



The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!™

ACTIVITY

EXPLORING FLOWERS



KQED

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ACTIVITY EXPLORING FLOWERS

Overview

Has your child ever noticed and admired flowers while you are out in the neighborhood? Maybe you have a garden or sometimes take home flowers to beautify your home. You can help your child learn more about them as together you observe, collect, and press interesting flowers.



The Science Idea

Living things depend on one another for their survival. Some animals depend on flowering plants for food, water, and shelter, and some plants depend on animals and insects to pollinate their flowers so they can reproduce. Learning about these relationships begins with observing diversity between and among flowers and other living things. When children see bees, butterflies, or other small creatures visiting flowers, they are also introduced to the idea that some animals depend on flowers for food, water, or shelter.

Skills: Collecting and recording data; comparing and contrasting; identifying patterns and relationships

Age: 3–6 year olds

What to Do

- [Observing and Collecting Flowers](#)
- [Pressing Flowers](#)
- [Take It Further](#)

Getting Ready

Start by noticing flowers with your child when you are out and about around your home or neighborhood. Invite her to touch and smell them. If flowers are not in bloom, stop by the floral department on a trip to the supermarket or visit a local flower shop.

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Observing and Collecting Flowers

Get a closer look at flowers in your garden, in a family or friend's garden, or in a public place where wild or cultivated flowers are growing. Remind your child to look carefully for all kinds of flowers; some may be subtle colors or even green. Encourage her to look at them closely, noticing the colors, shapes, and textures of their different parts. Ask questions like "How are the colors different on different parts of the plant?" and "What do you notice about the shapes of the petals?"

Comparing Flowers: Invite her to compare two different types of blossoms: "How are they different?" and "How do some of their parts look the same?" Invite her to look inside and underneath the flower, where it connects to the stem. What does she notice? Invite her to smell the flower. Does it have a smell? She may be surprised to learn that not all flowers have strong scents.

Observing Creatures in Flowers: Look for and draw your child's attention to any insects on or around the flowers, or evidence that other small creatures have been eating the flowers. If you do see a bee, butterfly, or other flying insect, encourage your child to stand back quietly and watch as the insect visits one flower after another. Ask "What do you think it's doing?"

Drawing Flowers: Invite your child to use crayons or colored pencils to draw one of the flowers using [My Flower Observation](#) (below). Encourage her to include a bee, butterfly, or other creature she has seen on or near the flower.

Collecting Flowers: Together, pick or purchase some interesting flowers to take home for pressing. Remind your child to ask for your permission before picking any flowers and to keep flowers away from her mouth, as some are poisonous if eaten. Encourage your child to look closely at any insects you see on or in the flowers. Ask questions like "What do you think the insect is doing?" and "How do you think the insect is using the flower?" Reminder: A few wildflowers are protected species that cannot be picked.

Pressing Flowers

What You Need:

- Flowers
- A phone book (or other heavy book)
- Newsprint (or other absorbent paper)
- Heavy items (for weight)
- Glue

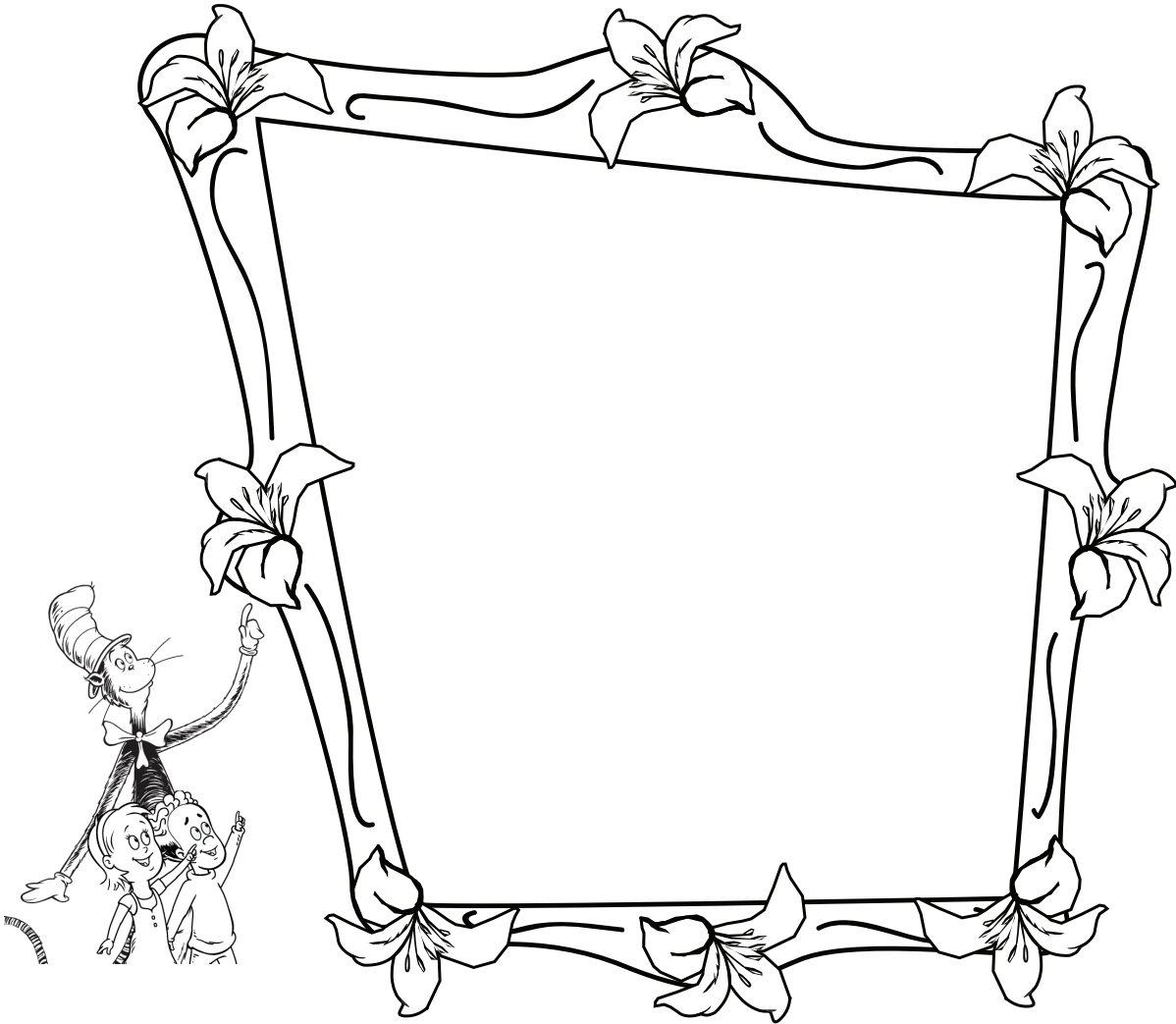
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My Flower Observation

Here's a flower that I saw!



Provide drawing materials and invite your child to draw a flower that she saw. Maybe she will include a bee, butterfly, or other creature that she saw in and around the flowers. Ask her to tell you about it and write down your child's description. What does she notice about the flower's shapes, colors, and smell? If she drew a creature, what is it doing?

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- Heavy cardstock or construction paper cut in 6” squares (1 for each flower)
- Paper and colored pencils for drawing (optional)

Note: Press the flowers soon after picking or buying them, or place them in the refrigerator until you are ready. Make sure the flowers are dry before you begin.

1. Open the phone book to the middle and spread the newsprint on the page.
2. Place the flower gently on the newsprint, add more newsprint on top, and close the book. (Use several layers of newsprint to ensure that no pigment from the flower seeps into the book.)
3. Place some other heavy items on top to weight it down.
4. Leave it there for several days.
5. Open the book and encourage your child to gently take out the newsprint with the flower inside.
6. Examine the flower with your child. “How has the flower changed?”
7. Use new sheets of newsprint to repeat the process.
8. After two or three repetitions, the flower will be flattened and dried.
9. Invite your child to gently lift the flower from the newsprint, spread clear glue on the squares of cardstock or construction paper, and gently stick on the flower.

Optional: Encourage your child to use colored pencils to draw some details around the flower to show the stem or leaves of the plant it came from. Maybe she will want to draw a picture of the insect she saw on the plant before you picked it. Display the drawing in a protected spot where your child can see it and share it with other family members.

Talking About Flowers: Encourage your child to share her pressed flowers with family members and friends. Help her describe where she found the flower, what it looked like and smelled like, and the process of pressing it. Maybe your child would like to make a pressed flower as a gift for a family member, just as Sally made a flower drawing for her mother in “Flower Power.”

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Take It Further

What You Need:

- Flowers
- Towel
- Scissors, wax paper, and iron

Preserving Flowers: Invite your child to preserve flowers without pressing them: Place a towel over the surface where you will be working. Cut wax paper into 2 squares, at least 6” across. Lay 1 square on the towel and encourage your child to arrange individual flowers on top of it. Carefully place a 2nd square over the flowers, and help her run a warm iron over the waxed paper until the 2 pieces stick together, holding the flower parts inside. Remember to carefully supervise her around the warm iron.

More Information About Flowers:

Wildflower photographs: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wildseed/gallery/index.htm>

Pressing flowers: <http://www.preservedgardens.com/how-to-press.htm>

Identifying insects: <http://www.backyardnature.net/insectid.htm>

More Ways to Discover and Learn

Go on an Adventure!

Visit a plant nursery or wildflower farm. Look at and smell interesting flowers, and invite your child to be a flower detective. For example, she can find flowers with similar parts, like long, narrow petals or short round ones. These are great places to notice butterflies and other insects on and around flowers.

Literacy Connection

What You Need:

- Flowers, pressed flowers
- Markers for writing
- Heavy cardstock or construction paper
- Crayons or colored pencils for drawing
- Plastic wrap (optional), hole punch, yarn or string

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As you collect and press individual flowers, encourage your child to describe them. Take her dictation, writing down her words on the paper next to the flower. Encourage your child to use words to describe the shapes, colors, and textures of the flower parts. This is a good time to introduce and use “flower words” with your child like blossom and petal. Invite her to draw and describe any insects or small animals that might have visited the flower.

Help your child make a small flower book from her pressed flowers by punching holes on the left side of each piece of paper and attaching them with yarn or string. Optional: Before punching holes and tying pages together, cover each page with plastic wrap. Invite your child to share and “read” the book to family members and friends.

Look in a Book

My, Oh My—A Butterfly! All about Butterflies (The Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library™) by Tish Rabe, illustrated by Joe Mathieu and Aristides Ruiz. Random House, 2007.

Oh Say Can You Seed? All About Flowering Plants (The Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library™) by Bonnie Worth, illustrated by Aristides Ruiz. Random House, 2001.

On Beyond Bugs! All About Insects (The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That!™) by Tish Rabe, illustrated by Aristides Ruiz. Random House, 1999.

Waiting for Wings by Lois Ehlert. Harcourt, 2001.

New Words

Flower or Blossom: The reproductive structure of some plants

Petal: One of the often brightly colored parts of the flower

Video

Watch the related video clip at PBS Parents (www.pbsparents.org/catinthehat/)

Related Game

Play the game “Flower Finder” at PBS KIDS (www.pbskids.org/catinthehat/games/flower-finder.html)