



Interactive Workshop: All About Dolphins DolphinProject.com



Appropriate for Grades K-6

Engage students by sharing why you support the work of Ric O'Barry's Dolphin Project.

Kids can sit in a circle, or at their desks. The idea is to have a warm and receptive environment that encourages questioning and sharing.

Part 1: Introductory Questions

"Do you love dolphins?"

"Who has been to a dolphin show?"

"What did you think of the show?"

"Did the animals seem happy?"

"Who has swam with a captive dolphin or who wants to?"

"How do you think the trainers get the dolphins to do tricks or to swim with you?"

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Part 2: Dolphin Facts, and Wild vs Captive Dolphins

These can be projected onto a screen or written on a blackboard.

- * Dolphins are self-aware mammals. Do you know what makes them mammals?
Answer: Dolphins are warm-blooded and breathe air.
- * Dolphins are not automatic breathers. Do you know what that means?
Answer: Dolphins have to make a conscious effort to breathe.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins can live 40-50 years. Some orcas (the largest species of dolphins) have been recorded to be over 100 years old.
Captive: Dolphins' lifespans are shortened, often by decades. A wild environment cannot be recreated in captivity. Often, captive dolphins die from stress and opportunistic infections.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins swim upwards of 50 miles a day in the open ocean. Some species are migratory and swim much further.
Captive: Dolphins can only swim in endless circles, often causing physical deformities to the animals, as well as emotional and mental distress.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins hunt live fish and squid, with the pod using many different techniques to hunt their prey.
Captive: Dolphins are fed dead fish, often "fortified" with vitamins and medicines to supplement their nutrition.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins have complex social structures and will often stay together for life.
Captive: Dolphins are separated from their families and put together in tiny tanks, creating unnatural social groups.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins have their own language and ways of communicating, each with their own personality and individual signature whistle (similar to a human name).
Captive: Dolphins in captivity come from all regions, and often cannot communicate with one another.
- * *Wild:* Dolphins live in an acoustic world, and navigate their environment via sonar, or echolocation.
Captive: Dolphins cannot echolocate in captivity, as their sonar bounces off glass and plastic like a house of mirrors, providing them with false data.

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Part 3: Being a Dolphin

A. Ask students to stand with their arms by their sides, instructing them to take a few breaths to get focused. Next, ask them to walk around the room and when you say "FREEZE," they are to freeze into the shapes you are going to call out. Tell them to make these shapes as BIG as possible, holding the pose for five seconds, then they are to walk around again until you call out the next shape.

These shapes are:

- * dolphin
- * elephant
- * giraffe
- * polar bear
- * tiger

B. Tell students the exercise will be repeated, but this time, they are to look like a CAPTIVE version of these animals. Ask students what it would be like to be in a tank or cage. Repeat section **A**.

C. Instruct students to imagine how dolphins feel in captivity, taken from their families and put together in tiny tanks. Explain that everyone speaks a different language and often cannot understand one another. Many dolphins become sick from stress.

D. Instruction:

- When you blow a whistle once, students have to turn around in a circle.
- When you blow it twice, students have to run around the room gracefully while waving one hand like a flipper.
- When you blow it three times, students must jump up and down ten times.

Ask students: How did this make you feel? Silly? Annoyed? What if you were given a treat each time you did it? How would you feel then?

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Part 4: Watch

Ask students to either sit on the floor or at their desks. Explain you are going to show them PSA's – Public Service Announcement Videos as well as some trailers for recommended films.

I HEART DOLPHINS -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a511p4ccpJ4&feature=youtu.be>

KIDS PSA - <https://vimeo.com/36356768>

CELEBRITY PSA - <https://vimeo.com/29535660>

THE COVE TRAILER - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KRD8e20fBo>

BLACKFISH TRAILER - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLOeH-Oq_1Y

Part 5: Guided Visualization

Ask students to lie down and close their eyes. Explain they will now have a chance to pretend they are wild dolphins, swimming free in the ocean.

* Breathe in and out five times, very slowly. Allow your mind to clear and forget all the things of the day. Imagine floating off the floor and into a blue sky. Underneath you is a brilliant blue, warm ocean.

* You are a dolphin, swimming with your pod members who are also your family. Imagine this as you take a big breath and then dive deep down into the water. The ocean is cooler the deeper you swim, and warmer when you near the surface.

* You see fish ahead and with your sonar, you catch a fish.

* You are playing with your family, jumping and splashing in the ocean, under the sun.

* You hear an engine and the whole pod swims to the surface. You see a boat full of happy people. The sound of children laughing makes you want to jump high and flip and play.

* Eventually the sun starts to set. You are very happy. You are a wild and free dolphin, surrounded by your family. You see fins above you and below you.

* Enjoy this feeling. Smile.

* Slowly wiggle your fingers and toes, and open your eyes when you are ready.

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Part 5: Final Question

Ask: "Show of hands – who wants to go to a dolphin show now?"

Thank students and suggest they follow Dolphin Project on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to learn how to get involved and help dolphins. Most important, ask that they take the pledge not to buy a ticket to a dolphin show!

Dolphin Project Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ricobarrysdolphinproject/>

Dolphin Project Twitter: https://twitter.com/Dolphin_Project

Dolphin Project Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/dolphin_project/

Authored by Vicki Kiely, Dolphin Project Senior Cove Monitor

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