



"Jet Fuel For The Imagination!"



"The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket"

This show introduces the planets of the solar system. Two imaginative children turn an old fridge carton into a rocket ship and, accompanied by a talking astronomy book, they visit the sun, the moon, and the nine planets, learning a few facts about each along the way.

The immersive environment of the planetarium is really effective here, with awe-inspiring panoramas and/or full-dome pictures of each planet. The endearing characters, numerous hair-raising animated rocket sequences, and launch countdowns keep the learning fun. The show also contains a strong message about using books and libraries, and developing imagination.

Some key points introduced in The Secret of the Cardboard Rocket:

- The names of the planets; their order out from the sun; and the appearance of each one
- The sun is a star
- Basic properties of the planets, e.g. rocky or gas; temperature; other selected features e.g.

- density (Saturn); Great Red Spot (Jupiter); rotation axis tipped on side (Uranus)
- Earth is unique in the solar system
- Using books and imagination can take you on all kinds of exciting adventures!

Other activities

- Make your own cardboard rocket (or draw a picture)
- Fun quiz
- Creative writing (choose one part of the show (e.g. flying through the cloud tops of Jupiter) and write about what it's like as if you were there in the cardboard rocket)
- Draw pictures of the planets
- In groups make a fact sheet about each planet. Include its number out from the sun (e.g. Earth is the third planet from the sun), its composition; its size; and the moons orbiting around it.
- In the show, each planet has its own theme music. Write/play 1 minute of music or sound effects for one of the planets, or the sun, or the moon. Try to make the effects you use reflect something about the planet: does your planet have swirling clouds? Is it freezing cold or sizzling hot? Does it have thousands of impact craters?

Fun quiz (1) (uses information all from show)

1. How many planets are in the solar system?
2. How many stars are in the solar system?
3. Which planets are called the gas giants?
4. Which planet is so light that it would float in water if you could find an ocean big enough to float it in?
5. What are the "rocky midgets"?
6. Which is the smallest planet?
7. Why is Mars colored red?
8. Write down four things that Earth has that the other planets don't.
9. Which planet orbits the sun tipped over on its side?
10. Which planet is the biggest one of all?
11. Which planet is famous for a huge system of crumbly rock and ice orbiting in rings around it?

Fun quiz (2) (uses extra information, to find out or extend)

1. Apart from nine planets, what else is in the solar system?
2. Which planets in the solar system do NOT have moons orbiting around them?
3. Which planet takes the most time to orbit around the sun once?
4. Which planet takes the least time to orbit around the sun once?
5. Think about the planet Saturn: do you think it orbits the sun once in a time longer than [question 3], in a time longer than [question 4], or in a time somewhere between 3 and 4. Why?