Arturo's Awesome Water Adventure!

Materials Needed

- Three clear containers or jars
- Water
- Blue food coloring
- Table salt
- Small rocks or pebbles
- A few green leaves (real or craft)
- A large tray or mat to contain spills
- A collection of small animal toys (or printed pictures) representing different habitats (e.g., shark, dolphin, crab, freshwater fish, frog, duck)
- Two smaller trays or placemats, one labeled "Freshwater" and one "Saltwater"
- **For the Craft (choose one):**
  - **Ocean in a Bottle:** Clear plastic bottle with a lid, water, blue food coloring, glitter, small plastic sea creatures, baby oil (optional, for wave effect).
  - **Lake Diorama:** A shoebox, blue and brown construction paper, glue, scissors, green play-doh or pipe cleaners for plants.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Arturo will be able to:

- State at least one important water safety rule.
- Sort animals into their correct "freshwater" or "saltwater" homes.
- Describe a key difference between an ocean and a river/lake.
- Create a craft that represents one of the aquatic habitats.

Lesson Activities

Part 1: The Water Safety Superhero (10 minutes)

Goal: To understand the importance of water safety in a fun, memorable way.

1. **Engage:** Start by asking, "Arturo, what's your favorite thing to do in the water?" Listen to his answer and get excited with him. Then say, "Playing in water is so much fun, and real-life superheroes know how to stay safe while they play. Let's learn the superhero rules for water!"
2. **Rule #1 - The Buddy Rule:** "The first and most important rule is to **always have a grown-up with you** when you're near water." Let's make a superhero pose for this. Maybe we can cross our arms like a superhero and say, "Grown-up with me!" Practice the pose and phrase together.
3. **Rule #2 - The Life Jacket Power-Up:** "On boats or if you're just learning to swim, a life jacket is like a superhero power-up! It helps you float." Pretend to put on a life jacket and puff out your chest proudly. Say, "Power-up!"
4. **Talk about Swimming:** "Do you know what the ultimate water superpower is? Learning how to swim! It's a skill that helps you stay safe and have even more fun in the water. It makes you strong and confident."

Part 2: Making Different Waters (15 minutes)

Goal: To see and feel the differences between rivers, lakes, and oceans in a hands-on way.

1. **Set Up:** Place the three clear jars on the large tray to catch any spills.
2. **Jar 1 - The River:** Fill the jar halfway with water. Add a few drops of blue food coloring. Drop in some small pebbles. Say, "This is our river! Rivers are always **moving and flowing**." Gently tilt the jar back and forth to make the water and pebbles move. "See how it flows?"
3. **Jar 2 - The Lake:** Fill the second jar halfway with water and add blue food coloring. Add a green leaf to float on top like a lily pad. Say, "This is our lake. A lake is a big body of water that is mostly **still**." Let Arturo see how the water doesn't flow like the river.
4. **Jar 3 - The Ocean:** Fill the last jar halfway with water and add blue food coloring. Add a good amount of salt (about 2 tablespoons) and stir until it dissolves. Say, "And this is the big, wide ocean! What's special about the ocean is that it has **salt water**." Ask Arturo if he wants to be a scientist and make a discovery. Let him dip a clean finger in the freshwater (lake jar) and taste it (it will taste like nothing). Then, let him dip a clean finger in the ocean jar and taste it. "What's the difference? The ocean is salty!" Explain that the ocean also has big movements called waves.

Part 3: Where Do I Live? Animal Sorting Fun (10 minutes)

Goal: To apply knowledge of habitats by sorting animals.

1. **Set Up:** Lay out the two placemats: one for "Freshwater" (for rivers and lakes) and one for "Saltwater" (for the ocean).
2. **The Game:** Place all the animal toys or pictures in a pile. Say, "Oh no! All these animals are lost and can't find their homes. Can you help them?"
3. **Sort and Discuss:** Have Arturo pick up one animal at a time. Ask, "Who is this?" (e.g., "A shark!"). Then ask, "Does a shark live in salty ocean water or fresh river water?" Guide him to place it on the correct mat.
4. **Continue for all animals:**
   - **Saltwater:** Shark, dolphin, crab, whale. Talk about how they are adapted to the salt.
   - **Freshwater:** Frog, duck, trout/bass. Talk about how they live in or near still lakes or flowing rivers.

Part 4: Create Your Own Water World! (15-20 minutes)

Goal: To creatively express understanding of one of the habitats.

1. **Offer a Choice:** "Now you get to be an artist and create your very own water world! Would you like to make an 'Ocean in a Bottle' or a 'Lake Diorama'?"
2. **Guide the Creation:**
   - **If he chooses Ocean in a Bottle:** Help him fill the bottle with water and blue food coloring. Let him add the glitter ("for sparkly fish scales!") and the small ocean animals. For a wave effect, add a layer of baby oil on top. Secure the lid tightly and show him how to tilt it to make the waves move.
   - **If he chooses Lake Diorama:** Help him glue blue paper to the bottom of the shoebox for water and brown paper to one side for the land. He can then use play-doh to make lily pads or green pipe cleaners for reeds. Finally, he can place his freshwater animal toys inside their new home.
3. **Share and Explain:** When he's done, ask him to tell you about the world he created. "Who lives in your lake?" or "What's happening in your ocean?"

Wrap-Up & Assessment

To see what we've learned, let's chat for a minute!

- "Can you show me your Water Safety Superhero pose and tell me the most important rule?" (*Looking for: "Always have a grown-up."*)
- Point to the jars from Part 2. "Which one of these is the salty ocean?" (*Looking for him to point to the correct jar.*)
- "Tell me one animal that lives in the ocean and one that lives in a freshwater lake." (*Looking for correct examples from the sorting game.*)
- Praise his wonderful work, his beautiful craft, and his smart thinking throughout the lesson.

Extension & Differentiation

- **To Extend Learning:** Ask more "why" questions. "Why do you think a big whale couldn't live in a small river?" or "What would happen if we put salt in a lake?" You could also watch a short, age-appropriate video about coral reefs or river ecosystems.
- **To Simplify:** If sorting is challenging, do it together. Hold up two animals (e.g., a shark and a frog) and ask, "Which one lives in the ocean?" Focus on just one key difference between the water types (e.g., "salty" vs. "not salty").