



Deep Dive

Classroom Guide

The deepest wonders are found by those brave enough to go under

CASEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Adventure

Learning Objectives

- Discover that the most amazing things are often hidden below the surface
 - Learn that going deeper (in oceans, books, friendships) reveals wonders
 - Understand ocean ecosystems and why they need protection
 - Practice courage — taking a "deep dive" into something unknown
-

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Ocean • Coral • Kelp • Bioluminescent • Seahorse • Whale • Treasure • Depth • Surface • Current

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Blue cellophane or tissue paper
- Paper and watercolors
- Sea creature templates
- Optional: nature documentary clips
- Optional: shells or sea glass

Before Reading

Connection Question

What do you think is hiding under the ocean that nobody has discovered yet?

Background Building

The ocean surface is beautiful, but the REAL magic is below. In this story, the hero starts at the shore, wades in, takes a deep breath, and dives under — into a kelp forest with dancing seahorses, a coral reef exploding with color, a whale singing a song that vibrates through your bones, and glowing creatures in the deepest dark. The deeper you go, the more extraordinary it gets.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero first dives under and sees the kelp forest** — A whole forest — underwater! What else might be hiding just below the surface of things we see every day?
- **When the hero meets the whale** — The whale is ENORMOUS but gentle. Sometimes the biggest things are the most peaceful. What does the whale's song sound like to you?
- **When glowing creatures light up the deepest dark** — Even in the darkest deep, there's light! These creatures make their OWN light. What does that remind you of?

Discussion Questions

1. The ocean looked one way from the surface and completely different underneath. What else in life looks different when you go deeper?

↳ How is this like getting to know a new friend — what's below THEIR surface?

2. The hero had to be brave to dive under. Why is going deeper sometimes scary? Why is it worth it?

↳ What's something you were nervous about trying but were glad you did?

3. Glowing creatures make their own light in the darkest place. What does it mean to "make your own light"?

↳ When things feel dark or hard, how do you create your own light?

4. The hero found treasure — but it wasn't gold. What was the real treasure?

↳ Is the real treasure ever the thing you expected?

Facilitation Tips

Use this story as a metaphor for depth: going deeper in conversations, friendships, learning. "Don't stay at the surface" is a powerful frame for classroom culture.

Emotional Payoff

Each layer of depth reveals greater wonder — the shore is nice, but the kelp forest is magical, the reef is spectacular, the whale is awe-inspiring, and the deepest dark holds its own light. The hero learns that the best things in life require the courage to go deeper.

After Reading Activities

Layers of the Ocean Mural

Duration: 20 min | Materials: Large paper, paints, sponges, sea creature cutouts

Create a class mural showing ocean layers: surface (waves, sun), shallow (kelp, fish), middle (whale, turtle), deep (glowing creatures). Each child contributes a creature to the right depth. Discuss what you find at each level.

Make Your Own Light

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Glow sticks, dark room, paper

Dim the lights. Give each child a glow stick. They are "bioluminescent creatures" making light in the dark. Discuss: what makes YOU glow? What are your strengths that light up dark moments? Write or draw your "glow."

Deep Dive Questions

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Question cards at different "depths"

Three levels of questions: Surface ("What's your name?"), Middle ("What's something you're good at?"), Deep ("What do you wish people knew about you?"). Practice going deeper in conversation. Note: deep questions are optional — no pressure.

Writing Prompts

- Draw what you imagine is at the very bottom of the ocean. What creatures live there? What do they look like?
- Write about a time you went "deeper" into something — a book, a friendship, a hobby — and found something wonderful.
- If you were a glowing creature in the dark ocean, what color would you glow? Why?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "Deep Dive," an underwater adventure about discovering that the most amazing things are hidden below the surface. Your child explored ocean layers, met gentle whales and glowing creatures, and learned that going deeper — in oceans, conversations, and learning — always reveals greater wonders.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Watch an ocean documentary clip together and discuss what surprised you most
- Practice "deep dive" conversations: start with surface questions and go deeper together
- Draw an ocean scene together — what's at the surface vs. what's hidden below?

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Snail and the Whale by Julia Donaldson
- Hello, World! Ocean Life by Jill McDonald
- Over and Under the Pond by Kate Messner
- The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister