

Third Grade Manatee Curriculum—Lesson 18: Let's Have a Manatee Science Night!¹

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Description

To coordinate a family science night at the school around the theme of manatees. Students will share their podcasts, posters, and/or PSAs that they created in Lesson 16 with other students and families.

Objective

By the end of the activity, students will have shared information that they have learned about manatees with their families and friends.

Strategy

Early in the School Year

1. Set a date for the science night and reserve the cafeteria or auditorium. Ideally, you will want to set the date several months in advance. Some schools like to do this on a PTA meeting night to attract parents to that meeting.
2. Check with your PTA to find out if they might be able to provide food for the event. (Schools may be able to use Title 1 money to provide food, or the PTA may wish to sell slices of pizza, hotdogs, etc.)

3. Decide on a format for the event. The format that seems to work well is to start at either 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. and have several “booths” that the families can visit. Each booth should ideally have interactive activities that invite audience participation. You might be able to use some of the activities from this curriculum (e.g., create a matching game with sketches and photographs of manatees from Lesson 15, or have the manatee migration game set up from Lesson 14). You might show podcasts that students created (possibly do this in an adjacent classroom where it will be quieter).
4. After about 90 minutes, try to arrange for a “grand finale” to draw everyone together—this might be a musical performance, or a live animal presentation (check with local zoos, wildlife officials, aquariums, etc.). Wrap up the evening at about 7:30 or 8:00 pm.
5. Start rounding up partners for the event. Your local UF/IFAS Extension office, local aquarium or zoo, and water management district are all good places to start. Once you find someone who is interested, they probably have contacts with others who will help out. These folks will help by providing booths¹ and will sometimes come into the classrooms on the days preceding the event to teach the kids and get them excited about bringing

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their families to the event. Partners might also be able to provide door prize items!

6. Assign responsibilities for the event. Someone from the school will need to coordinate the logistics (i.e., reserve the room, work with PTA, distribute fliers to classes, etc.). Someone will need to take overall responsibility for the event (this might be someone from the school or one of the partners). This person will coordinate with exhibitors, arrange the grand finale, design the layout of the event, create fliers and signs, etc.

¹Water-cycle bracelets, pollution/trash activities, touch tanks, fish printing, manatee or dolphin artifacts, safe boating, water safety, and sun safety are all great topics for booths.

About Two Weeks before the Event

1. The school and program coordinator should coordinate with each other to make sure all of the logistics have been addressed.
2. Teachers should work with students to select videos, posters, activities, etc., to showcase at the event.

A Few Days before the Event

1. Fliers should be sent home with all students to promote the event. If fish printing is going to be an activity, fliers might ask parents to bring blank shirts to print on at the event.
2. In-class visits may be made by some of the presenters.

Night of the Event

1. Exhibitors will probably begin setting up about two hours ahead of time.
2. Once the families arrive, there should be a sign-in sheet at the entrance so that you have a list of the families that participated. To provide an incentive to sign in, perhaps provide a free tote bag to carry all their goodies in or give them free food tickets when they sign in.
3. Provide an opportunity for people to vote for their favorite poster, etc. (perhaps have categories like “most informative” or “most artistic”)
4. Once the event is underway, someone should give a “heads-up” about 10 minutes before the grand finale (over the PA system) to encourage folks to wrap up whatever they are doing and make their way to the stage area (or wherever the grand finale will be held).
5. Before the grand finale, make announcements and conduct door prize drawings as appropriate.