Reptiles

Introduction to Reptiles:

Another group of animals waking up for spring are reptiles (turtles, snakes, crocodiles and alligators, and lizards). Many other groups have some of the same characteristics that reptiles have; however, it is the set of characteristics that make reptiles, reptiles. The following are key characteristics of reptiles.

- Cold blooded – body temperature is about the same as the outside temperature.
  - To survive they need to avoid really hot and really cold temperatures.
  - So where do you think reptiles will go when it’s too cold outside?
    - Most go underground alone, but some (like the garter snake) will huddle up together, sometimes hundreds of them!
- Scales covering their body (like fish).
- Most reptiles lay eggs with soft, leathery shells (you can use large marshmallows as a visual example).
- Some reptiles live in water, but reptiles still use their noses to breathe air into their lungs, unlike fish.

Turtle Activities:

1. Torn-Paper Plate Turtles

Materials
- Several shades of green and brown construction paper
- Paper bowls
- Markers for eyes
- Scissors
- Equal parts Elmer’s glue and water mixture
- Paint brushes
Give each child a paper bowl. Have construction paper in shades of brown and green. Let the children tear paper and papier-mâché them onto the back of the bowl. Have children cut out and decorate 4 legs, a tail and a head, then glue the legs, head, and tail to the underside of the turtle “shell.”

2. Egg Carton Turtles

**Materials**
- Egg carton (both paper and Styrofoam work)
- Markers
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue

Cut up the egg carton as individual egg buckets (if you were to turn the carton upside down, each bump would be a turtle shell). Decorate your turtle shell however you like. Add legs and a head at the end.

3. Turtle Tryouts

**Materials**
- Cardboard (about 2ft x 3ft)
- Markers
- String

Have an adult trace (and probably cut out as well) a large, backpack-sized turtle shell. The shape is pretty much an oval with an indent or flat top. Poke a small hole on either end of the flat top and then another hole about halfway down the shell (four holes in total, two on each side). Loop one piece of string through each side to create the straps of the backpack shell. Then have the kids decorate the shell. Once their shell is complete, they can put it on and slowly crawl about their habitat. Randomly and unexpectedly, a parent should pounce or swoop in as a predator to try and eat the turtle. If the turtle can tuck their head and limbs in before the predator attacks them, then they are safe.
4. **SONG: Tiny Tim the Turtle**

   *The kids love this song...if only to scream the word POP! at the end.*

   I had a little turtle, his name was Tiny Tim
   I put him in the bathtub, to see if he could swim
   He drank up all the water, he ate up all the soap
   and now he’s sick in bed with bubbles in his throat.
   Bubble, bubble, bubble... Bubble, bubble, bubble
   Bubble, bubble, bubble... Bubble, bubble, POP!

5. **EXTRA ACTIVITY: Cold-Blooded Experiment**

   **Materials**
   - *Lamp with a bright light*

   Say “There are warm-blooded creatures (like mammals and birds) and cold-blooded creatures like (turtles, frogs, snakes.)”

   “Warm-blooded creatures try to keep their bodies the same temperature. When you go to the doctor, they check your temperature, right? If it’s not around 98.6, it means something is wrong. We can make our own heat when we are cold. What does your body do when you’re cold?” – shiver. “We can also cool ourselves when we are hot. What does your body do when it’s really hot?” – sweat. So we can help make ourselves warmer or cooler.

   “Cold-blooded creatures take on the temperature of their surroundings. When it’s hot outside, they are hot. When it’s cold outside, they are cold. So their body temperature goes up and down with their surroundings. When their bodies are cold, they move REALLY slow.” Tell them it’s cold and have them crawl around really slow. Bring out a really bright light. Say “Now the sun is out so we need to warm up!” Have them crawl to the light and bask in the warmth for a while. Say “Ok – we’re all warmed up, now we can move again!”

   After about 10 seconds say, “You’re starting to run out of warmth, so you’re getting slower...and slower...and slower... You don’t want to freeze, so you must make your way back to the warm sun.”