Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to the fifth Minis at Home newsletter. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important!

This week’s theme = BUTTERFLY MIGRATION

Did you enjoy learning about migration last week? I hope so because this week we’re going to talk about migrating some more.

You may remember that migration means the seasonal movement of creatures from one place to another. When the seasons change some animals (and some people, too!) move to a new home for awhile to find new food or to stay cozy warm.

This week, we’d like to talk to you about butterflies. Yes, butterflies! Now, you may think that butterflies would be a topic for the springtime, but it just so happens that one of the best-known kinds is busy migrating right now: the monarch butterfly. In fact, about 500,000 monarchs fly south in early fall. That’s more butterflies than the entire number of people who live on Maryland’s Eastern Shore!

The beautiful monarch butterfly is orange with black “veins” and white dots. But monarchs are not brightly colored just to be pretty. Their bright colors warn predators like birds not to eat them...they are poisonous to birds. Monarchs eat a plant called milkweed, which is also poisonous to birds. Milkweed is their most very favorite food, although some people have found that they will eat butternut squash, cucumber, zucchini, and pumpkin leaves if there is no milkweed around. If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Chocolate cake?

Pizza?

Pickles?
Right now, you may see monarchs flitting and flying about, sometimes resting on bushes, while making their way over 3000 miles to Mexico. That's a very long way! Ask your grownup to show you a map. That is about as wide as our country...from Easton to California. The amazing thing about monarchs is that they all travel to the very same forest in the mountains of Mexico. Some even find the same tree as their ancestors. Like many other migrating animals, monarch butterflies know exactly when and where to fly, even though they have never been to Mexico before. It's pretty incredible that these delicate insects can travel so far!

These butterflies have gathered in Michoacán, Mexico. They usually arrive there around November 1st and stay for about five months.

Activity: BUDDING NATURALIST—LEARNING ABOUT SYMMETRY

What is symmetry??? Symmetry occurs when one side of something is a mirror image of the other. That means they look exactly the same…but opposite. This happens a lot in nature! Flowers and animals are often symmetrical. Look at a tiger cat's face: The markings and stripes are sometimes the same on each side of the face. People’s faces have symmetry, too. If you draw an imaginary line from the middle of your forehead down to your chin, you'll notice that each side of your face is the same.

Almost all butterflies are symmetrical....that is, the shapes, lines and colors on each wing of the butterfly are almost exactly the same, just flipped.

Try an experiment: Ask your grownup to fold a piece of paper in half. Then open the paper and draw something on just one side of the fold (you'll see the fold line, so only draw on one side of it). Then, take a small mirror, hold it upright, and place it directly on top of the fold line so the mirror is perpendicular (sticking straight up) to the paper. Hold the mirror very still. Look into the mirror and you'll see your exact drawing reflected on the other side of your paper. This is an example of symmetry.
Butterflies: Fun Facts

In 2009, monarch butterflies were bred and raised on the International Space Station.

Butterfly enthusiasts grow special gardens just to attract monarch butterflies.

Some people call a group of butterflies a “kaleidoscope” of butterflies. I love this idea! Have you every looked through a kaleidoscope? The patterns may remind you of a butterfly’s wings. If you don’t have a kaleidoscope, ask your grownup to Google “kaleidoscopes” and look at some of the images.

Butterflies like to play in mud puddles. This is called puddling. The wet soil is full of nutrients for them. Just as dried fruits are more nutrient-dense than fresh, mud puddles concentrate nutrients as the water evaporates.

Just what’s nutritious for butterflies in a mud puddle? Rotting plant matter, salts, and minerals. Yum! That’s the butterfly version of a smoothie. Butterflies will continue to visit mud puddles until the puddles dry up and all the yumminess is gone.

Do you like to play in mud puddles? Have you ever stomped in one? What happened? Did your grownup join in or just sigh?
**Activity: MOVE LIKE A MONARCH!**

Two little butterflies flying left and right  *(Flap hands, moving them to the left and to the right.)*  
Two little butterflies are quite a sight.  
Two little butterflies flying up to the sun  *(Flap hands while stretching up.)*  
Two little butterflies flying down.  *(Flap hands children while bending down.)*  
Two little butterflies are flying to the back.  *(Flap hands behind back.)*  
Two little butterflies are coming back.  *(Flap hands to the front.)*  
Two little butterflies are flying all around.  *(Flap hands any movement.)*  
Two little butterflies are sitting on the ground.  *(Sit down with hands on legs.)*

"Two Little Butterflies" by Jolanda Garcia, KidsSoup Inc.

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**Craft: BUTTERFLY SYMMETRY**

**Materials:**

- Heavy white or light-colored paper or card stock, folded in half vertically
- Pencil
- Small binder clips or paper clips
- Liquid acrylic, tempera or finger paints: black and up to 3 other colors
- 2 googly eyes (or you can make your own eyes)
- Black strips of paper or pipe cleaners for antennas
- Toilet paper roll
- Aleene’s tacky glue
- Scissors
- Newspaper for protecting your workspace

**Procedure:**

Paint the outside of your toilet paper roll black and set aside to dry.

When the toilet paper roll is dry, add googly eyes and antennas to one end — this will be the butterfly’s body.

*Psst to grown-ups: Even if you think you can’t draw, please DON’T share that with your children. You don’t want to plant seeds of self-doubt in your children. Drawing is a skill that can be developed. The directions we give for drawing will always be easy enough for you to follow, even if you “don’t think you have a creative bone in your body.”*
Draw the outline of a butterfly on the folded paper. **Make sure that you are drawing from the folded edge and not from the open edges!** Note that you only need to draw **half** of the outline so that when you cut along the lines and open up the paper, you will have a full butterfly.

You may find it easier to draw the butterfly horizontally. If so, here are some tricks to help you with your drawing:

1) Think of the butterfly’s body as a hot dog shape. Create it along the folded edge.

2) Create the butterfly’s wings by drawing a squishy heart shape without the pointed bottom. You do not need to draw a perfect shape at all!

Keep your paper folded. Use binder clips or paper clips to keep it together while you cut. Cut out your butterfly and open it up.

Squirt small drops of paint on one side of the butterfly **only**. Don’t use too much paint or it might leak out from the sides.

Fold the butterfly back up and gently press down on top of the paper, being careful not to move the paper too much.

Open the paper up and you will have symmetrical butterfly wings!

Once the wings have dried, glue your butterfly body on top.
Flutterbyes by Constance Del Nero

Cranes and bats
planes and gnats:
All of these things can fly

Puffballs in the breeze
Your germs when you sneeze:
All of these things can fly

Seagulls and bees
Moths and geese:
All of these things can fly

Mosquitoes and balloons
rockets and moons:
Can you see them against the sky?

So many things
can soar and fly
but

the beautifulest of all
is the butterfly

Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair
and read together

Mother Monarch, by Mindy Lighthipe
Gotta Go! Gotta Go!, by Sam Swope
Monarch Butterfly, by Gail Gibbons
Senorita Mariposa, by Ben Gundersheimer
Hurry and the Monarch, by Antoine O'Flatharta

See you next week with issue 6 of Minis at Home!

Share your work on https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/
or email pictures to Ann Hansen ahansen@academyartmuseum.org
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