Our Wonderful Water Cycle

1st and 2nd Grade

Objectives

- Students will identify and explain the stages of the water cycle.
- Students will understand evaporation, condensation and precipitation.

Materials Needed

- Slow cooker with lid
- Water
- Metal fasteners
- Water Cycle Spinner
- Posterboard or chart paper
- Marker
- Crayons
- Scissors

Introduction

Set up a slow cooker in the front of the room (out of reach of students) and pour water into it. Set the temperature on high and ask students to observe what happens when the water heats up. (They will see steam rising.)

Next, place a lid over the top and ask them what they think will happen to the water that is rising. (It will gather together on the lid.)

Finally, ask students to predict what will happen to the water droplets on the inside of the lid when you lift the lid off of the pot. (They will drip downward.)

Tell students that you have just demonstrated a process called the water cycle.

Procedure

1. Write the words *evaporation*, *condensation* and *precipitation* on the board. Explain that evaporation is water vapor traveling up into the air, condensation is water droplets forming into clouds and precipitation is water falling to the ground as rain, snow or hail.
2. Teach students this simple song about the water cycle. (You may want to write the lyrics on posterboard or chart paper, or provide students with a copy.) Demonstrate the hand motions and encourage students to act out the steps of the water cycle as they sing.

The Water Cycle Song

(Sing to the tune of "Itsy Bitsy Spider.")

You know the water cycle

Makes water move around!

Evaporation lifts water off the ground, *(Move hands up over your head.)*

Condensation forms drops into a cloud, *(Form a cloud with your hands above your head.)*

And precipitation makes them fall back down! *(Wiggle your fingers down toward the ground.)*

3. Review the terms again. Make sure students understand that during evaporation, water droplets are carried upward (as they were when the steam rose from the pot). Then the water droplets gather together (as they did on the lid of the pot) to form clouds. When the clouds get too heavy, the water falls (like the water droplets dripped from the lid).

Guided/Independent Practice

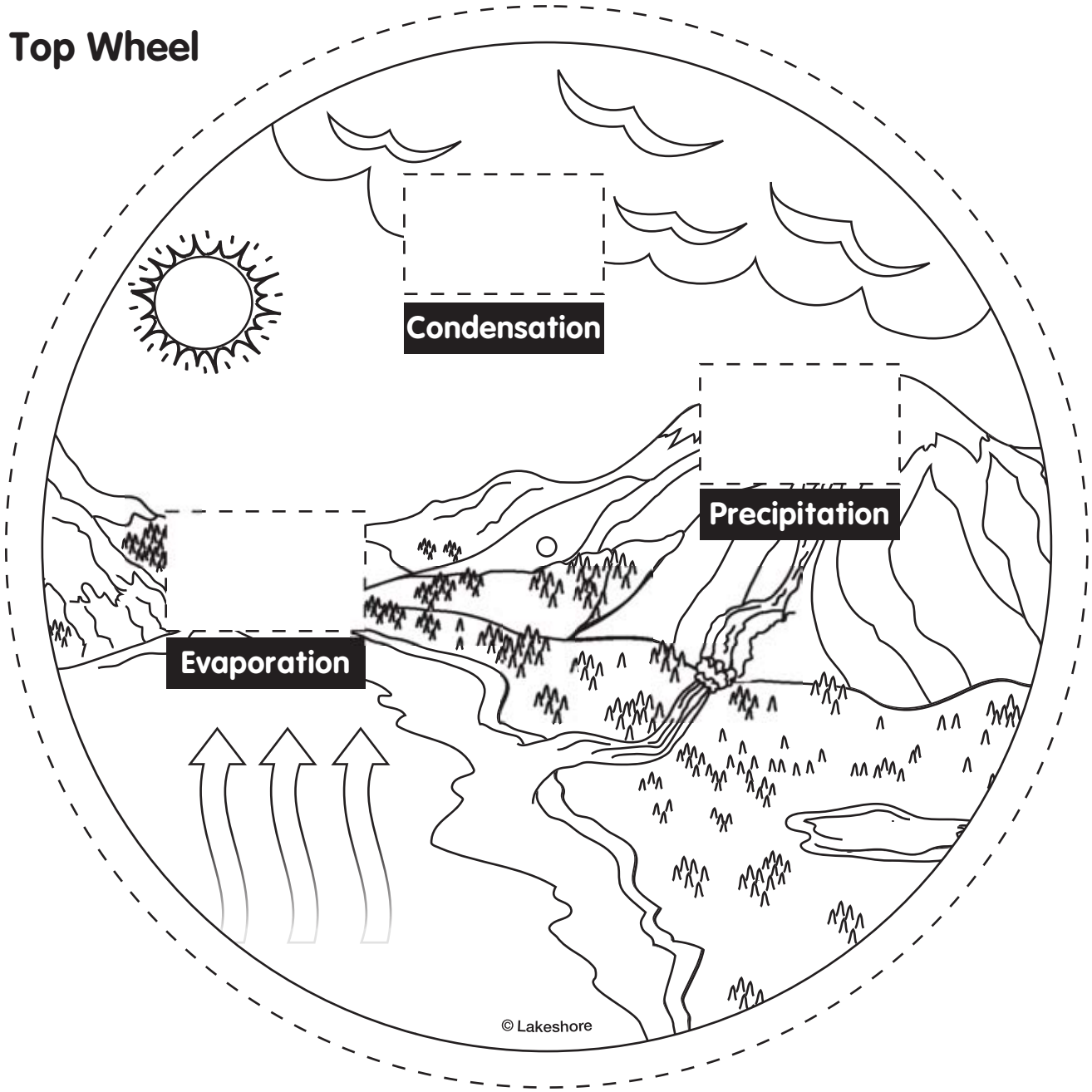
1. Have students make a Water Cycle Spinner to demonstrate the movement of the water cycle.
2. When students have completed their spinners, have them take turns demonstrating the process to a partner while explaining the steps of the water cycle. You can even sing the song again and have students point to each step on the spinner as they sing the corresponding lyrics!

Water Cycle Spinner

Directions:

1. Color both wheels and cut them out.
2. Cut along the dashed lines to create three windows on the top wheel.
3. Place the top wheel on top of the bottom wheel. Push a metal fastener through the center of both wheels and secure on back.
4. Turn the wheel to see the water cycle in action!

Top Wheel



Water Cycle Spinner

Bottom Wheel