Jungle Theme for Preschool

From Miss Cheryl at Preschool Plan It

Many times, when searching for Jungle-themed activities for preschool, we run across Rain Forest activities, Zoo activities or, more often, Savanah animals. In this theme, I’ve researched animals from the Jungles in Asia and Africa. The activities are based on some of the creatures found there.

If you are looking for a Rain Forest or Zoo theme, you will find them on my website:
Click here for the Rain Forest Theme  Click here for the Zoo Theme

On the following pages you’ll find over 35 themed activities for all of your Interest Learning Centers—enough for at least a week’s worth of planning!

You’ll also find the following printable items:
- Themed Activities for Your Interest Learning Centers
- Jungle Calendar Pieces (No pattern! Just a different, cool Jungle creature picture each day!)
- Animal Match File Folder Game
- XXXXX Playdough Recipe (sparkly and fun!)
- Activity Mat #1: Water, Land or Air?
- Activity Mat #2: Snake Pit
- 5 Little Monkeys Song Poster & Song Card

Now, Let the Jungle Theme Planning Begin!
Banana Peel Painting
Materials Needed: banana peels (use the ones from the Pass The Banana activity in the Circle Time section below!); paint, paper
The children dip the banana peel into the paint (put paint in shallow trays) and then drop the peels or press the peels onto the paper. Or, use the peels as paint brushes!

Tissue Paper Creations
Materials needed: colored tissue paper and crepe paper, scissors, glue, glue sticks, paper
The children cut and glue the paper to create! They can make or create their own jungle animal or any creation they want. Don’t limit them to creating “only Jungle” items……the goal of a theme is to draw them into learning……the learning here is practicing using scissors, practicing squeezing out glue and just creating!

Snake Painting
Materials needed: string (sturdy string, like twine), shallow trays of paint; paper; clothespins (optional)
The children drag the string through the tray of paint and then drag it on their paper. Some children find it easier to hold the clothespin that is pinched onto the string.
The designs they can create are awesome and the color mixing that happens is equally awesome!
Jungle Snake Info: Burmese Pythons and Cobras are very common in Asian Jungles. Rock Pythons and Mambas are common in African Jungles.

Discover The Hiding Animal
Materials needed: jungle animal sorters; shaving cream
Simply “hide” jungle animals in piles of shaving cream! Your preschoolers will know what to do from here!
You can find jungle animals in your zoo or safari sorters/manipulatives or in this type of Wild Animal set.

Egg Shell Collage
Materials needed: cracked, cleaned eggshells (from the Crack Me Up Circle Time activity below); vinegar; food coloring; glue; tag board or other sturdy paper; essential oil (optional)
With the children, have them help you crush the cleaned eggshells into smaller pieces. Separate into several Ziploc baggies.

Cover egg shells with white vinegar. Add one drop of essential oil to neutralize the vinegar smell. Add a few drops of food coloring to each bag. Have fun with colors…add 2 colors to each bag to create different colors.

Seal bags and give them a little shake. Sit the bags upright (I placed them all the bags in a clear bin) so the vinegar is covering all the shells.

Give the bag a swish and a shake every 2 hours or so. Let them sit overnight. The next day, drain the shells and spread out on paper towels to dry. (I've been told you can bake them dry in the oven for a few minutes, but I've never tried this. If you do, please let me know how it works!)

Now, provide tag board (or poster board or other sturdy paper), glue and bowls of colored eggshells to the children to create with!

**Blocks**

*In the Jungle, the Mighty Jungle…*  
Provide plastic jungle and wild animals, snakes, etc., plastic trees, sticks, twigs, rocks, etc. for the children to create habitats with.  
Consider adding small bowls of water (for rivers/ponds) and bowls of dirt, sand, etc.

**Circle**

Circle Time is such a great time for children to learn the social skills of being together as a large group AND to learn more about your Back to School Preschool Activities theme!

**Going On A Jungle Trip**

You will need: cardboard tubes for the children to use as binoculars (staple 2 together for each child); pictures of jungle animals, trees, etc.

To introduce kids to the Jungle, hang pictures of the animals they might see there as well as the trees, flowers, etc. Make up your own version of “Going on a Bear Hunt” song as you take the children on a tour of the Jungle:

We're going on a Jungle Trip (we're going on a jungle trip).
What will we see?  (What will we see?)
Let’s get out our binoculars (use binoculars).
What do you see?
(Choose one of the items a child sees.  Walk over to it together and tell them what it is.
Remove picture from wall or chair or wherever you had it, show it to them and then move on to
the next.)
What else do you see?  Continue until all pictures have been found.

Go back to Circle Time and show them the pictures, ask if anyone remembers any of the
names?  Tell them you are going to be doing all kinds of Jungle activities this week!

EXTENSION:  Provide glue and misc. arts/craft supplies at the writing table for the children to
decorate their binoculars and print their names on them.  I do not add yarn or string to them.  I
know many do so the children can hang them around their necks throughout the day, but we’ve
found this to be very dangerous as they get caught on toys, doorknobs, chairs and their friends.

**Pass The Banana**

Materials Needed:  banana (bring enough to share and eat at the end!); CD Player and my
favorite CD for this type of game:  Bean Bag Activities and Coordination Skills CD (track 6: Pass
the Beanbag is my favorite for passing games at Circle Time).  Use your own favorite CD as
well!

The children pass the banana to the beat of each verse:  slow, fast, etc. until the music stops.
When the music stops after each verse (or each song that you play), talk about the Jungle.  Ask
a question after each stop of the music such as:

What kind of animal eats bananas?
What does a Jungle look like?
What kind of animals do you think live in the jungle?

When you are done playing, either enjoy eating bananas together OR make Banana-sicles with
the children for snake today! (See instructions in the Cooking Section below).

**Going Out To Play**

Use the names of Jungle critters to sing the classic song “One Little Duck” only use the jungle
names:
One ________ went out to play
On a bright and shiny day.
He/she had such enormous fun
That he/she called another _____________ to come.
(Call out sounds the children think this animal would make).

Continue on with many animals.  When done, end this way:

...That he/she called another _____________ to come.

But instead they heard their mother calling:
“Time for Dinner!!!!!!!!!!!”
And all the animals when home that day!

Crack Me Up!

The common birds found in the Jungle are: Crowned Eagles and Gray Parrots (in Africa) and Black Eagles and Cockatoos (in Asia).

Birds lay eggs. What’s inside an egg? Let’s see!

You’ll need enough eggs for each child to crack one open; 3 bowls.

Let each child practice cracking open an egg into a bowl. This bowl will be the egg cracking bowl for the children!

As each child cracks open their egg, remove any eggshells.

Put the eggshells into another bowl (this will be your eggshell bowl!).

Pour the now eggshell-free egg into a larger bowl.

Give the egg cracking bowl to the next child. Continue.

When done, use the eggs to make scrambled eggs in small groups!

Rinse the eggshells in soapy water and let dry.

Once dry, crunch them into small pieces and dye them to use for an art project later this week:

See Egg Shell Collage in the Art Section above for directions.

Favorite Jungle Animal Graph

Create a graph that 2 columns and as many rows as you have children.

Place the graph on the floor and have the children print their name as best they can in a box in the first column.

Provide small pictures of each of the Jungle animals (print and laminate several of each type. You can reuse these as a matching game as well and use them year after year for this theme).

Hang the graph on the wall where the children can reach it.

Lay out one of each of the Jungle animal pictures on the floor.

Have one child choose which they like the most. They tape that picture next to their name.

Replace that picture with another picture of that animal and let the next child choose.

Use this chart to discuss how many liked each animal.
Which animal do more children like?
Which animal to fewer children like? Etc.

Cooking

Cooking with children helps develop their math skills and helps them to learn how to follow directions. It also allows for some great conversation! Ask many questions while cooking with
your children to encourage conversation! Be sure to ask specific themed questions while making these fun snacks!

**Scrambled Eggs**

Materials needed: the eggs from the Crack Me Up activity in the Circle Time section above. Make scrambled eggs with the children! Let them help whisk the eggs with a whisk or fork.

**Banana-sicles**

Materials needed: bananas (1/2 a banana per child)—use the bananas you brought it for the Pass The Banana Circle Time activity above; crafts sticks, chocolate chip pieces, plastic knives, wax paper, cookie sheet.

Have the children help cut the bananas in half. Each child inserts a craft stick into the banana. Heat in a double boiler (or microwave) the chocolate chip pieces. Have the children use plastic knives to "frost" their bananas. Place them in a cookie sheet on wax paper (to prevent them from sticking to the sheet) and place in freezer until snack time!

*We have also rolled them in colored or sprinkles while the chocolate is still soft.

**Gorilla Bars**

There are many recipes for Gorilla Bars. Some call for molasses. This recipe is the one in my files that we made years ago. Ingredients:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>flour</td>
<td>3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quick oats</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking powder</td>
<td>2 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baking soda</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cinnamon</td>
<td>1 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salt</td>
<td>Pinch of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raisins</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mashed up bananas</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>milk</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egg whites</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vanilla</td>
<td>1 tsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Have children help you measure and mix together the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and raisins in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, have children help you measure and mix together the bananas, milk, egg whites and vanilla.
3. Add banana mixture to the bowl with the dry ingredients. Beat until mixed and smooth.
4. Pour into 9” X 13” pan. Bake at 350F for about 30-40 minutes, depending on your oven.

**Animal Cracker Match**

Materials needed: Animal crackers for snack!
Have the children compare and classify the animals on their napkins.
And then compare with the animals their friends have!
**Drama**

**Jungle Time!**

Set up your dramatic play area into a jungle!
Hang shades of green and brown crepe paper from the ceiling. Place green fabric (or outdoor carpeting—that green stuff!) on the floor, add some binoculars; some jungle books; some maps from your local travel agency and, of course, stuffed jungle animals!

For activities with Dramatic Play try:
Have the children help twist large grocery bags into vines and tree trunks and attach with tape to the wall. Provide paper and scissors for them to create leaves and more vines.
Provide large grocery bags (with armholes cut out) and misc. arts & crafts to make vests with.
Provide large paper bowls to make hats with.
Provide boxes to create jeeps/cars with to drive to the jungle (cut out the bottoms of the boxes so the children can stand in them. Cut oval holes on the sides for the children to use as handles to hold their car up with as they “drive” to the jungle!

**Easel**

**Feather Painting**

Provide feathers to dramatic play to paint with. Or add branches with leaves!

**Gross Motor**

**Monkey, Monkey, Leopard**

Play a jungle version of Duck, Duck, Goose!
Did you Know? The Leopard is the number one predator in the jungle!
Crocodile Race

Have the children go from one end of the room to the other on their bellies using their arms to pull them along and legs to push them along.

Did You Know? The Nile Crocodile is the most prominent in African jungles and the Salt Water Crocodile lives in the Asian Jungles.

Leaping Leopards

Tape lines on the floor with painters’ tape and see how far the children can jump past the line. They run up to the line running 4 times before leaping (practice rational counting skills!). Did You Know? Leopards can run 36 MPH, leap about 20 feet and jump up to 10 feet? Wow!

Handa’s Surprise: Your Turn!

After reading Handa’s Surprise (see the book suggestion in the Library section below), provide a few baskets with fruit (play fruit or read) for the children to balance on their heads.

Have them sort the fruit, count the number of pieces, etc. Can they balance 1 piece? 2 pieces?

Jungle Obstacle Course

Create an obstacle course inside or outside. Encourage the children to act like a jungle animal while completing the course:
Under the table like a crocodile.
Leap over some blue fabric (the river) like a Leopard.
Climb over a chair or item like a Monkey.
Slither around a chair like a Python.

Library

Book Suggestions for the Library
Roar! A Noisy Counting Book by Pamela Duncan Edwards
Jazzy in the Jungle by Lucy Cousins
Jungle Animals (Fun Facts for Kids) by Kidsbooks
Rumble in the Jungle by Giles Andreae
If I Were A Jungle Animal by Amanda Ellery
Handa’s Surprise by Eileen Browne
Animal Match File Folder Game

Create the file folder game in this packet. Instructions for play are included.

Snake Pit

Use the playdough you made (above) or your own recipe.
Provide the mat in this packet.
Provide beans, rice, pasta and/or other items for the children to add to the snakes they make for their snake pit.

The Longest Python

The longest Python known was Medusa, measuring at 25 feet 2 inches!
Click here for the Guinness Book of World Records information on Medusa!

Create a snake out of paper that is 25 feet, 2 inches long.
Use clear packing tape to tape it to your carpet.
Throughout the week, have the children measure Medusa using different tools such as:
Their feet!
Blocks
Tape measures
Rulers
A stuffed snake

Water, Land, Air Activity Mat

Print and laminate the mat in this packet.
Provide playdough for the children to create jungle animals that live in each area or Provide dry erase markers for them to create the animals with.

Animal Sorting

Materials needed: Wild Animal sorters/Jungle sorters; bowls
Allow the children to investigate and sort, compare and count the animals into bowls by the different attributes they observe (land/air/water; small/large; etc.)
Music & Move

5 Little Monkeys Swinging From A Tree
Print, laminate and hang the song poster from this packet. Sing this song with the children while acting it out!

Jungle Drums
Create drums with the children using different recyclable materials such as oatmeal containers, coffee cans, boxes, etc.
Use the drums to teach different tempos and/or patterns. Hard/soft; 2 taps/4 taps; etc.

Jungle Animal Dance
Show pictures of jungle animals to the children. Ask them how they think that animal moves. Play music and encourage them to move like that animal while making the sounds it makes. Continue with each animal you have pictures of. (See list of Jungle animal names in the Miscellaneous section).

Sand & Water

Jungle Floor
Put soil, grass, rocks, twigs, branches and jungle animals in your sensory table.

Jungle Mud
Mix equal amounts of cornstarch and water to your bin. Add some green paint or food coloring to the water first. This goop is pretty cool! Try adding wild animals to the table as well!
Magnifiers, Maps & More

Provide magnifying glasses and leaves, twigs, sand, soil, branches, and other items related to jungles (snake skins would be cool!). Also, provide laminated maps for the children to explore.

Finding the Scent
Provide jars or bowls with cotton balls in each that are scented with different items. (vanilla, cinnamon, etc.). I’ve used film canisters (you can still find them on Amazon…check these out!). Animals use their sense of smell to find their food or determine what is around them! Ask them if they can identify the smells!

Extension: Create 2 jars of each smell for them to try to match by smell.

Map Creating
Encourage the children to make a treasure map or a map of the classroom! Use Do-A-Dots, markers, pencils, etc. Provide wrinkled brown grocery bags for thicker "map" paper!

Jungle Creatures!
African Jungles: baboons, bonobos, bush babies, chimpanzees, colobus, crowned eagles, gorillas, gray parrots, jungle elephants, leopards, mambas, mandrills, Nile crocodiles, okapis, rock pythons, termites, tiger fish

Asian Jungles: Betta fish (fighting fish), black eagles, Burmese pythons, cobras, flying fox bats, gibbons, jungle cockatoos, jungle elephants, langur monkeys, leopards, macaques, orangutans, salt water crocodiles, sloth bears, Sumatran rhinoceros, sun bears, tarsiers, tigers.
Print and laminate all of these pieces. Use a dry erase marker to print the month on the card below (after you have laminated it). You can then erase and use again any month you’d like!

There is NO pattern to this month’s numbers. I’ve included a picture of a different Jungle creature and printing its name & which Jungle they are found in (Asia or Africa)

Tiger (Asia)
Calendar Pieces Jungle Theme

1. Chimpanzee (Africa)
2. Bush Baby (Africa)
3. Burmese Python (Asia)
4. Bonobo (Africa)
5. Baboon (Africa)
6. Black Eagle (Asia)

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Calendar Pieces Jungle Theme

Gorilla (Africa) 7  
Flying Fox Bat (Asia) 8  
Crowned Eagle (Africa) 9  
Gibbons (Asia) 10  
Cobra (Asia) 11  
Colobus (Africa) 12  

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Calendar Pieces Jungle Theme

Gorilla (Africa)  13  Jungle Cockatoos (Asia)  14  Langur Monkeys (Asia)  15

Jungle Elephant (Asia and Africa)  16  Gray Parrot (Africa)  17  Leopard (Asia and Africa)  18

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Tarsier (Asia)

25

Sun Bear (Asia)

26

Sumatran Rhinoceros (Asia)

27

Sloth Bear (Asia)

28

Salt Water Crocodile (Asia)

29

Rock Python (Africa)

30
Jungle Life
File Folder Game

How to make the file folder game:

- Print out all pages.
- Cut out game title and the instructions from this page.
- Glue title onto tab of file folder & instructions on the front.
- Attach the large cards to the inside of a file folder.
- Laminate the animals and critters and place in envelope.

Instructions:
Children place each animal and critter where they think it lives or sleeps!

Variation: Remember that some will be found in multiple areas such as:
Monkeys swing in the trees but also run on the ground!

Print duplicates of the animals/critters to play a matching game!
3-4 cups flour  1 cup salt  2 cups hot water  
2 tsp oil  variety of colors of tempera paint

1. Mix 2 cups of the flour and all the salt together.
2. Add hot water and oil.
3. Stir.
4. Add more flour as needed until correct consistency.
5. Separate dough into small balls. (Enough for each child to have one)
6. Without children looking, open each ball and add a few drops of paint in the middle and then close the balls up again.
7. Give each child one ball of playdough. Tell them to squish and knead it to make it turn into a color.
8. Encourage them to share colors with each other!
9. Make an extra batch of this playdough with the children to use later in the week with the Snake Pit or the Water, Land, Air activity mats in this packet.

This texture is fun. It works a little like putty in that as you stretch it, it shrinks a bit.

Use this playdough by itself or with the activity mats in this packet!

Recipe makes enough for 8 children.
Activity/ Playdough Mats

On the next 2 pages you’ll find the activity mats for this month! Print and laminate them before use. The first is called **Snake Pit**.

Snakes tend to live in large groups together to keep warm. Python, however, (which are common in the Jungle) are pretty solitary! They lay hundreds of eggs and wrap around them to keep the eggs warm until they hatch! Encourage your children to make Snakes and snake eggs in this Snake Pit!

The second is called **Water, Land, Air**.
For this mat, encourage your children to create their own playdough Jungle animals and then place them in the area they would live!

As with most activity mats, there are additional ways to use them!

1. For The Snake Pit, provide dry erase markers for children to create snakes.
2. For Water, Land, Air: Print out and laminate small pictures of Jungle animals for the children to discuss and place where each animal would live. (You can find and print your own OR use the calendar pieces in this packet).

*(Skills: muscle development; fine motor control; eye-hand coordination, sets & classifying; sorting, color recognition, measuring)*

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Snake Pit! Create your own snakes! And, create snake eggs for your snakes to keep warm and hatch!
Song Card & Song Poster

How to use:

• Print and laminate the song card below (it is 5” X 3”).
• Place in a can or box with other cards of songs your children love!
• In transitional times (waiting to go outside or wash hands, etc.), pull out your song box or song can (I use a decorated coffee can!).
• Shuffle the cards in your hands saying “Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle” and your children yell “STOP”!
• When they yell stop, whichever card is on top is the one you sing! The kids LOVE this!

Each month you’ll receive one of these cards that correspond with the song poster for the month to add to your Song Card Collection!

On the next page, you’ll find the Song Poster! Print and laminate for use over the years!

5 Little Monkeys Swinging In A Tree
5 little monkeys
swinging in a tree,
Teasing Mr. Crocodile:
"You can’t catch me!
You can’t catch me!"
Along came Mr. Crocodile
quiet as could be and... SNAP!
Thank you so much for being a member of THE PRESCHOOL PLAN IT TEACHER CLUB!!

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Have ideas for future Teacher Club Themes? Click Here to send me a note!

Thanks! ~Miss Cheryl

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