



## Nature Study

Each Friday morning, you will go through two of our nature cards. These are short, factual cards with images to help your child become familiar with objects in the natural world.

As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

As you explore nature outside your home, watch and listen for newly discovered delights. Most of all, remember...

*"Point to some lovely flower or gracious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but as a beautiful thought of God."*

~ Charlotte Mason

Nature Study



## Ant 1

*Formicidae*

- Ants are a type of insect related to wasps and bees, with small bodies that come in shades of black, red, yellow, and brown.
- Ants can be found in nearly every part of the world, minus Antarctica and a few remote islands.

- Ants are one of the strongest creatures in the world: their tiny bodies can carry up to 50 times their weight!
- There are many varieties of ants all known for different things, such as the most common: the pavement ant, but also the bright red fire ant, the painful bullet ant, and the industrious carpenter ant.
- Ants live in colonies where every insect plays their part. A queen lives at the heart of a colony and lays eggs, producing worker ants, which perform a variety of tasks such as taking care of the queen, eggs, and larvae, digging and repairing their nest, and foraging for food.



## Cricket 1

*Grylloidea*

- Crickets are small jumping insects with six legs and long antennae.
- Crickets live all over the world, and can be found on every continent except Antarctica.
- Crickets are distant relatives of grasshoppers.

- Many crickets are herbivores and primarily eat plants, though some cricket species are omnivores and will eat the larvae and eggs of other insects.
- Crickets produce a chirping sound by rubbing rough sections of their wings together, which acts as a resonating chamber, much like a violin. Male crickets make this sound to attract mates.

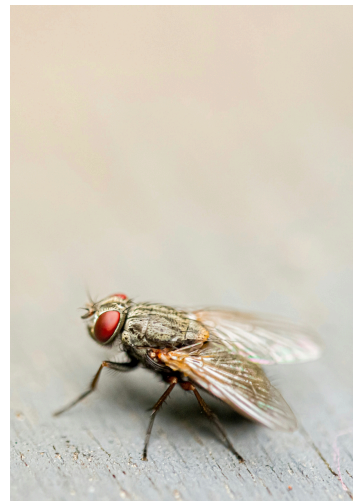


## Dragonfly 2

*Anisoptera*

- Dragonflies are a type of fast-flying insect with four wings and long abdomens.
- Dragonflies come in many different colors such as red, blue, green, and yellow, and some also have iridescent shades.

- There are over 3,000 known dragonfly species in the world.
- The globe skimmer is the most common species of dragonfly, and is known by that name because it can be found in warm climates all over the world.
- Dragonflies are a predatory insect and will eat flies, butterflies, mosquitos, bees, and other small bugs. They catch these insects mid-air and will use their legs to trap them with great success, catching 95% of the prey they go after.



## Fly 2

*Diptera*

- Flies are a small winged insect with big eyes and six legs. They have a pair of larger wings they use to fly and two smaller wings that are used for balance.
- "Fly" is a large class that includes various species such as the housefly, the mosquito, the mayfly,

the horsefly, and gnats, which are all related.

- The housefly has the ability to taste with their legs, and often clean their legs by rubbing them against each other as a way to 'cleanse their palate,' making it easier to taste whatever they encounter next.
- Flies have compound eyes, meaning they have numerous small lenses making up their eyes that each take in visual stimuli, all adding up into a big picture.
- Flies are very useful in the ecosystem as they are the second most effective pollinator, helping spread pollen from plant to plant.



## Grasshopper 3

*Acridomorpha*

- Grasshoppers are winged insects that live on the ground. They have large, strong hind legs that they use to jump and evade threats. Their short front legs are used to grab food.
- Similarly to crickets, grasshoppers produce

noise by rubbing textured legs against their front wings, which they use to attract mates.

- Grasshoppers feed on plants. In certain conditions, some types of grasshoppers can change color and become locusts, a type of grasshopper that is considered a pest, due to how they swarm and destroy crops.
- Grasshoppers don't have typical ears. Instead, they have simple eardrums on their abdomen that pick up vibrations, helping them hear other grasshoppers.



## Ladybug 3

*Coccinellidae*

- Ladybugs, as they are called in the United States, or ladybirds, as they are called in the United Kingdom, are beetles known for their bright red colors and black spots.
- Ladybugs are considered a symbol of luck in many cultures.

- The "lady" in ladybug is actually meant to represent Mary, the mother of Jesus. It is thought that perhaps this is because Mary was often depicted wearing red cloaks in paintings, similar to the bright red color of many ladybugs.
- The bright colors of the ladybug are meant to warn off predators, signaling that they taste bad.
- Ladybugs typically eat aphids, which are a tiny insect that preys on plants. Because of their diet, ladybugs are considered helpful insects and are often purposefully released in gardens to kill off plant-destroying aphids.

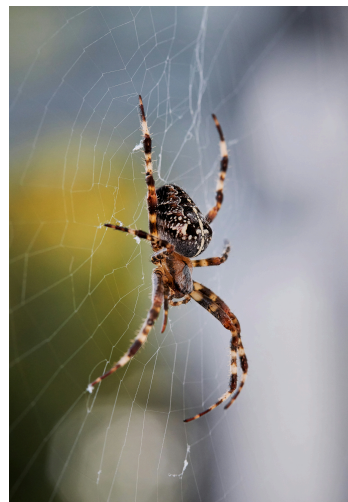


## Moth 4

*Lepidoptera*

- Moths are a type of winged insects that are primarily nocturnal, meaning most species of moths emerge at night.
- Moths are distinctive from butterflies in that their antennae are usually feathery, whereas butterflies have slender antennae ending in a balled, "club" shape.

- While many moth caterpillars make cocoons and then emerge as adult moths, some caterpillars simply burrow into the ground instead, leaving once they have changed into their adult form.
- Moths have varied diets: many species of moth larvae eat fabrics, while adult moths often drink nectar. However, there are some moths, such as the Luna moth, that don't have mouths in their adult forms and therefore do not eat at all.
- Moths are important pollinators. However, scientists didn't discover this until modern times, due to moths being mostly nocturnal.



## Spider 4

*Araneae*

- Spiders are arachnids with eight legs, fangs, and silk-producing organs called spinnerets that they typically use to weave webs.
- Many spiders use their fangs to inject venom into their prey, paralyzing it and making it easier to eat.
- Most spiders prey on small insects and other spiders, though some larger species have been known to eat lizards and birds.
- While not all species of spiders spin webs, many do, and their webs serve as a large, sticky trap to catch food.
- Spiders typically live for up to two years, however, larger spiders like the tarantula can live for about 25 years!