the “Sprout and Grow Window” to grow plants in the classroom to aide this concept.
- Create a list of student responses of what living things need to stay alive: Examples - Food, water, air, space, and shelter.

- Elephants are living things. Ask students how they think elephants might find/use those things (food, water, air, space, shelter) in an African savanna. How do they think people find/use those things they need in Africa? Record student responses or allow them to share their thoughts by drawing pictures.
  - If possible show pictures or provide videos of an African savanna first, to insure students understand what it looks like when considering the comparative question and investigation.
- Ask the students if they think elephants and people might ever have to compete for the same things or share what they need (food, water, air, space, shelter)?
- Explain to the class that they will be doing an investigation at the Zoo to come up with an answer to that question.

### **Observing and Predicting**

Visit African Elephant Crossing at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo:

- If possible, break students up into smaller groups with an adult leader.
- Let students freely observe African Elephant Crossing. Point out that the space is made to look like a real African savanna. While looking at the exhibit, talk with your class about what they see. What does the savanna look like? What kinds of plants do they see? What is covering the ground? Is there any water?
- Taking note of things in the exhibit that elephants need to survive (food, water, air, space, shelter). Can students find these 5 things on exhibit that elephants need?
- Next walk around the exhibit discussing each need/resource in greater detail by exploring the exhibit signs and pictures. Use exhibit signs and pictures to spark conversations explaining how elephants and people find and use these resources in Africa.
- Complete the checklist (adult/group leader can use one “master” copy to record each groups responses) when each of the 5 needs/resources is found on exhibit and indicate if people and/or elephants need it to survive in an African savanna. Support further questioning like – Does shelter for elephants look the same as shelter for people?

- Have students observe the elephants. Ask them to tell you how they see the elephants using the things they need (food, water, air, space, shelter) in their exhibit. Teacher or adult chaperone can record responses on the back of checklist for further inquiry conversations back in the classroom.

## **Communicating**

### Post Field Experience Procedures:

- Have a discussion with students and ask them to share the things they saw at African Elephant Crossing.
- Ask them to share their opinions/answers for the original comparative question: “Do elephants and people need the same or different things to survive in an African savanna?” Why or why not? What did they learn from visiting the Zoo and doing this inquiry activity?
  - Extension: ask students if we need those same resources to survive where we live in Cleveland, Ohio. Does it look the same here as it does in Africa (ex. Shelter, food, water)? Do we get water where we live in different ways than people do in Africa?
  - What things/resources do we need to share where we live? Can we help wildlife in our community by providing some things that they need to survive? (ex. More green space/trees for shelter and living space, bird feeders for food, etc.)
    - Work with students on a plan to help provide resources for the wildlife in your area by planting flowers, trees or other outdoor plants. Create pine cone bird feeders to provide food, or come up with other unique ways to build/provide shelter for wildlife.
- Students can be encouraged to share their thoughts through stories, pictures dramatic play, etc.