



LION ACTIVITIES AND LESSON PLAN

1st - 3rd Grade Class

To help children learn about lions and their plight — and why lions matter — Born Free USA has put together this lesson plan for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students. We use interesting facts and engaging in-class activities to get kids thinking about the king of the jungle, and how they can make a difference just by being aware of the importance of lions to our planet.

Learn About Lions: Ask/explain/teach these fun facts to the kids

SIZE:

- > Lions are called “big cats.” They’re similar to pet cats at home, but more than 40 times larger, with sharp teeth and nails to match. That’s one reason why they don’t make good pets!
- > Lions are the second largest cat. Do you know what the biggest cat is? (Answer: the tiger — but not by much.) Lions can be a bit taller than tigers, but don’t weigh as much, so not as big.
- > Lions can be eight feet long (show how long that is compared to your desk) and weigh from 350-500 pounds. You’d have to pile about 10 of the children on one scale to weigh as much as a lion!

SOUND:

- > What kind of sound does a lion make? (Answer: roars, purrs, growls, etc.) A lion’s roar is so loud that it can be heard up to five miles away! How loud can you all roar together? 1, 2, 3, and everyone roar together!

(NEXT)

DAY TO DAY:

- > Guess what lions do for most of the day. (Answer: they sleep 16-20 hours per day!) Can you imagine sleeping that long? You would only have four hours to eat, play, and come to school. Do any of you notice your pet cats sleeping that much?
- > But, unlike most pet cats, did you know lions are good swimmers?
- > Guess how many years lions live? (Answer: about 14.)
- > Who do you think does most of the hunting for food: the male or female lion? (Answer: the female.)

HOME:

- > Another reason lions don't make good pets is that a lion's home is in Africa. (If you have a map in the classroom, ask the students if they know where Africa is and to point it out.)
- > A lion's homeland is made up of desert and grassland.
- > A group of lions is called a "pride" which can be from three to 30 lions.
- > Lions can claim a home territory of up to 100 square miles.
- > The female lion is called a "lioness."
- > Baby lions are called "cubs."
- > Do you know what a lion's "mane" is? (Answer: hair around a lion's head and neck. Image on the first page.)
- > Does the male or female lion have a mane? (Answer: male.)



A LIONESS STRETCHING ON A TREE

FUTURE:

- > But, lions are in trouble. There aren't that many of them left in their home in Africa.
- > That's why we say that lions are "endangered" and we need to work to save them.
- > One way we can help them is to learn about lions and share what we learn with our friends and family.
- > A great way to do that is to draw or color a picture of a lion and share it. (See below.)

Lion Art Activities: Help kids get creative to help lions

A) Color or draw a lion. Print out the coloring and drawing pages included at the end of this packet.

- > Ask students if they would like to color a male lion with a mane or a lioness. Or, maybe they want to draw their own lion. (Give them the print-out that matches what they'd like to do.)
- > Let students know that, after they are done with their artwork, you'll send it to Born Free USA (scan to info@bornfreeusa.org or mail to: Born Free USA/Lion drawings P.O. Box 32160

Washington, DC 20007): a group that helps lions. Tell them that their artwork will be displayed on the Born Free USA website to help other students and people learn about and appreciate lions and work to help save them — just by seeing all of their artwork.

- > Artwork will be displayed on Born Free USA's "Year of the Lion" page: www.bornfreeusa.org/yearofthelion.

B) Make a lion puppet. Provide lunch bags along with markers, yellow and orange construction paper, yarn, and pipe cleaners. There are many ways to create a lion puppet. Below is an idea to get your students started. (There are also templates and how-to videos online if you have internet in your classroom.)



1. With the bag flat, bottom side folded and on top, start by having the students draw a lion face on the bottom flap of the paper bag.
2. Next, students can cut out two ears and a tail from the construction paper. Glue the tail to the back of the bag and two ears to the top. Cut and glue various strands of yellow and orange yarn around the lion's head, at the top of the bag. Or, cut a big circle from the orange or yellow construction paper and glue that to the back of the top of the bag to make a big, round mane. Add a couple of pipe cleaners along the side of the face for whiskers.
3. Let the puppets dry. Then, ask the students to get their puppets and make lion sounds to their neighbor. If you have a camera, videotape the students roaring with their puppets and send it to Born Free USA (info@bornfreeusa.org) and we'll display it on our "Year of the Lion" webpage with the coloring artwork: www.bornfreeusa.org/yearofthelion. Once the artwork is displayed on the Born Free USA site, if you have internet, you can show the students their work online.

Play a Born Free Song & Slide Show: See if the kids will sing the chorus



PHOTO: KEITH WILLETTE

If you have access to internet in your classroom, before the kids make their artwork, this simple slide show (under three minutes) shows photographs of lions in the wild and plays the "Born Free" song. This will help them see what lions look like and learn the Born Free name, which is the wildlife organization that is helping lions and will showcase their work (https://youtu.be/Rb2Awn_dYTts).

2 LION CUBS PLAYING

Read and Discuss: Teaching a lesson through a story

Aesop's fable about the lion and the mouse:

A large lion was awakened from his sleep by a mouse running over him. Rising up angrily, he caught the little mouse with his big paws and sharp nails and was just about to eat him... but the mouse begged the lion, saying, "Please, if you would spare my life, I will be sure to repay your kindness."

The lion thought the idea of a tiny little mouse being able to help a big lion was very silly—so he laughed loudly and let the little mouse go.

A few days later, the big lion was caught by a hunter who captured him and wound him up in a large net with ropes tied to a tree. The lion was trapped and let out a mighty roar! The mouse, recognizing the lion's roar, came running. The mouse climbed up the tree and gnawed the rope with her teeth until the ropes snapped and set the lion free.

Then, the mouse said, "You thought the idea of a little mouse ever being able to help a big lion was silly. You laughed and didn't think I could repay you for your favor. Now you know that it is even possible for a little mouse to help a big lion."

The big lion had learned his lesson and was now happy and free! He thanked the little mouse with a big purr!

Lesson learned: *No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.*

DISCUSS: Ask the students what types of kind deeds they can do to help others (including animals) who are smaller than them. Ask what kind deeds others, who are bigger than them, have done for them.

Just like the little mouse helping the lion, the students need to help lions, too — because there are not very many of them left. This lesson plan will help you and the students save lions.



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