

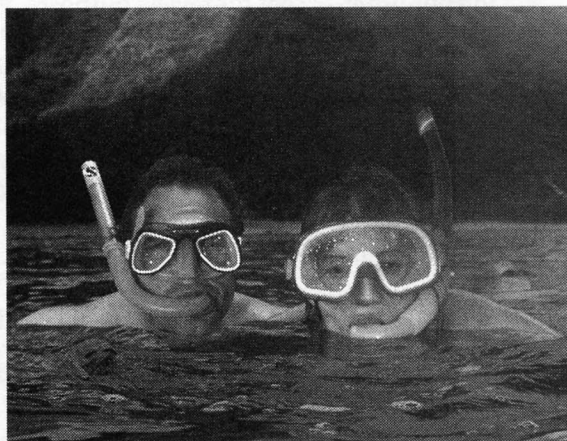
A Teacher's Guide to A Swim through the Sea

Lesson plans for the book

A Swim Through the Sea, by Kristin Joy Pratt

by Bruce & Carol Malnor

Bruce and Carol Malnor together have over 40 years of educational experience. Bruce has been a classroom teacher, elementary school principal, and is a Brain Gym instructor. Carol has taught elementary, junior high and high school, and has helped found two alternative



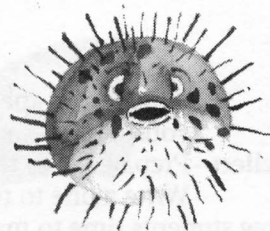
high schools. They are directors of the Education for Life Foundation and have conducted workshops for educators throughout the U.S., as well as in Canada, Germany and Italy.

Bruce and Carol share a lifelong appreciation of nature. They enjoy snorkeling through the sea whenever they have the opportunity.



*Sharing Nature
with Children Series*

Porcupine Fish



Balloon Volleyball

Objectives

- Identify human defense mechanisms
- Increase awareness of helpful and supportive words and actions

Tools of Maturity

- Body, intellect, feeling, body, and will (*see note)

Benchmarks

- Understands how peer relationships affect health (Health 2, Level III); understands that the way a person views an incident reflects personal beliefs, experiences, and attitudes (Behavioral Studies 1, Level II); contributes to a supportive environment in the group (Life Skills: Working with Others 1, Level IV)

Skills for Living

- Servicefulness, sensitivity

Materials

- For older students, Ocean Animal Clue Game (Resources, page 48), clues copied and each clue inserted into a separate balloon—enough for 1 per student; for younger students, pictures of 8 different ocean animals copied and inserted into separate balloons—enough for 1 picture per student; 100+ additional balloons; paper and pencil—1 per student group; string or yarn long enough to go across the classroom; lively music
- Time: For older students, you may want to allow two class periods for this activity.

Awaken Enthusiasm



(Body) Tell the students that when threatened, the porcupine fish takes in water and balloons up to two or three times its normal size. If suddenly taken from the water, it inhales air to produce the same effect. Pass out balloons with the inserted clues and have students blow them up and close them off by knotting the end. Play lively music and have students try to keep their balloon up in the air using particular parts of their body. For example, index fingers only, elbows only, alternate knees or feet, head only, right hand only, etc. Switch to a different body part every 15 to 30 seconds.

Focus Attention



(Intellect) Tell students to pop their balloon and find the clue inside. Have students form into a small group with all those who have a clue for the same animal; expect noise and some confusion as they move around the room reading their clues. You may want to set a time limit to add excitement and a sense of challenge. There will be eight groups in all.

Direct Experience



(Feeling) The porcupine fish balloons up when it is hurt or frightened; getting larger is the fish's defense mechanism. We often can tell when a person is hurt or frightened when they use human defense mechanisms. Some of these defenses include yelling or talking loudly, crying, pouting, running away, withdrawing by getting very quiet, eating a lot, not eating, sleeping a lot, making fun of others, blaming others. Ask student groups to

brainstorm words and actions that can be encouraging and helpful when someone in class is feeling hurt, insecure, threatened, or afraid. For example, they can offer help, give a hug, share their lunch, or just listen. Make a master list of all of the ideas from the small groups.

Share Inspiration



(Will) Challenge the class to notice all of the helpful words and actions in the classroom for one week. Each time a student notices someone helping, encouraging, or being kind to someone else, that student adds a balloon to a jar. Try to fill the jar by the end of the week. At the end of the week, play "balloon volleyball" with all of the balloons. To play, move aside desks and chairs and divide the room in half with a piece of yarn or string. (This will serve as the net.) Divide the class into two teams with half of the students on each side of the string. Blow up the balloons with each side getting an equal share. At a given signal, both sides hit their balloons to the opposite side. The object of the game is for one team to have fewer balloons on its side than the other team when the final whistle sounds. (Play for a couple of minutes or as long as the energy is positive.)

*NOTE: All four tools of maturity are incorporated into this lesson. Students have preferred ways of learning. They usually express one or two tools more strongly than the others. This lesson draws on all four tools, thus giving every student the opportunity to feel comfortable as well as challenged. Variety encourages students of all temperaments and learning styles to be actively engaged.

Mind Map

