



St. Luke's Lutheran Preschool

Outdoor Classroom Monthly Lab Visits

Study: Rabbit

Overview

1. Intro on Carpet: About Rabbits, Video
2. Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit: Observing the Rabbit
3. Interest Area: Inside on Carpet: Body Parts of Rabbit
4. Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit: Observing Rabbit's Body Parts and How It Moves, Hopping like a Rabbit
5. Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit and Picnic Tables: Rabbit's Diet

Supplies Needed

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4wSZJGGPq0>
- <http://www.aimmeats.com/images/Rabbit%20Parts%2001.jpg>
- Napkin
- Carrots
- Dark Romaine Lettuce
- Mint
- Goldfish
- Strawberries



St. Luke's Lutheran Preschool

Outdoor Classroom Monthly Lab Visits

Study: Rabbit

Intro on Carpet:

Welcome the children into the lab and remind them that in the lab we are no longer preschoolers and teachers- we are all scientists! Scientists are ready to observe, experiment and learn so that means we have good listening ears and follow directions to stay safe.

Ask the children to raise their hand and guess what the most common wild animal in the United States is. The correct answer is rabbits! They live in woods, grassy fields, near farms and even in neighborhoods and they are kept as pets! Ask the children if they noticed a new addition to the lab this year out by the garden, our very own rabbit! Our Rabbit lives in his area just for him, that has dirt for him to burrow in and a roof to protect him. "Bunny" is just a nickname for a rabbit.

Watch this short video observing how wild rabbits behave and interact.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4wSZJGGPq0>

Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit

Tell the children that now we are going to go outside and observe our own rabbit! Remind them that even though he is our pet for us to study, he is still an animal and it is important to stay safe. They must not try to scare the rabbit, stick their hands in the cage unless directed to, or bang on his house. Just like the animals in our lab, we have to be respectful. We don't want to scare the rabbit because we don't want him to get upset and hide or try to attack us.

Line the children up and take them outside. Have them take turns looking close to the rabbit's cage. Ask them what she looks like. Is she big or small? Fluffy and soft or hard and slimy? What color is she? How big are her ears? Why do they think they are so big? What do her legs look like and why? What does her tail look like? Is she scared of us and trying to burrow in the dirt or is she friendly? Is she moving around or being still? What is she laying in, grass or dirt? Rabbits are crepuscular which means they are most active at sunset and at dawn. Have the children repeat the word crepuscular after you. During the day, they hide under bushes, logs or even old sheds. Rabbits build underground burrows to live in. The burrows have tunnels and a large room. Since our rabbit is in a cage, he can only burrow down a little. A burrow is their underground home. Rabbits are small mammals with fluffy, short tails, whiskers and distinctive long ears. Our Rabbit is about 10 to 15 pounds, that's about the size of a cat, and she is 7 years old. Rabbits can weigh less than 1 pound and the world's largest rabbit was 42 pounds! That is about the size of some of the children!

Interest Area: On Carpet with Projector

Rabbits are mammals, have the children repeat "mammal" after you. A mammal is a warm blooded vertebrate that has hair of fur. Ask the children if they know any other examples of mammals, hint humans are mammals.

Project the diagram of the rabbit. <http://www.aimmeats.com/images/Rabbit%20Parts%2001.jpg>

Go over the different body parts.

Mouth: Rabbit's teeth grow their whole life! Ask the children about our teeth, we have baby ones that fall out and are replaced with new adult ones. Rabbit's keep the same teeth and they just grow their whole life, about 3-5 inches a year! Their tongue has 8,000 little taste buds so they do have favorite foods, just like me and you!

Nose: Rabbits have 100 million receptors to help them smell odors and humans only have 5 or 6 million. Rabbits twitch their noses from 20-120 times per minute to expose more sensory pads to detect smells. When a rabbit is really relaxed their nose stops twitching. Rabbits smell each other when they first meet, kind of like dogs do, and they can tell how old each other is just from smelling!

Eye: Rabbit eyes are located on the sides of their heads and can be any color. Rabbits can see better from the side, behind, or above them but they have a blind spot right in front of them. Rabbits can only distinguish some colors but they can see objects in a farther distance than we can. Each eye can rotate 360 degrees. This allows them to look behind them without turning their heads.

Ear: Rabbits have long ears, about 4 inches long. Their ears can catch sound from any direction. Since they have 2 ears, they can hear sounds coming from two different directions, kind of like we can but they have a better sense of hearing since their ears are bigger. Their ears give off heat to help keep them cool.

Loin: The back area where the hind legs are attached to the spine.

Rump: The rabbit's bottom, where the fur is very thin.

Tail: The tail is also called "**Scut**" have the children repeat after you. In wild rabbits the underside is pale and is used as a danger signal and for communication when several rabbits are feeding over a big area.

Hock: The rougher bottom of the foot. Rabbits sweat off the pads of their feet.

Leg/Foot: Rabbit's legs are very strong used for jumping and running. A wild rabbit can jump 12 ft. in the air and the force of their kick can break the bones of another rabbit! Rabbits run zig zag patterns to escape predators. They can run up to 35 miles per hour. When a rabbit thumps it's back leg, that means it's very upset.

Belly: Rabbits produce two kinds of waste (poop). One kind is soft and slimy, called **cecotrophy's**, have the children repeat after you. Something yucky about rabbits is that at night time, they eat this waste! Their digestive system has trouble absorbing vitamins and nutrients out of the food so that is why they eat their waste to get all the nutrients. Yuck!

Dewlap: A spot of excess fur under the muzzle. The female has a much larger dewlap than the male. It is from the dewlap that she pulls fur for nesting her babies at night.

Have the children repeat the bold words after you.

Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit and Open Area

Now that we have learned about all the parts of the rabbit, we are going to go outside and observe how she uses each body part. Take the children back outside to the rabbit. Observe the rabbit run and hop and see where she goes around the area. When she hops, point out how her legs move and push off the ground. Have the children spread and squat and practice jumping as high as they can, pushing off the ground, just like a rabbit!

Gather back around the rabbit and have the children get completely silent. Instruct one child to make a soft noise on one side of the rabbit and then another child on the other side of the rabbit. Watch how the ears move, together and independently, as she listens. Experiment making different sounds and the rabbit's reaction.

**If possible, have one teacher hold the rabbit and allow the children to study it up close. They may gently touch her back, making sure not to touch the face as she may bite if she becomes agitated and to stand clear of her back legs, as she may kick very hard. How does the rabbit feel?

Interest Area: Outside with Rabbit and Picnic Tables

Put the rabbit back in her pen. Have the children sit at the picnic tables and ask them to raise their hand and say what they think a rabbit eats. Rabbits are **herbivores**, have the children repeat this after you. That means they do not eat meat, only vegetables and plants. Rabbits eat grass, clovers, wild flowers, tree bark, herbs and farm crops. Rabbits also eat their own poop remember, yuck! However, rabbits are very susceptible to the wrong kinds of food and a lot of different plants are poisonous to them. They love fresh fruit and vegetables and need hay to help digest their food. They also drink a lot of water! A 4 pound rabbit will drink as much water as a 20 pound dog. Rabbits need to eat hay to help them digest their other food.

Pass each child out a napkin and a baby carrot, a piece of dark romaine lettuce, half a strawberry, a small piece of mint, and a gold fish. Ask the children out of those foods what they think a rabbit CANNOT eat- a gold fish! Have the children try all the food and see which ones they like and predict which they think the rabbit will like. Slowly, one at a time, give the rabbit a small piece of each of those items and observe how he eats and what he seems to like better. Ask the children what they think was the rabbits favorite. Remind them it's important to limit how much of each we give the rabbit because some things like fruit are high in sugar or other things that too much of can make the rabbit sick! A lot of people think rabbits love carrots, and while this may be true it is very important to only give them a little bit of carrot occasionally, like a treat. Too much will make them sick.