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The River

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What is Migration?

- Migration is the seasonal movement of animals from one region to another.
 - Many types of fish travel, or migrate, between freshwater rivers and the sea. Some journeys cover thousands of miles, others only a matter of yards.
 - Some fish migrate to find food or to avoid extreme weather conditions, while others make the journey to breed.
 - It is uncertain how the fish navigate their course – one of the many wonders of nature.
- Help the children grasp the abstract concept of migration with hands-on activities.
 - Create an outdoor migration route. Designate a few stops along a route that can be run or walked, for example, follow the migration route from this tree to the fence, going around the swings, under the slide, and over the grass.
 - Create an indoor obstacle course. Tell the children they'll migrate from point A to point B as the little fish did, but they'll go under the table, around the corner, and through the tunnel.
 - Provide plastic fish (or other animals) that the children can migrate from one side of the sand to the other in a sandbox or sensory table.
 - Have a Migration Celebration! Celebrate the fish's triumphant arrival at the sea, where she is meant to be. Decorate the room with child-created paper chains, listen to music about fish, dance "The Swim" to rock-and-roll music, and munch on goldfish crackers. And of course, cap off the fun by another reading of *The River*.

Music

Use text from the book to create a song, sung to the tune of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."
Encourage the children to sing this each time the book is read aloud.

"Through snow and wind and rain and sun,
The fish must finish what she's begun.
The days grow longer, the air is still.
The fish swims on and on until
The river has become a sea.
This is where she's meant to be!"

Art

Provide paper, orange paint and glitter (or glitter paint) so the children can replicate the texture that's seen on the fish in the book in a painting of their own design. Suggest the children tell you about their painting and record their comments to create a keepsake.

Counting Fish

Using the last double-page spread in the book, have the children help you count the fish on the left page, and then the ones on the right page. Ask which page has more? How many more? What about the fish whose tails are on one page with their heads on the other?



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Science

- Discuss the terrain, plants, and wildlife seen in the colorful illustrations, such as the busy beavers who scamper and scurry.
- Expand by creating hands-on activities. For beavers these might include:
 - Collecting sticks outside to build with
 - Exploring the engineering component of dam building
 - Using photos and illustrations of real beavers in action to discover how they live
 - Providing or making puppets for puppet play

Word Sounds

Word sounds build phonological awareness, an important step in learning to read.

- Rhymes: make a chart of rhyming pairs from the book in several columns across the top of a blackboard, whiteboard or easel pad. Ask the children to think of words (even nonsense words, especially with very young children) that rhyme, then write them down in the columns. Examples of rhyming words in the book: *sky/fly, floes/goes/flows/sloves, night/light, air/where, sway/way/play/day, sea/be.*
- Homonyms: if you're reading this book to an older child, point out how the words *floes* and *flows* sound the same but are spelled differently and mean different things. Start a list and add to it over time, for example, *nose/knows, shoe/shoo, chili/chilly, we/wee, slay/sleigh.*

Discussion Topics for Creative Thinking/Creative Writing:

- What might the little fish be thinking as the river flows through the snowcapped mountains?
- What was your favorite place that the river flowed through? Why?
- The little fish seems to be smiling. What do you think makes her happy?
- Why is the owl awake in the middle of the night? What would you do if you were awake all night?

Vocabulary

Expand on word knowledge by showing pictures, providing non-fiction and story books or actual examples of nouns and act out or listen to audio clips of verbs. Repeat the activities often to help the child make a permanent connection with the word.

Dappled light
Deer
Hoot
Ice floes
Icy

Leap
Owl
Pine forest
River
Riverbank

Rushing/gushing
Scurry/hurry
Sea
Snow geese
Snowcapped