

Web of Life

Ages: Grades 3-6
minutes

Time: 30-40

No. of participants: up to 40
students

No. of additional adults: Depends on number of

Required supplies:

- *Into the Forest: Nature's Food Chain Game* cards (40)
- ball of yarn
- chart paper, a white board or chalkboard and appropriate writing tool

Objective: To learn about food webs through participating the “Web of Life” game. To discover how interconnected organisms in an ecosystem are to each other. To realize the importance of each organism, from the tiniest to the largest.

Lesson Plan Procedures

1. Introduction:

- a. *Before starting - Leader must go through the cards a select enough cards for each student to get one. The cards selected must represent each group in a food web (i.e. plants, herbivores, omnivores, and carnivores). You will want to have a higher number of plants and herbivores.*
- b. *Ask the students to sit or stand in a circle. Depending on the size of the group you may want to split into smaller groups. Ideally there should be 12-15 per group with 1 leader/group.*
- c. *Explain - Today we will be playing a game called “Web of Life”. To play this game each of you will get to become a living thing found in a forest ecosystem. Does anyone know what an ecosystem is? (All of the living things found in a certain type of environment.) So, again, today you will each become a different living thing, which is part a forest ecosystem.*

2. Beginning Instructions:

- a. *The card that you are about to receive will tell you what living thing you get to become. Please read the information on the card once you get it and then hang it around your neck.*
- b. *Pass out the cards from the *Into the Forest* game. Each student should get one.*
- c. *Make sure everyone understands their cards.*
- d. *Go around the circle, each person saying the name of their organism to the group.*

3. Main Lesson:

- a. *Ask for a volunteer to begin. Give that person the ball of yarn and ask him/her to tell the group what organism they are and then to pick another organism that eats them or that they might eat. The student should then toss the yarn to the person with that card. Continue this with each person who gets the yarn.*
- b. *It is okay if the same person gets it more than once, but encourage the students to first try to think of an organism that has not yet had a turn.*
- c. *Once everyone has had at least one chance, pause the game and ask everyone to take a look at the web they've created.*
- d. *Ask questions such as:*
 - i. *Pull on the yarn of one organism and ask - Who felt that?*
 - ii. *What would happen if _____ became extinct?*

- iii. *Who/what would be affected by that? (Encourage them to keep going through the web, noticing that most, if not all of the organisms would be affected in one way or another.)*
- iv. *What would happen if all of the sudden there were too many _____s?*
- e. *Using chart paper, a white board or chalkboard begin to put the animals into groups with the students' help. You should come up with the following categories:*
 - i. *plants*
 - ii. *animals who eat only plants (herbivores)*
 - iii. *animals that eat plants and other animals (omnivores)*
 - iv. *animals that eat only other animals (carnivores)*
- f. *Looking at these categories discuss the following questions:*
 - i. *Think about it, which category do you think needs to have the most? Least? Why?*
 - ii. *What would happen if that were not the case? Provide an example.*

4. Conclusion:

- a. *Discuss - do we, as humans, have a part to play in keeping this ecosystem working the way it was intended it to? What can we do to help it stay balanced? Write these ideas down for the group to see.*