

Bats of the Chihuahuan Desert

Stellaluna



Although bats and birds both fly, they are not closely related. Bats are, in fact, mammals. Birds are able to fly because they have hollow bones and feathers, while bats have fur and lighter versions of mammal bones which are marrow-filled. In this activity, you will read a book with your students and then have a discussion about the differences between bats and birds.

Lesson Procedure

We are going to read a story about a bat named Stellaluna. Through her story we will learn the differences between bats and birds. But before we start reading, can anyone tell me some things that make bats and birds similar? [A picture of a bat and a picture of a bird are provided in Resource File 3 — general bat image and general bird image — should your students need a visual representation to help them answer this question.]

[Possible answers: They both have wings; They both fly]

Read the story.

Class Discussion

Comprehension Questions: [Adjustments to questions can be made based on student ages and time constraints.]

1. Describe what happened in the beginning of the story.
2. Describe what happened in the middle of the story.
3. Describe what happened at the end of the story.
4. How was Stellaluna the same as her bird friends.
5. How was Stellaluna different from her bird friends.
6. How was Stellaluna's bat family the same as her bird family?
7. How was Stellaluna's bat family different from her bird family?
8. How did Stellaluna adapt to live with her new family of birds?
9. In the end, Stellaluna and her bird friends figured out they were different. How did this make them feel about one another?
10. Can you predict what might happen to Stellaluna after the end of the story?

Activity

Tell students: Based on what we just learned in *Stellaluna*, let's see how well you learned the differences between birds and bats.

Materials Needed

- *Stellaluna* by Jannell Cannon
- General bat image and general bird image found in Resource File 3

1. Have the students stand up and spread out in the room so there is enough space between each other for moving their arms.
2. Demonstrate the difference between how a bird flaps its wings and how a bat flaps its wings.
 - a. Have students mimic a bird flap with their arms bent at the elbow, as though they are mimicking a chicken. They can mimic a bat flap with their arms spread out and not bent.
3. Ask students the following questions about Stellaluna and have them flap their arms in response as if they were a bird or bat.
 - a. I hatch out of an egg.
 - b. My mom fed me bugs to eat.
 - c. I sleep hanging upside down.
 - d. I can fly in the dark.
 - e. My wings are covered with feathers.
 - f. I could not land gracefully on a branch.
 - g. I eat fruit.
 - h. I live in a nest.