

Animal Activities

1. Adopt a Bug

Contributed by Peace Corps/Mexico

Objective: To appreciate insect characteristics and their roles in ecosystems through an up-close and thorough examination

AGE **Ages:** Young, middle

Materials: Transparent containers (2-liter bottles or other large containers); scissors or knife; an insect net (easily made with a wire hanger and pantyhose) and/or a small jar with lid; bug food; sponge (untreated and non-dyed); habitat embellishments (small sticks, dirt or sand, small rocks, etc.); bugs!

Time: 2-3 hours

Procedure:

Kids collect insects, keep them for a day or two, observe them, and release them.

First, you might want to discuss with your kids the anatomy of insects, what makes an insect different from other animals, and why insects are beneficial in the environment. Explain that insects have three segments (head, thorax, and abdomen) and six legs, which makes them different from arachnids (spiders, scorpions, ticks, etc.) and other common bugs (millipedes, pill bugs). Most insects go through metamorphosis with four life stages. A butterfly is a common example: egg, caterpillar (larva), cocoon (pupa), and butterfly (adult).

