

Mer Academy Week III, 25-29 June 2007



MEL FISHER MARITIME HERITAGE SOCIETY

Young Navigator

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MEL FISHER MARITIME MUSEUM
Education Department

MER ACADEMY

2007



FLORIDA
State Parks
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MEL FISHER
MARITIME HERITAGE
SOCIETY



Cameron and Zuzanka prepare research on the different types of coral to share with their group.

THEME FOR THE WEEK

Unlocking the Mysteries of the Coral Reef



“For in the end, we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.”

- Baba Dioum

We studied the food chain of a coral reef by playing a game of food chain tag. Each student played a role within the food chain—zooplankton, coral, parrot fish, shark, and disease/pollution. Students had to avoid their predators while attempting to collect food cards from their prey; it was interesting to discuss who was left at the end of the game and why.

Students worked in teams to survey the biodiversity found at the beach. Partners snorkeled and tallied the different flora and fauna they found, created graphs illustrating their results, and presented their finds to the group. During our field trip aboard *The Discovery*, the students were able to use their knowledge of fish and coral identification to track what they saw and report their surveys to the group.

We ended the week by creating posters advertising what we know is harming coral reefs and what people can do to protect the reef.



Madison, Tessa, and Sophie learn about what is harming the reef, and how they can work to protect it, through a game of Coral Reef Jenga.



Hannah presents information on fish identification alongside Brian, coordinator of education for Reef Relief.



We reenacted a coral reef food chain; here, Mason, acting as a parrotfish, attempts to dodge his predator while collecting food cards from his prey.



Patrick, Eric, and Tessa show off their chocolate and marshmallow model of coral polyps.

This week Mer Academy students investigated the question, “How can we use our knowledge of coral reefs to help save them?” We began the week by studying the building blocks of coral reefs. The students created their own coral polyp models using marshmallows (representing the body of the coral polyp), chocolate (representing the hard calcium carbonate that forms the skeleton of the coral reef), sprinkles (representing the zooxanthellae living in the coral’s tissues), and licorice (representing the tentacles of the coral belonging to the Phylum Cnidaria).

Next, we studied some inhabitants of coral reefs. Brian, education coordinator for Reef Relief, visited camp to share his knowledge of what kinds of animals live on a reef and what elements are endangering reefs. He ended his visit by leading us in a rousing game of fish identification bingo.



Patrick and Kevin use tools, pictures of fish, and food to investigate how fishes’ mouths are individualized to their eating styles.



Aboard *The Discovery* students observe life on a coral reef.



**MEL FISHER MARITIME
HERITAGE SOCIETY**

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The Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization existing for the purpose of accumulating and disseminating information by providing educational services to the public on maritime and colonial activity in the New World and preserving maritime cultural resources. It fulfills its mission through study, education, exhibition and publication.