



Murre Egg Drop

Topic:	Murre eggs are shaped to roll in a tight circle that enable them to remain in cliffside nests.
Method:	Children use their imagination and ingenuity to design a survival strategy for their egg treasure.
Time/Age:	20-40 minutes/10 - 16 years old
Background:	Murres are seabirds that remain in the ocean for most of the year. Like all birds though, they must return to land to raise their young. Murres prefer rocky cliffs to lay their single egg on the bare rock without a nest. These rocky cliffs make it difficult for predators to steal the egg. Murre eggs are pointed at one end, which makes them roll around in a circle, if disturbed. This is a perfect adaptation when any mishap could cause their egg to fall off the rocky cliffs into the ocean below.
Materials:	Murre Egg photo, one chicken egg per group, wide variety of scrap material for children to protect their egg, step ladder, certificates
Procedure:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give the group an introduction to murres and how they choose seaside cliffs to lay their eggs on the bare rock. Show the group a picture of a murre egg and explain how this shape will make the egg roll in a tight circle. Ask the students: "What is the advantage of having your egg roll in a tight circle? Answer: It can stay on narrow ledges.2. Split the class into small groups (about 2-3 students per group). Explain to the students that each group will be given an egg. They are just like murres and lay their eggs on the sides of cliffs. But our eggs don't roll in a tight circle. The students must design and create some protective device to put around their egg to protect it from a fall.

3. Give each group a chicken egg and 15-20 minutes to create a protective layer for their egg.
4. After every group has completed their protective device, bring the group back together.
5. Explain to the students that the top of the step ladder is our cliff face, where their next is located. One by one, each group will give the leader their egg and protective device. The leader will take it to the top of the step ladder and roll it out of the nest to the floor below.
6. The groups that created devices that protect the egg from this test are the winner.
7. Award every group with a certificate. Successful ones get the Survival Egg, while broken eggs get the Broken Egg Award.

Conclusion:

Murre eggs are specially designed to roll in a tight circle, reducing the chances of them falling off cliffs. But there are other threats to a murre's survival. What could be some human caused threats that could endanger these seabirds called murre? Only by eliminating these additional threats can we be ensured that our seaside cliffs will continue to be populated by murre and their specially designed eggs.

Extension:

Have children think of how different bird eggs are shaped or colored for protection. Can they think of different adaptations that enable bird eggs to survive?