



Glorious Frogs

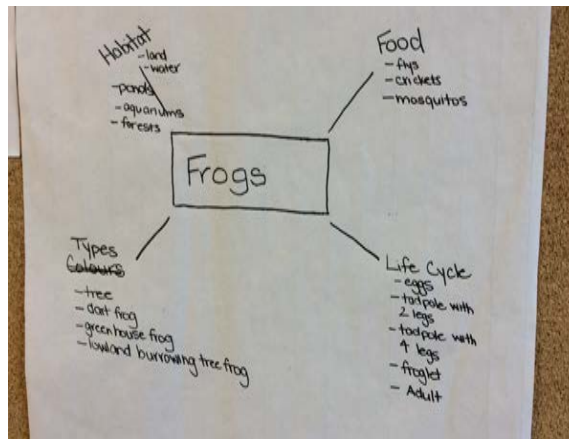
Owl - Saint John Paul II: Infant

Background

In the month of May 2018, the infants ranging in ages from 12 months to 22 months, along with their educators Tami Sutton, RECE, Jen Silva, RECE, Connie Cunningham, RECE and Judy Hackbart, RECE decided to investigate more about frogs. The project concluded in July 2018.

Phase 1: Beginning the Project

The infant frog project started out in the playground with a garden frog. Some of the infants were interested in looking at it more closely. Connie started to sing “Five Green and Speckled Frogs” and when we would make our way outside. Lincoln would find the frog and go to Connie, so she could sing. Our educators thought what do we know about frogs and have we had any experiences with frogs. The questions they thought the infants would want to know are, 1) what is the purpose of a frog, 2) are frogs friendly, and 3) how do frogs grow? Our educators searched the internet for who we could ask about frogs. A herpetologist is a person who studies amphibians and reptiles, both in the wild and captivity.

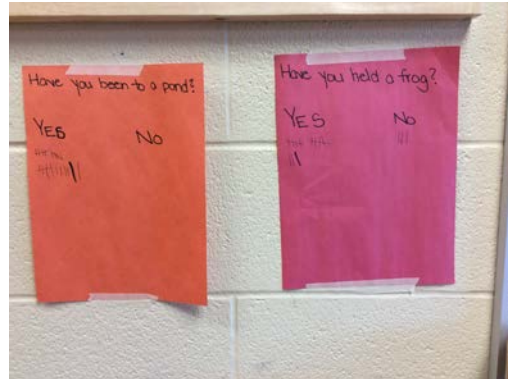


This is our web and in thinking about our project, collectively we decided these four domains were the most age appropriate for the children to understand.

Phase 2: Developing the Project

The educators decided to create a survey to gauge the experience with frogs of all families in the centre. The survey posted, asked, “Have you been to a pond”? As well as, “have you held a frog”? These questions asked as a part of the project because for many of the infants going to a pond and

seeing frogs could be their first experience. We found that, out of the families whom participated in the survey, all 21 answered that they have been to a pond before. The second survey question generated 16 responses and 13 people answered yes they had held a frog before and only 3 answered no they had not held a frog before.



Later that week, we took to the streets in strollers in search of nature paths and ponds. When we found our first path, we stopped on a bridge that crossed over a creek. We watched as the creek ran under the bridge to the other side. As we looked at the creek from the bridge, we could see fish, but no frogs. We continued on our way and found a path.



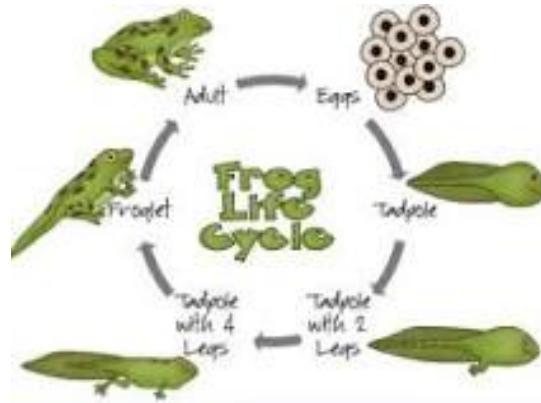
Lincoln, Alexis and Damian enjoyed exploring the path and used the buddy system, by holding hands with each other. Logan preferred the stroller. We continued to walk along the path until we found the pond. As we came up to the pond, we were so excited that Jen took us for a closer look. As we looked at the pond, Jen noticed tadpoles. She was so excited to see tadpoles. We had a chance to sit and get a look at the water's edge and see these black things swimming. Our educators pointed and said, "Look, do you see? Tadpoles?"



Although Jen, Tami and Connie wanted to take some tadpoles back to the centre, they were not prepared with buckets. They improvised and caught the tadpoles in a plastic milk bag. As we made our way back to the centre, Jen noticed a parent from Owl out in his yard, working on his grass. She went over and talked to him to see if he had any old containers that were not in use. He so kindly gave us two containers where the tadpoles were transferred to and some extra water could be brought back to create our own pond-like aquarium. When we arrived back to the centre, Jen brought an old aquarium out of the cupboard and some rocks. We helped Jen carefully put the rocks on the bottom and watched as she poured the tadpoles and water into the tank.



Jen then looked on the internet and searched the life cycle of a frog. It explained that first there are eggs that look like jelly. They then hatch from their eggs into tadpoles and eat the algae and microorganisms and develop into a tadpole with two legs. Next it becomes a tadpole with four legs, then a froglet and finally a frog.



Alexis and Lincoln would look into the tank and say “Foggy.” Jen would point and say, “Tadpole”. After a few times of hearing the word tadpole, Alexis and Lincoln would repeat the word “tadpole”.



As we watched the tadpoles in the aquarium swim around, we noticed that they were not swimming as actively as when we first brought them back to Owl. Our educators thought maybe we should replenish the algae and water source. We transferred buckets filled with some water, algae and even tadpoles from the aquarium. We had many tadpoles so we thought we should return some to their home. We gathered in the strollers, made our trek back to the pond and saw some big machines digging up the road. We found our path where again we were able to get out and explore with our



buddies. Now that we were acquainted with the path we wandered a bit stopping to point out flowers or pick up rocks. When we were at the pond on this trip, we notice that there were some bigger tadpoles and some with legs growing. Jen said they were called tadpoles with two legs. Ours did not look like that yet. Jen wondered if it was because they were not in their natural habitat.

We brought back pond water and algae. In observing the tadpoles, the fresh water and algae made them happy as they started to swim around and be more active again. With the tadpoles not being in their natural environment, we did seem to notice a slight odor and with that, we knew it was time to take the tadpoles back to the pond and speed up their life cycle to become a frog. During our field study we were able to see little froglets jumping around.

We had another day out in the sun and a ride in the strollers for a trip back to the pond where we returned the tadpoles. Then, by the magic of our educators, a frog was caught and brought back to the centre with us. We tried to create a natural habitat for it by bringing back big blades of grass that Lincoln and Jen picked off the branch together, which we taped inside the aquarium. We rearranged the rocks to create a dry platform for the frog and a place to put the crickets for feeding. The frog was placed in his new home.



Our educators wondered why we have frogs and what their purpose in life is. In searching, we found out that frogs are here to help keep the population of insects down. They like to eat bugs like flies, mosquitos and crickets. Lincoln was so excited he would look inside the aquarium and say “Ogg” repeatedly. Cadence hopped up and down as she watched the frog and chanted “hop”. Jen went to the pet store one day and bought some crickets for the frog to eat. After sleep time, Connie put the crickets in the tank on the platform and we watched the frog move around carefully and seek out his food. We learned that frogs are friendly and don’t mind being kept as a pet for a short period as long as you feed them. What an experience!



Phase 3: Concluding the Project

Our educators knew the project was ready to be finished as our older friends were getting ready to move on to the toddler room and new friends were joining the Owl family. In July 2018 we released the frog back to his home. To have a memory of our frog project our educators picked a rock out of the garden and we created a rock frog as a final project. Alexis, Lincoln and Cadence worked together to paint a rock to look like a frog. Cadence and Jen then went out and placed our frog rock in the garden for everyone to enjoy.





Teacher Reflections

I observed the fascination of the infants as they looked in the aquarium and watched the tadpoles swim around and slowly start to change form. Even the excitement of when we had the frog, really made me see the engagement that infants are capable of. Sometimes, mimicking hopping and yelling “hop” as they did it, or just yelling “frog”, when they would see the frog. This project helped foster infant development through expressive and receptive language with their attempt at new words like, hop, tadpole and frog. Creating opportunities of independence and giving them a sense of belonging, as they were able to walk while holding a buddy’s hand on the path on our way to the pond. - Jen Silva – RECE

Our walks in nature were such a big learning opportunity. We had a chance to come in contact with neighbours in our community, observe bike riders and dog walkers as well as watching the big machines widen the road. We had the chance to move at the children’s pace and truly observe the things that interested them. The pond offered up close encounters with ducks, birds, tadpoles, frogs, chipmunks, insects and even a water snake. The infants had time to watch the frogs in action, see where they come from and get a quick glance at the circle of life. Our time outside was supporting their overall well-being and encouraging a sense of belonging as we rode with our friends and had a buddy to walk with. - Tami Sutton- RECE

To experience hands on learning with the infants is such a magical experience. It is easy to talk about frogs or other objects/animals in books, songs, puppets or stuffed animals but until you have real live experiences with these objects/animals it is hard for them to fully comprehend. With our trips to the pond and nature, we were able to provide these experiences for them. Watching the infants become startled when the different frogs jumped out of the bucket or in front of the strollers and back into the



pond gave the real life experiences to think about when we sing songs like “5 green and speckled frogs”. How truly excited the infants became when they showed their parents what we found at the pond, by bringing them over to the aquarium and pointing, some saying “Frog”, “Ogg” or sounds, others bouncing up and down or jumping up completely to mimic the frogs behaviour. - Connie Cunningham RECE

My time with the infants was after they brought back the tadpoles. The aquarium became a focal point in the room where there was always someone taking an interest in what was happening with the tadpoles. These moments generally created a social activity where a few friends would join together to watch the tadpoles move around. It became a very social event where friends gave each other space to gather around the aquarium to watch the tadpoles. With their own words or sounds and facial expressions you could see them expressing their excitement. - Judy Hackbart – RECE