

Lesson Plan: Make a Nest, Make a Promise

Inspired by FEN, a show by Orla Clogher

Age Group 4-8 years old

Curriculum Links

SPHE (Wellbeing)
SESE (Science – Living Things; Geography – Habitats)
Visual Arts (Construction & Nature Materials)

Learning Outcomes (SMART targets)

By the end of the session, pupils will be able to:

Identify that a Curlew is a wading bird which nests on the ground
Identify and select suitable natural materials to create a nest structure.
Work collaboratively to build a small nest within a 15–20 minute activity.
Describe how it might feel to be a bird protecting eggs, showing empathy for wildlife.
Contribute one personal “Promise to Nature” (optional- you can write or draw your promise!)

Materials Needed

Natural materials: twigs, moss, leaves, grasses, feathers, soft bark, other options; wool, pipe cleaners, cotton wool
paper plates (optional base)
Glue or string (optional, for younger children)
Crayons, pencils or markers

Step 1: Reflecting on the Story of FEN (10–15 mins)

Gather the children in a circle and invite a quiet moment of reflection.
Begin with something like:

“Do you remember FEN and the Little Fox? They took us on a journey into the wetland – a soft, wild place where birds nest, bugs buzz, and curlews sing.”

Ask open questions (encourage one-word or short answers):

What did you see during the show?
What did you hear?
How did it make you feel?
If you could use one word to describe the show, what would it be?

Then move into the nesting theme:

“Do you remember what FEN found hidden in the grass?”
What was in the nest?
Why are nests important?
How are nests made?
Are all nests made the same?
How do birds make such good nests using only their beaks and feet?



Do you know what kind of bird was in the show? Show illustration of a curlew from resource booklet.

If no answers:

"This is a curlew. She's a special bird called a wading bird. That means she has long legs and a long beak, so she can walk in muddy places and look for food. Curlews also make their nests right on the ground, hidden in the grass, instead of up in trees!"

"Today, we're going to try it ourselves. Let's make our own nests – gentle, safe, and wild, just like the ones in the story."

Step 2: Build a Nest (20–30 mins)

Children explore and build their nests using natural materials.

They can work alone or in pairs.

Let them choose: soft, strong, small, big – what would a bird like?

Encourage experimentation: Be the bird! "What happens if you add more moss? Can it hold an egg?"

Step 3: Reflect and Share (10–15 mins)

Gather again in a circle, display the nests in a shared space. Invite a few children to share their nest:

"What did you use to make your nest?" "Would it be cosy for an egg?"

Play the curlew call (optional – QR code from pack) and invite a moment of stillness.

"Let's imagine the curlew resting in one of our nests. Listen... can you hear her call?"

"Could we make a promise to the curlew to do something nice for nature?"

examples:

"I promise to not throw rubbish on the ground."

"I promise to be kind to animals and insects"

"I promise to walk carefully where nature lives."

Place nests on display.

