

Making the Grade: School Program Menu for 3rd Grades 2025-2026



Katie Cantu kcantu@jasperia.org

Greg Oldsen goldsen@jasperia.org

The following is a list of presentations offered to third grade classes in Jasper County. This is not a complete list, and for other options or questions about a program, please contact the naturalists. We work with teachers to fit our programming with their curriculum!

- All programs are free and materials will be provided unless otherwise noted.
- Although descriptions are for in-class, all programs can be adapted for outdoor locations.
- Please call or email at the beginning of the school year to guarantee your desired day and time.
- Plan for 30-40 minutes per program.
- Have your students come up with a list of questions for the naturalists before the scheduled program time.
- Please plan to sit with your class and enjoy the presentation along with them!

Bucket of Bones

This is a great program to go along with the study of animal traits and body structures. We will make comparisons between invertebrates and vertebrates. The naturalist will bring a bucket of cleaned bones from the skeleton of a deer or other wild animal from our area. It's up to the students to identify and piece the skeleton together!

***3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2**

Animal Classification

This program follows along with reading about animals and how scientists group them based on their characteristics. Students will study various groups of animals found in Jasper County and will become familiar with using field guides and other resources to identify and classify them.

***3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2**



Fall Field Trip

Third grade classes travel to Mariposa Park or Uhlenhopp Arboretum on the eastern side of Jasper County where the field trip possibilities are endless! We can incorporate the "Bird Beaks", "Fascinating Fossils", "Aging of Trees", "Bucket of Bones", "Incredible Insects", and "Migrating Monarchs" programs into these field trips as well as gyotaku fish printing, observation hikes and working with microscopes. Please contact the naturalists for more information on what we can do to make this a great learning experience for your students!

***3-LS1-1, 3-LS2-1, 3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2,
3-LS4-1, 3-LS4-3, 3-LS4-4**

Bird Beak Buffet

Students will study several different kinds of birds from different habitats in Iowa. We will determine how these birds are similar and different by observing beak design and wing shape on real, taxidermy birds. Students will experiment with tools representative of beak designs to determine if there is a relationship between beak design and food preference.



***3-LS3-1, 3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-2,**

Fascinating Fossils

Students will learn how fossils are made, what they tell us of the past, and how to identify common fossils found in Iowa. The naturalist will bring examples for small group study. A few fossils will be made for the classroom using rubber molds and plaster of paris to demonstrate sedimentation and the forming of fossil molds and casts. A discussion will also be led on paleontology and how scientists study things that lived a long time ago.



***3-LS3-2, 3-LS4-1, 3-LS4-4**

Diary of a Worm

A discussion about the life cycle of worms will be led with the students. Students will then work with small groups to observe real worms under a microscope, explore the internal organs of a dissected worm, and make worm measurements using gummy worms.

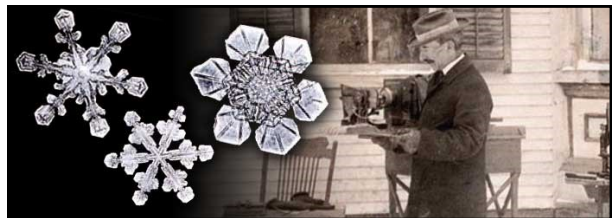
***3-LS1-1**



The Story of Snow

Students will gain a whole new perspective on snow after reading "Snowflake Bentley", a story about a farmer who photographed snowflakes, and studying snowflake shapes and patterns with the naturalist. We will discuss how temperature changes snowflakes and students will make snowflakes of their own or study real snowflakes if they are around! A great follow-up activity (if there is snow on the ground) is snowshoeing with the naturalist around the school yard!

***3-ESS2-1**



Astronomy

We will review how Earth moves and why what we see from Earth changes throughout the year, focusing on constellations and other astronomical events that might be happening at the time of the program.



First Impressions

Students will distinguish between reactions to an animal based on myth or stereotype and those based on facts. Students will recognize the value of animals' contributions to ecosystems even those that people sometimes respond to with fear. The class will meet "Cupcake" the fox snake in a live animal demonstration.

***3-LS4-4**