

Instructions for the downloadable lesson plan

Welcome to *Making Tired Eyes Smile*. Please gather in a circle six to ten friends with dementia or Alzheimer's.

Your tools

A flip chart.

Black marker.

A copy of the Blue Jay photo mounted securely with tape on all sides on a contrasting background paper.

Copies of the two poem experiences to give each friend.

Suggested process

Opening:

Greet each friend in a personal salutation and conversation.

Begin a general discussion about birds collecting their ideas.

Introduce the first poem with a synopsis of the poem.

Read the poem to them.

Pass out the poem and everyone reads together.

Story:

Tell them that together we are going to create a story – it can be true or make believe.

Show the Blue Jay to each friend one at a time - let a friend hold it, if they wish.

Ask what they see.

Repeat what the friend sees as you move around the circle.

Tape picture on flip chart.

Ask: "How do we want to begin our story?"

Use questions to elicit additional contributions if necessary.

Continuously read and reread as sentences are added.

A story may be 6 or 7 sentences.

Word mix-up:

Write the theme of the misspelled words on the chart.

Write one misspelled word on the flip chart.

Ask: if the word was spelled correctly what would it be.

This lesson plan uses a technique of first and last letters in the right space as an aid to recognition. If the group is struggling print one letter at a time until someone figures it out. Continue as long as there is interest.

A sensory poem:

Introduce the Tennyson poem, *The Eagle* with a synopsis.

Read the poem.

Discuss the group's experiences with eagles (if any).

Write a sensory poem about an eagle one line at a time.

Continuously reread as the group works through the lines.

Poem:

Introduce the poem, *I Heard a Bird Sing* by Herford with a synopsis.

Read the poem.

Pass out a copy for each friend.

Read together.

Closing story:

Tell them what you are going to read before you read the story.

Gather ideas they have about bird songs.

Read the story.

Open the circle for conversation (about anything).

Comment:

This is a lot for a first time experience. It is given as a typical lesson plan. The general recommendation when initiating *Making Tired Eyes Smile* is to:

build welcoming introductions to each other,
create the story and
read the closing story.

Other components are added as the group builds confidence in the facilitator.

Downloadable lesson plan – Birds

Picture cue:

Pretty Bird (FWS)

Enrichment (optional):

When Spring Unlocks the Flowers (R. Heber)

Word mix-up:

Birds we know

rbion	robin
hwak	hawk
gosoe	goose
dcuk	duck
bule jya	blue jay
eglæ	eagle
corw	crow
mckoingbrid	mockingbird
dvoe	dove
pigioen	pigeon

Read: *The Eagle* (Tennyson)

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Fill in the blank:

If I fly like an eagle in the sky
I see . . .
I hear . . .
I smell . . .
I feel (the emotion) . . .

Poetry interpretation:

I Heard a Bird Sing (Oliver Herford)

Closing story:

Bird Songs

Notes:

Poetry interpretation

I Heard a Bird Sing (Oliver Herford)

1. Make copies of the poem for each friend.
2. Read poem to circle.
3. Pass out poem and read together.

I heard a bird sing
 In the dark of December
A magical thing
 And sweet to remember.

“We are nearer to Spring
 Than we were in September,”
I heard a bird sing
 In the dark of December.

Bird Songs

"I want to sing like birds sing not worrying who hears or what they think." These words of Rumi accompany me as I step to the tune of birds this morning. I hear cardinals, blue jays, mockingbirds and doves. The chatter I think is about the beautiful morning that is opening this day.

I catch glimpses of swift wings searching for the best perch to view the rising sun. I hear the cardinal at the top of the tree. The fresh spring green leaves contrast with his red plumage. A second cardinal answers his call. What are the two conversing about?

A blue jay screeches at a squirrel. Other jays fly to his aid. And the cacophony of agitated jay voices challenge the squirrel. The squirrel continues his hunt for a breakfast morsel as though unaware he is the target of angry bird shouts. The jays quickly bore of this verbal attack and fly to other trees. A dove coos and the air is softened. Could the dove's delicate sound be "Om" in dove speak? I feel a blessing drop onto my shoulders.

The mockingbird's many melodic tones amuse me and sometimes trick me. I think it is another fine bird only to see the mockingbird laughing at my foolishness. I find one of his feathers and collect it as a token of his many songs. This feather will join the bouquet of feathers on my desk.

I write. A feather is a writing instrument of past centuries. It only seems appropriate to link my computer keyboard to an old tradition. My prized feather is from one of the hawks who hunts in our big oaks. He tithes. It is a thank you for caring for the trees that draw others to its shelter.

The hawk dines on some of the birds that sing as I walk. It is upsetting until I frame it in the circle of life. A songbird now flies as part of the hawk. The hawk's wings soar high and strong. I once more reflect on Rumi's words: *"I want to sing like birds sing not worrying who hears or what they think."*

And so I sing back to the birds this morning not worrying who hears or what they think.

LaRee L. Ewers

Notes:

Download lesson plan: Birds – Story / Poetry enrichment

***When Spring Unlocks the Flowers* (Reginald Heber) – excerpt**

1. Make copies of the poem for each friend.
2. Read poem to circle.
3. Pass out poem and read together.

The birds that wake the morning
And those that love the shade;
The winds that sweep the ocean,
Or lull the drowsy glade;
The sun that from his amber bower
Rejoices in his way;
The moon and stars, their Ruler's state
In silent pomp display.

