

Cozy Caves: Shapes for Hibernating Friends

Introduction: Sleepy Animals! (5 mins)

Talk about winter and how some animals sleep for a long time. This is called hibernation! Ask: 'Where do animals like bears or bats sleep in winter?' (Caves, dens, burrows). Explain that these homes keep them safe and warm. 'Let's pretend these homes are different shapes!'

Activity 1: Shape Hunt & Cave Entrances (10 mins)

Before the lesson, cut out several circles, squares, and triangles from construction paper. Hide them around the homeschool area. Say: 'Oh no! The sleepy animals need to find their cave entrances! Can you help me find the shapes?' Have the child search for the shapes. As they find each one, help them name it ('You found a circle!'). Discuss what kind of animal might fit through each shape entrance.

Activity 2: Matching Animals to Caves (10 mins)

Lay the found shapes on the floor or a table. Give the child the small toy animals or pictures. Say: 'Let's help the animals find their cozy caves! Can you put the bear in the square cave? Put the bat in the triangle cave? Put the groundhog in the circle cave?' Guide them as needed, reinforcing the shape names.

Activity 3: Build Your Own Cave! (15 mins)

Option 1 (Paper Craft): Give the child a piece of construction paper, pre-cut shapes, and glue/tape. Let them choose shapes to create their own picture of an animal's hibernation cave. They can glue a square 'cave' onto the paper and add a triangle 'roof' or a circle 'entrance'.

Option 2 (Large Motor Play): Use a blanket draped over chairs or a play tunnel to create a larger 'cave'. 'Let's build a big triangle cave with this blanket!' or 'Crawl through the circle cave tunnel!' The child can put their toy animal inside to 'hibernate'.

Activity 4: Shape Snack Time (Optional - 10 mins)

If using snacks, offer shape-themed foods. 'Look, this cracker is a square, just like the bear's cave! This cookie is a circle, like the groundhog's burrow entrance!'

Conclusion: Shape Review (5 mins)

Gather the shapes used. Point to each one and ask the child, 'What shape is this?' Praise their efforts in identifying shapes and helping the animals find their cozy hibernation spots. Ask them to point to a circle, square, or triangle somewhere else in the room.