Grades K–2
Journey to NYC Parks
Life of a Ladybug

What’s that? A ladybug! Learn about ladybugs and make your own.

What Will You Learn?

- What the life cycle and body of a ladybug looks like
- How to cut out different shapes

Materials:

- Paper plate
- Black construction paper
- Parchment paper
- Red and black paper plates
- Fastener
- Googly eyes
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Tape

Instructions:

1. Flip both your black and red paper plates inside out.
2. Cut your red paper plate and parchment paper in half.
3. In this order, stack the black plate, parchment paper (both halves), and red plate (both halves) together.
4. Make sure all 5 pieces overlap at the top of the black plate. Hole punch at that point.
5. Place a fastener in the hole to keep them together.
6. Cut out a circle from your black paper for the ladybug's head.
7. Using glue, paste the head under your fastener with half the circle sticking out.
8. Cut one pipe cleaner into four equal pieces. Repeat with the second pipe cleaner. Six pieces for legs and 2 for antennae.
9. Use tape to attach the 6 legs under your ladybug; 3 legs on the left side of the black plate and 3 legs on the right side.
10. Use a permanent marker to create black spots for your ladybug.
11. Place 2 googly eyes and 2 antennae (remaining pipe cleaner pieces) on the head (black construction paper).

Reflection Questions:
- What shapes did you use to create your ladybug?
- What does each material feel like?
- Can you imagine what it would be like to be a ladybug? What would you see?

Explanation:
- Ladybugs go through a complete transformation called metamorphosis, which consists of four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult.
  - After mating, females lay up to 300 fertilized eggs on plants.
  - The newly hatched larvae (plural of larva) feed on aphids (small sap-eating insects) for about three weeks before entering a resting stage as pupae (plural of pupa).
  - After a week of growth, adult ladybugs emerge fully formed and ready to continue feeding.
• Ladybugs have developed a way to protect themselves. They can create a fluid from the joints in their legs, which gives them a foul taste and acts as a way to keep predators away. Their distinctive coloring and spots are warning signals to potential predators, to show that they taste unpleasant or are toxic.
• Ladybugs play an important role in ecosystems as natural predators of plant-eating insects, especially aphids. By eating these pests, ladybugs help protect crops and maintain ecological balance. They are considered good and helpful insects and are often welcomed in gardens as a form of natural pest control.

Further Reading Recommendations:

Ladybugs
The Story of a Ladybug
Si Yo Fuera Una Mariquita (If I Were a Ladybug)

Borrow these books and more: borrow.nypl.org