

## Why Do Birds Sing?

**Companion Text:** Night Symphony, written by Lara Binn, and illustrated by Valia Ovseyko  
**Subject Area & Grade Level:** Science, Kindergarten

### *Objectives*

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how specific, physical and behavioral characteristics of animals help them to survive in their environments
- Develop an increased awareness of bird sounds in their environment.

### *Staging Activity*

Ask students what birds sound like. Invite students to demonstrate as many different birdcalls and songs as possible, one at a time. If they get stuck, prompt them with “whoo-whoo,” “caw-caw,” or any birdsongs common to your geographic area that students would likely recognize. If you are able, bring your students outside to a natural area and have them be silent for a minute, just listening to the sounds of nature. Then, ask them if they can add any new bird sounds to the set you came up with before coming outside. Point out that when you are outside in nature that it can be difficult to tell exactly which animals are making which sounds, since the animals can be so well hidden in the foliage.

### *Core Activity*

Read the story once through without stopping. Then, open up to the Tuesday Night page, and re-read it. Ask students to point out exactly which words are the sound that the bird makes (“Twee, twee, tweet”). Then, remind students that, as we pointed out earlier, different birds make different sounds. Ask them why they think birds make the sounds they do.

Explain that birds song is not just for human enjoyment, though many people do enjoy and appreciate listening to birds. Birds sing in order to communicate with each other, and each type of bird has at least 5-15 “songs” or “calls” that it can use, depending on what it wants to communicate with other birds. Ask students to name as many things as possible that birds may need to communicate with each other with their different calls or songs, and write them down as students suggest them. Title the list “Why Do Birds Sing?” and be sure it includes some wording of the following ideas:

- To attract other birds for mating
- To warn that a predator is nearby
- To defend his territory from other birds
- To beg for food from parent-birds
- To keep a flock of birds flying in formation together (to give each other directions)
- To ask to be helped or rescued by a parent-bird
- To coordinate their hatching (so they all hatch at the same time)



### ***Extension***

Ask students who birds are communicating to when they sing. Lead students to the answer that birds are usually communicating to other birds of the same type. Break up students in groups of three or four and tell each group they will be a group of birds who are the same type, and who are in a specific situation that you will give them (Use the Why Do Birds Sing? list for suggested situations). Their job will be to act out the situation, and to make up a specific bird call or song that they use to communicate with each other during the skit. Give groups just 3-5 minutes to create their bird calls and skits, and then have each group perform in front of the others. Have the non-performers point out the made-up bird call and what it was used to communicate in each skit.

