

Lesson Plan: Soaring Survivors

Grade/Level	Grade Level: First grade. Can be adapted for older students.
Time Allotment	45 minutes to one hour
Content Area(s)	Science (with potential integration into Language Arts & Social Studies)

Curricular Connections

Learning Standard: 1-LS1-2: Read texts and use media to find patterns in behavior of parents and offspring that help offspring survive.

Lesson Overview

Students will use videos, photos, and discussion to explore, identify, and express patterns of parental care that help young bald eagles survive.

Instructional Materials

- Playlist with videos of Bald Eagle parental care: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeNR2ocnICodsQPgeA-obijTm0zYotgxx> and/or pictures of bald eagles (adults and young).
 - Craft materials such as paper, crayons, and markers.
 - Children’s book about bald eagles (optional).
 - A cardboard or wooden base for making model nests (optional).
 - Sticks, grass, corn husks/corn cobs, and pine needles (optional).
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Introduction

Engage: Begin by showing students pictures or videos of adult and nestlings Bald Eagles. Ask them what they know about Bald Eagles.

Explore: Introduce the learning standard, explaining that students will be learning about how bald eagle parents care for their young and how these behaviors help their chicks survive.

Activate Prior Knowledge: Ask students:

- What do baby animals need to survive? (Food, water, shelter, protection).
 - Do you think all animal parents care for their young in the same way? Why or why not?
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Presentation

Share information about bald eagle parenting behaviors. Focus on key aspects like:

- Building a large nest high in a tree
 - Protects eggs and young from ground-based predators.
- Lining the nest with grass and other soft materials
 - Prevents eggs from breaking and helps keep eggs and young warm in winter weather.
- Taking turns incubating and brooding eggs and eaglets.
 - One parent can hunt while the other incubates or broods and protects the nest.
- Tearing food into small pieces for young eaglets.
 - Young eaglets cannot tear prey or swallow large chunks of meat.

- Helping fledglings as they gain hunting and flying skills.
 - Newly fledged eaglets don't fly or hunt very well.

After each key point, encourage students to discuss:

- How does this behavior help their offspring survive?
 - What would happen if parents didn't do this?
 - Can you think of other animals that might have similar parenting behaviors?
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Activity and Assessment

Briefly review the key takeaways from the lesson:

- Bald eagle parents play a crucial role in their chicks' survival.
- They engage in specific behaviors like building nests, incubating eggs, brooding young, hunting and feeding young, and caring for their young after they leave the nest.
- These behaviors address the basic needs of offspring and protect them from danger.

Design and Creation Component

Provide each student with materials for building a nest.

- Instruct students to design and create a visual representation of a bald eagle nest, including the surrounding environment.
- Encourage students to depict specific parental behaviors within their artwork. For example, parents hunting for food, feeding the eaglets, or protecting them from predators or weather.
- OR: Have students work in groups to create a model of a bald eagle nest. Encourage them to discuss the materials they use and why they are important for eaglet survival.

Writing Component

- After completing their artwork, have students write a short piece of descriptive writing to go with their visual representation.
 - Instruct students to explain the importance of the depicted parental behaviors in helping the offspring survive. They can describe how each behavior contributes to the well-being and development of the young eagles.
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Differentiation

- Provide support to students who struggle by offering sentence starters or visuals.
 - Challenge advanced students by asking them to compare bald eagle parenting with other birds or animals.
 - Integrate language arts by having students write a short story or poem about a bald eagle chick growing up.
 - Connect to social studies by discussing the Bald Eagle's significance as the national bird.
 - Pair lesson with **Compare and Contrast Male and Female Bald Eagles**.
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Extension

- Watch a live bald eagle cam online: <https://www.raptorresource.org/classroom/>.
- Visit a local zoo or nature center to see bald eagles in person.
- Have students research other animals to compare/contrast their parenting strategies.