

Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian

A RIF GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY COORDINATORS

Themes: Life Science, Insects, Butterflies, History

Grade Level: K to 2nd grade

Book Brief: Maria is fascinated by caterpillars and butterflies. She uses careful observation and her artistic talent to document their life cycles.

Author:

Margarita Engle

Illustrator:

Julie Paschkis



TIME TO READ!

Before reading: What do the children know about the life cycle of the butterfly? Explain that, in 1647, people were *superstitious* about what they didn't understand. It took the hard work of people like Maria to help us begin to understand nature.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

BUTTERFLY BITES (AGES 4-10)

Ingredients: cheese slices, bread, baby carrots, ranch dressing (optional), plastic knives (optional)

Place a square cheese slice on a piece of bread. Cut into four triangles. Arrange triangles like wings on either side of carrots to make butterflies. For an added challenge, children can experiment cutting smaller triangles to make more wings. How many butterfly wings can you make from one piece of bread?

SUMMER BIRD FEEDERS (AGES 4-12)

Materials: plastic lid, string, hole punch, construction paper, scissors, glue, ripe fruit

Punch four holes at opposite ends of lid. Cut four pieces of string 12" long; tie one piece of string around each hole. Tie the other ends of the strings together so the lid hangs down. Cut out colorful flowers from construction paper and glue around the

lid. When dry, hang outside. Place fruit on the lid and watch for butterflies to come snacking!

TIE-DYED BUTTERFLIES (AGES 4-12)

Materials: coffee filters, droppers, food coloring, water, pipe cleaners, cups

Mix food coloring and water in cups to make several different colors. Fold coffee filter in half. Use dropper to draw up colored water; drop onto filter. Repeat with other colors. Unfold filter. When dry, place filter between a folded pipe cleaner. Twist the pipe cleaner together at the top to make the butterfly body and antennae. Spread out the filter for wings.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OTHER BOOKS BY THIS AUTHOR

The Wild Book (2012), *When You Wander* (2013), *Mountain Dog* (2013).

TECHNOLOGY LINK FOR KIDS

www.rif.org/kids

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