

Finger Print Fish



Objectives

Students explore how schooling behavior is an adaptation for avoiding predators.

Materials

For each student:

- white construction paper
- pencil
- one nontoxic red or orange stamp pad
- paint brush

For every five students:

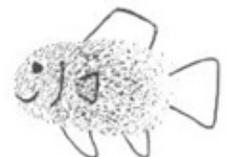
- tagboard or cardboard
- fish shape

Background

As a recommended pre-activity, read *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni. (New York: Dragonfly Books/Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.)

Action

1. Before class, make fish templates for students to trace: Trace the fish shape onto tagboard and cut a fish template for every five students.
2. Students use the fish templates to lightly trace a fish outline onto a piece of white construction paper.
3. Each student presses a thumb on the black stamp pad, inking it well. They stamp a black thumb print on their paper where the fish's eye would be.
4. Students add red or orange thumb-prints to fill in the fish pattern.
5. Students use thin markers to add fins, a tail, and a mouth to each of their thumb-prints, turning them into little fish. (All of the little fish should be swimming in the same direction.) They can fill in the background (corals, seaweed, ocean, etc. using crayons or tempera paint and brushes.
6. Standing at the front of the class, hold up a student's paper so everyone can see the fingerprint fish. Use these questions to lead a discussion with your class:
 - What does it look like to students in the back row? (One big fish)
 - What does it look like to students in front? (Lots of little fish)
 - How does swimming in a school protect small fishes from predators like sharks? What would a shark see? (A shark might think it's looking at a fish that's too big to eat.)



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