# LESSON PLAN FOR JIM SMILEY AND HIS JUMPING FROG

**Concept or Topic:** Fun with Frogs  
**Suggested Grade Level:** Pre-Kindergarten: Ages 3 -5 year old

**Subject:** Multidisciplinary  
**Suggested Time Frame:** Parent/Child Group Meeting, 60 – 90 minutes

**Objective:** Children will exhibit knowledge of frogs through use of language, motor, social and intellectual skills at each of five interactive stations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State Standards: Missouri Pre-K Standards</th>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy: #3  Listening/receptive language – listens for different purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science: #2  Life Science</td>
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<td>a. explores characteristics of living things</td>
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<td>b. investigates characteristics of living things</td>
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<td>Social &amp; Emotional: #2  Knowledge of Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. works cooperatively with children and adults</td>
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<td>Health and Safety: #1  Physical Development and Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. uses gross motor skills with purpose and coordination</td>
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<td>Mathematics: #1  Number &amp; Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>a. uses numbers to show quantity</td>
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<td>b. uses language to represent number of objects</td>
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<td>c. solves problems using numbers</td>
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<td>d. uses numerical representation</td>
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**Assessment Options:** Parent / Child Fun With Frogs Activity Evaluation Rubric

**Vocabulary:** amphibian, egg, tadpole, froglet, frog life cycle, species, habitat, stranger, contest, disappointed, heavy, algae

**Subject Area Integration:** Four areas of early childhood development as outlined by the Parents as Teachers curriculum: language, motor, social, and intellectual

**Background Information:** Children exhibit a natural curiosity and fondness for frogs. Expanding this interest with a paraphrased, puppet-enhanced version of “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog” can begin a lifelong appreciation for the talents of Mark Twain.

**Materials:** See activities.

**Related Twain Quotes/Passages:**
- “He ketched a frog one day and took him home and said he cal’lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump.” “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog”.
- “And when it come to fair – and – square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see.” “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog”.
- “Anyways, I’ve got my opinion, and I’ll resk forty dollars that he can out-jump ary frog in Calaveras county.” “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog”.
- “It certainly had a wide celebrity . . . but I was aware that it was only the frog that was celebrated. It wasn’t I.” Mark Twain Autobiography.

**Suggested Parent/Child Follow-Up Activities:**
- “My Frog Booklet”  
- Visit local library for more frog stories.
LESSON PLAN FOR JIM SMILEY AND HIS JUMPING FROG

Technology & Resources:
http://twainquotes.com  “Jumping Frog of Calaveras County”.
“Toads and Frogs of Missouri”  (Poster) Missouri Department of Conservation
“Missouri’s Toads and Frogs”  (Pamphlet) Missouri Department of Conservation.
C. 1982.

Lesson Sequence:
Parent / Child Activity Centers (no particular order of participation)
1. “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog”  (story time)
2. Frog Pond
3. Edible Frogs
4. “Five Green Speckled Frogs”  (music activity)
5. Frog Races

Center # 1
Introduction for Parents and Children

Our event today originated from a teacher workshop about Missouri author Mark Twain. Among other things, Mark Twain wrote The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, that you may have read. He also wrote The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, which was first published in the November 18, 1865 edition of the New York Saturday Press, under the title, “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog.” It is set in a gold mining camp in Calaveras County, California and has its origins in the folklore of the Gold Rush era. It is one of Mark Twain’s earliest writings and helped establish his reputation as a humorist. Mark Twain grew up in Hannibal, Missouri and is widely known as the Father of American literature.

In the short story entitled, “Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog,” Twain tells a colorful tale about a miner, Jim Smiley, who plays tricks on both friends and strangers. He does not think about the consequences of his actions and he often treats animals cruelly to win money. Finally, another man plays a trick on Jim who learns how it feels to lose unfairly.

“Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog”
Procedure: Read slowly and with much expression. Use a frog hand puppet to dramatize.

Once there was a man named Jim Smiley who had a frog. His name was Daniel Webster. Jim trained his frog to jump by giving him flies to eat as a treat. When Jim would say “Flies, Dan’l, flies!”, the frog would jump up quick as a wink and grab a fly. He was a very good jumper. Jim was always bragging that his frog was better than anyone else’s.

One day Jim went to town with Dan’l in a box. He met a stranger. (Does anyone know what a stranger is? A stranger is someone you don’t know …)

The stranger said, “What might it be that you’ve got in the box?”

And Jim answered, “It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain’t – it’s only just a frog.”

“Well”, said the stranger, “What’s he good for?”

Jim smiled. “He’s good enough for one thing I should judge – he can out-jump any frog in Calaveras County.” (That’s where they lived)

The stranger just shook his head. “Well, I’m only stranger here,” he said, “and I ain’t got no frog – but if I had a frog I’d bet you” . . . ‘that my frog could out jump your frog.’

“I’ll go and get you a frog” says Jim – and we’ll have a contest! (What is a contest? A contest is another name for game that you play with someone becoming the winner.)

Off went Jim to find another frog.

While he was gone, the stranger picked up Dan’l Webster and gave him a rock to eat. (Dan’l thought it was just a big fly.) Then he gave Dan’l another rock, and another rock, and another rock, until the frog was full of rocks.

Soon Jim got back with the other frog and the jumping contest began. Jim said, “Flies, Dan’l, flies!”, but Dan’l didn’t move. “Flies, Dan’l, flies!” But Dan’l didn’t move.

The stranger’s frog moved, though. He was scared, and he jumped away! He won the contest! (Why did he win? He jumped further than Dan’l.)

‘Well’, said the stranger, ‘I guess your frog isn’t a good jumper after all’, and off he went.

Jim was very disappointed. (What does disappointed mean? Disappointed is a feeling of being sad, because you didn’t get something.) Why didn’t Dan’l jump? (Encourage answers from the children.)

Jim picked up his frog. Dan’l was very heavy. (What does heavy mean? Heavy means hard to pick up/ weighs a lot.) He was too heavy to jump!

Jim turned the frog upside down and out came the rocks. When he put Dan’l back on the ground and said, “Flies, Dan’l, flies!” the frog jumped high into the air! Dan’l was a good jumper, when he wasn’t eating rocks.

And then Jim gave Dan’l some flies to eat.

The End

Center # 2
**Frog Pond**

**Materials:** plastic kids pool, lumber board to represent land area, several larger rocks, a small log section, several frogs, sticks, leaves, grass earthworms and dead insects for the frogs to eat.

**Procedure:** Provide a temporary land/aquatic environment (kid size plastic pool) for children to observe actions and characteristics of live frogs. Place rocks, board, log section, sticks, leaves, grass, earthworms and/or dead insects in the pool area, along with several frogs to create a frog habitat. Children will enjoy observing frog behavior and may touch or briefly handle a frog. Teachers assist as parents will read the Parent Handout: A Frog’s Life and present a brief explanation to their child about the frog’s life cycle. Parents will also have a discussion with their child about what he/she experienced at this center.

**Parents as Teachers**
Parent Handout
(for Center #2)

A Frog’s Life

Missouri is home to many kinds (species) of frogs. These colorful and harmless little creatures live in our forests, grasslands, wetlands (alongside and in creeks, streams, ponds, marshes and rivers), and even in our own backyards. Frogs have smooth, wet skin and tiny teeth. Frogs have strong back legs and are great jumpers! Big bullfrogs can jump as far as 6 feet. The longest jump for a frog is 11 feet.

A frog is an amphibian, meaning that they live two lives. During the tadpole stage, they live in the water and, as an adult, frogs live on the land and in the water. The female frog lays her eggs singly in clumps or as a film of eggs on the surface of the water. The eggs develop into tadpoles.

Tadpoles have gills (for breathing) like fish and eat algae. Tadpoles develop hind legs and then front legs, as their tail becomes smaller. They soon lose their gills, develop lungs, and go to the water’s surface to breathe air. In the final stage, as a froglet, their tail disappears as they change from a life under the water to a life on land, or alongside the edge of a pond or stream. Froglets grow quickly into adult frogs and begin eating insects, spiders, and worms.

Frogs are important to the world, because they help control the insects. Frog legs are also good to eat! Some of Missouri’s common frogs are the Northern Spring Peeper, Green Tree Frog, Gray Tree Frog, Plains Leopard Frog, Bullfrog, and Green Frog.
Edible Frogs

Materials: cups, paper plates, napkins, milk, small pitchers, Rice Krispie treats, frog cookie cutter

Procedure: Have green Rice Krispie treats made in cookie sheets, approximately ½ inch thick. Allow each child to use a frog cookie cutter to cut 1 or 2 frogs. Provide child-sized pitchers of milk available for each child to pour their own drink. Encourage taking turns, sharing and using manners.

Recipe: 10 ounce package of marshmallows
½ cup margarine
7 ½ cups Rice Krispies
Green food coloring


Center # 4
“Five Green Speckled Frogs”

Materials: 5 paper plate frog puppets.
Procedure: The children will hold up the five paper plate puppets. As they sing the song, they will demonstrate their knowledge of number awareness by removing one puppet after each verse.

Song: “Five Green Speckled Frogs”

Five green speckled frogs
Sitting on a speckled log.
Eating the most delicious bugs. YUM, YUM!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are four green speckled frogs!

Four green speckled frogs
Sitting on a speckled log.
Eating the most delicious bugs. YUM, YUM!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are three green speckled frogs!

Three green speckled frogs
Sitting on a speckled log.
Eating the most delicious bugs. YUM, YUM!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are two green speckled frogs

Two green speckled frogs
Sitting on a speckled log.
Eating the most delicious bugs. YUM, YUM!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there is one green speckled frog!

One green speckled frog
Sitting on a speckled log.
Eating the most delicious bugs. YUM, YUM!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool.
Now there are no green speckled frogs!

Center # 5
Frog Races

**Materials:** flour, tape, M & M’s, raisins.

**Procedure:** Mark alley ways with “start” and “finish” lines by using flour (for outside activity) or masking tape (for inside activity). Demonstrate jumping in upright and crouched (frog) positions. Allow children to jump as they choose. Take turns having children race against each other, rewarding all frogs (children) with flies (M & M’s or raisins) as they cross the finish line.
Carefully color the diagrams that show the stages of development of a frog. You can learn them, too. Find books on frogs in the library.

This takes four months.
PARENT / CHILD FUN WITH FROGS ACTIVITY EVALUATION RUBRIC

To Be Completed By Parent of Child Attending Group Meeting

Place check above number that best describes your child's performance during the activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Attention to Activity:</strong> Your child focused and gave attention to the activity.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Problem Solving:</strong> Your child found new and used suggested methods for discovering science concepts.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<th><strong>Science Concepts:</strong> Your child grasped the science concepts presented.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<th><strong>Attitude:</strong> Your child demonstrated a positive attitude during the activity.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<th><strong>Contribution:</strong> Your child asked questions and / or answered questions about the vocabulary and concepts presented.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<th><strong>Enjoyment:</strong> Your child enjoyed the activity.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Age Appropriate:</strong> The activity was age appropriate for your child.</th>
<th>Less than Satisfactory</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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