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LIONS, TIGERS, AND BEARS, OH MY!

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I loved creating fun games for my children using our plastic and wooden animals. To this day, if I spy a plastic container of animals, I always look them over to see what adorable creatures they contain. Bags of these creatures make wonderful gifts, especially for a spring party. Here are some of the fun things that we did with ours.

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-Have the children group according to wild (lions, tigers, bears...) and domestic (horses, cows, lambs...). Using a large map, locate where each might be found in the world.

-Classify the animals as mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, or insects.

-Discuss how God designed each animal for its surroundings and its own protection—long legs for running, sharp teeth for tearing meat, claws for climbing, nostrils that close to keep out sand...

-Play charades by selecting one and then acting it out for all to guess.

-Match the animals with pictures of them from books or magazines.

-To make your own Animal Bingo, cut out pictures of your animals and glue on poster board. Use your plastic animals to cover the animals that are called out.

-Each child should pretend to be Noah and pair them to board the Ark.

-Using paint, crayons, moss, rocks and such, make dioramas out of shoe boxes by creating jungle scenes for jungle animals, forest scenes for forest animals, farm scenes for farm animals. If you have never made one of these, this is so much fun. Just create the scene inside the box turned on its side. Then place the animals where they look best against the background, and place on a shelf or table for all to enjoy.

-Use the animals to help the children understand mathematical concepts. Corral the horses by color. For instance, you can say, we have 6 white horses in this corral and 5 black horses in the other. How many horses do we have all together? Place 5 horses in each of your 4 corrals. So 4 groups of 5 is? And 20 divided into 4 groups is? We have 10 cows. If we take 4 to market how many cows will we have left?

-Take turns selecting an animal and walking and talking like that creature.

-Take turns making sounds of the animals and having the children select the appropriate animal.

-While singing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” leave out the name of the animal, but make its sound and have the child pick out the animal that matches that sound.

-Hide the wild animals around the house and then go on a safari to find them.

yui_3_7_2_1_1366900346758_3527 -Take the animals with you to the Zoo. One by one draw them out of a bag and find a real live specimen for every one selected.