

Experiment 8

Butterflies flutterby

Materials needed:

butterfly kit
small cage

[butterfly kits can be purchased from
a variety of different sources such as
Insect Lore at www.insectlore.com]

In this unit, the students will observe a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.

The objectives of this lesson are

- (1) to make careful observations of the metamorphosis of a butterfly*
- (2) learn about a life cycle.*

I. Think about it.

Have the students think about how a butterfly got its name. Help them look up the origin of the butterfly name from a library or internet reference.

Have the students think about how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly. Help them explore their ideas with questions such as:

- ① What do you think happens first when a caterpillar changes to a butterfly?
- ② What do you think happens next when a caterpillar changes to a butterfly?
- ③ What do you think happens last when a caterpillar changes to a butterfly?
- ④ Do you think you can watch the caterpillar in the chrysalis as it changes to a butterfly?
- ⑤ What do you think the chrysalis is made of?
- ⑥ What color do you think the chrysalis will be?

II. Observe it

- ① Help the students follow the instructions to set up the butterfly kit.
- ② Have the students observe the different stages of metamorphosis.
- ③ Help your students draw the life cycle of the butterfly as they observed it.
- ④ Help your students note any other interesting observations.

III. What did you discover?

Have the students answer the questions about the life cycle of a butterfly. Help them write summary statements of what they actually observed. They may have expected something different to happen, but encourage them to record what actually happened – even if the butterflies did not grow or the eggs or chrysalis died.

IV. Why?

Help the students understand that the life cycle of a butterfly is a very amazing process. Explain to them that scientists would not know about the life cycle of a butterfly if they did not make careful observations. Discuss with the students the origin for the name “butterfly.”