

illustration: JOËLLE JOLIVET

A walk down the beach can be sensory delight – the hues of the sun and the water; the saltiness in the air; the tingling sensation of sand against the foot, the sound of crashing waves. It is also a great place for people watching. An Indian beach has more to offer – including fishing boats, the merry-go-round, food stalls and much more.

An Indian Beach, a never-ending picture book by Joëlle Jolivet captures the rich medley of sights that is the south Indian beach. It can be flipped open liked a 'normal' book, a page at a time; or opened out into a big circle or rectangle. Whether you 'read' the book or move around it, you will find yourself looking at the beach, as it appears at different times of the day – with different people doing different things, depending on whether it is morning or afternoon, evening or night.

Children are bound to find something new each time they come to the book – but here is a list of activities, which will help them find their way through the beach.

OBSERVE AND DISCUSS

1. The beach is full of people. Some work and live at/near the beach, whereas some are visitors. Ask the children to look at all the various people shown in the book, and respond to questions such as these:

Who is doing what? Who works, who plays? What are the different kinds of work that people are doing (fishing, driving, selling etc.)? What kind of work are men engaged in? What kind of work are women engaged in? Can you categorize the activities based on the time of the day?

2. Encourage children to pick out one character from the book and build a story around them. Let them give him or her a name, and based on what the pictures tell us, come up with details about the character's background, work. They could be asked to imagine how a day in his or her life is likely to unfold.

3. Invite children to share experiences of the beaches they have gone to – either in their neighbourhood or one they have recently visited. What is their favourite beach activity? How different is that beach from this one in the book? Encourage children to think beyond the obvious responses like, 'the beach is dirty' or 'the sand is hot.'

4. This south Indian beach has many food stalls – these stalls sell what is known as street food. What are the stalls selling? Have children eaten these snacks anywhere else? What do they eat when they go to the beach? Does their favourite beach have a snack that cannot be had elsewhere?

5. The houses near the beach are built using different materials. Direct the children's attention to the walls and roofs in the images and list the various materials used to build houses.

6. Observe, along with the children, what time of the day in the book are shadows the strongest? Have a discussion as to why shadows change at different times of the day?

7. Ask children to list all activities associated with fishing in the book? Who does them, men or women, or both? Have they ever seen fishermen at work? What about fisher women – do they do the same thing as fishermen do?

8. Ask children to look closely at the fish in the book – their shapes, sizes, scales, fins. Can they recognize and name any of them? What are they called in their mother tongues?

9. Ask children to write out all the words they know about the sea: have a discussion on these words, and what they describe (hint: tide, foam).

ART

1. The art in this book was created using a printmaking technique called Linocut Printing where an image is carved on a linoleum surface that later gets inked and transferred onto paper or fabric. Point out some interesting things about this process:

- Linocut requires patience and a steady hand for carving.
- It prints the mirror image of the design drawn on the surface.
- It is a subtractive method where you take away the parts of the surface where you want to leave the white of the page, and keep the parts you want to be inked.

Children can get an idea about the process using potatoes:

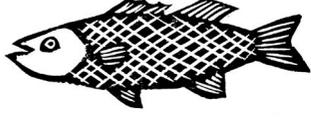
- a. Cut the potato in half.
- b. Draw a shape onto the flat cut side of the potato.
- c. Carve out the potato around the drawn shape using a blade or a knife (under adult supervision). This will leave their drawing as a solid raised stamp.
- d. Using a paint brush, cover your potato stamp with a thin layer of paint and then carefully place the potato stamp onto the fabric or paper and press down firmly to transfer the design.
- e. The stamp can be used multiple times as patterns to make gift wrapping paper, book covers, pillow cases etc.

2. Children can try putting together their own never-ending book as a group or solo activity, using time as a marker for each page. They can make it as long as they want. Some suggestions for subjects: scenes from the local market place from morning to evening, a day in the life of their pet dog/cat, festivals celebrated through the year etc.

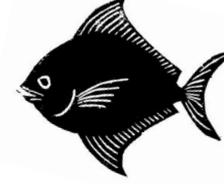
You would need to assist children in glueing pages together, and make sure that their drawings flow nicely across the pages – you could do this by using one element that connects all pages, such as a road, or a river.

HERE'S A LIST OF SOME TYPES OF FISH FROM THE BOOK.

Red Snapper
சங்கரா



Pomfret
வெளவால்



Seer Fish
வஞ்சரம்



Tuna
சூரை



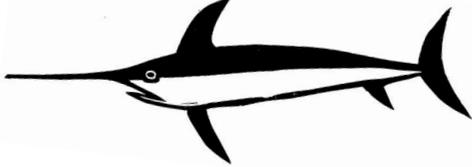
Anchovy
நெத்திலி



Cuttle Fish
கணவாய்



Flying Fish
மயில் கோலா



Eel
விலாங்கு



Barracuda
சீலா



Shark
சுறா



Sea Horse
கடல் குதிரை



Perch
கீச்சான்

