Pre-K Comprehensive Lesson Plan

"Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" by J.W. Zarek

Overview

This comprehensive lesson plan uses "Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" to help Pre-K students (ages 4-5) explore butterflies, special places, memory skills, family relationships, and sensory awareness. Through the story of Bella and Grandma Yetta's butterfly adventures, children will engage in developmentally appropriate activities with frequent movement breaks to maintain engagement.

Learning Objectives

- Students will identify basic characteristics of butterflies (colors, wings, movement)
- Students will recognize that butterflies can be found in different places around the world
- Students will practice memory and recall through simple sequencing activities
- Students will explore family relationships and special keepsakes
- Students will engage with sensory experiences related to the story
- Students will learn simple vocabulary related to butterflies and family

Materials Needed

- "Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket" book
- Simple picture cards of the four places in the story
- Large, clear pictures of butterflies from the story:
    - Red butterfly (China)
    - Blue butterfly (Colombia)
    - Orange and black butterfly (Arkansas)
    - White butterfly (Japan)
- Materials for simple butterfly craft:
    - Pre-folded paper "lockets" (circles folded in half)
    - Pre-cut butterfly shapes in different colors

    - Large glue sticks
    - Chunky crayons
- Sensory materials:
    - Red fabric scraps
    - Small wind chimes
    - Blue tissue paper
    - Orange and black tissue paper
    - Artificial flowers
- Butterfly movement music
- Transition song recording
- Visual schedule cards showing each activity
- Chart paper and thick markers

Simplified Vocabulary Focus

- Butterfly
- Wings
- Locket
- Special
- Remember
- Colors (red, blue, orange, white)
- Family
- Grandma
- Gift
- Travel

Daily Schedule (with Movement Breaks)

This lesson is designed with frequent transitions and movement activities to accommodate Pre-K attention spans.

Morning Circle and Introduction (8 minutes)

1. Show students the visual schedule for the day's butterfly activities.
2. Introduce the butterfly topic: "Today we're going to learn about butterflies!"
3. **Quick Movement Break**: "Let's warm up our bodies by being butterflies! Curl up small like you're in a cocoon, and slowly stretch out your wings!"
4. Show large pictures of the different colored butterflies.
5. Simple color identification: "This butterfly is red! Can you find something red in our classroom?"

Story Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Show the book cover: "Our story is called 'Bella Brown—Grandma's Missing Butterfly Locket'"
2. Ask: "What do you see on the cover?"
3. Briefly explain: "A locket is a special necklace that opens up. Bella's grandma has a special butterfly locket."
4. **Transition Song**: Sing a simple "Story Time" song to help students settle for the read-aloud.

Reading the Book - Part 1 (7-8 minutes)

1. Read the first half of the story expressively.
2. Use simple language to explain as you read.
3. Pause to show the butterfly pictures that match each part of the story.
4. Ask simple questions: "What color is this butterfly?" "How do you think Bella feels?"
5. **Movement Break**: "Let's be the red butterflies from China! Stretch out your red wings and flutter around!"

Reading the Book - Part 2 (7-8 minutes)

1. Briefly remind students where the story left off.
2. Read the second half of the story.
3. Make butterfly wing movements with your arms as you read about butterflies.
4. Emphasize the surprise at the end when Grandma gives Bella the locket.

5. **Emotion Check**: "How did Bella feel when she got the locket? Show me with your face!"

Butterfly Movement Activity (5 minutes)

1. Play gentle music.
2. Guide students through simple butterfly movements:
    - "Fly high like a butterfly"
    - "Land softly on a flower"
    - "Open and close your wings slowly"
    - "Flutter in a circle"

Snack Break and Transition (10 minutes)

1. Have students wash hands.
2. During snack, remind them about the story: "We read about Bella and her grandma. They saw butterflies in different places."
3. **Transition Song**: Sing a clean-up song to move to the next activity.

Simplified Memory Places Activity (8-10 minutes)

1. Sit in a circle with students.
2. Show four large, simple picture cards (one for each place):
    - Red mountain for China
    - Temple with cherry blossoms for Japan
    - Jungle with blue butterfly for Colombia
    - Garden with orange butterflies for Arkansas
3. Place the cards in order on the floor.
4. Use a toy butterfly to "fly" from place to place, retelling the simplest version of the story.
5. Have students help retell what happened at each place: "What color butterfly did they see here?"
6. **Movement Transition**: "Let's fly like butterflies to our craft tables!"

Simple Butterfly Locket Craft (10 minutes)

1. Have all materials pre-prepared:
    - Pre-folded paper "lockets"
    - Pre-cut butterfly shapes in story colors
    - Large glue sticks at each table
2. Show a completed sample: "We're making special butterfly lockets like in our story!"
3. Simple instructions: "Glue your favorite butterfly inside your locket. You can color your locket too."
4. Assist children who need help with glue or folding.
5. Talk about the story as they work: "Which butterfly is your favorite?"

Sensory Exploration (10 minutes total - 2-3 minutes per station)

Set up four very simple sensory experiences on a table:

1. **Red fabric** (China): "Feel the soft red fabric like the Red Wing butterflies."
2. **Wind chimes** (Japan): "Listen to the gentle 'tink-tink' sounds like in Japan."
3. **Blue tissue paper** (Colombia): "Touch the light blue tissue like the Blue Morpho."
4. **Orange tissue paper with artificial flowers** (Arkansas): "See the orange butterflies in the garden."

Guide small groups to each station for brief exploration, with the focus on connecting sensory experiences to the story's butterflies.

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

1. Gather students with their locket crafts.
2. Briefly review: "Today we read about Bella and her grandma. They saw different colored butterflies."
3. Show each butterfly picture again and have students call out the colors.
4. End with a simple question: "What was your favorite butterfly from our story?"
5. Final butterfly movement: "Let's all be our favorite color butterfly and fly around our circle one more time!"

Assessment Through Observation

Watch for:

- Students' recognition of basic butterfly colors
- Participation in movement activities
- Engagement with sensory materials
- Ability to recall at least one part of the story
- Completion of the simple craft activity

Adaptations for Different Learners

For Students Who Need Additional Support

- Provide hand-over-hand assistance with craft materials
- Use visual picture cues for each story location
- Pair with a peer buddy during movement activities
- Offer noise-reducing headphones for sensory-sensitive children during wind chime exploration

For Advanced Learners

- Ask them to help retell more details of the story
- Encourage naming more butterfly features (antennae, body parts)
- Invite them to create a simple butterfly pattern with colors
- Have them help demonstrate butterfly movements for peers

For English Language Learners

- Use pictures paired with words for key vocabulary
- Emphasize hands-on activities and movement
- Provide extra visual supports
- Use gestures consistently with verbal instructions

Home Connection

Send home a simple note with:

- A picture of a butterfly the child can color
- 2-3 butterfly vocabulary words learned
- Suggestion for families to look for butterflies outside together
- Question for families: "What special thing does your family like to do together?"

Teacher Reflection Questions

After the lesson, consider:

1. Which butterfly colors did students remember most easily?
2. How did students respond to the sensory materials?
3. Were the movement breaks effective in maintaining engagement?
4. Which parts of the story seemed most interesting to students?
5. How might you adjust this lesson next time?