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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

The sandpipers

"Children, have you ever seen a sandpiper?" asked the teacher. The children shook their heads. The teacher showed them a picture of a sandpiper and said, "What long legs it has for such a little bird!"

"Yes. Why do you suppose he has such long legs?" asked one of the children.

"To wade with?" guessed another.

"Yes," said the teacher. "Mr. Sandpiper lives by the side of a great piece of salt water called an ocean. The land that is close to the water is called a beach. It is sometimes rocky, but where Mr. Sandpiper lives, it is sandy. He is not very sociable, for he and his wife and the babies live where there are no other families of Sandpipers very near him. Mrs. Sandpiper makes her nest near the beach."

The teacher continued, "One day the whole family were on the beach, running up and down, and the father and mother were scratching in the loose sand and getting worms for the baby Sandpipers and for themselves to eat. Every time one of the little Sandpipers called, the father or mother put a worm into its open mouth. But the babies wanted so much food that, after a while, their mamma thought they had better learn to catch worms for themselves; so she called them and showed them how to scratch up the sand, and how to catch the worms when they were in sight."

"The Sandpiper family were having a very good time eating and playing, when suddenly they saw some men coming. Each of these men carried a gun," said the teacher.

Mamma Sandpiper was frightened and ran to her nest, and the baby Sandpipers hid under her wings. But Papa Sandpiper was afraid that the men would find them, so he made believe that he was hurt. He ran along before the men with his wings drooping, pretending to be injured, to distract them from his family. He led them along, farther and farther from his family, until he thought the men were far enough away. Then he hid from them and went back to his family as fast as he could.

The other birdies were very glad to see him safe and well, and they thanked him for saving them. They all went back to the beach, but they did not see the men again.

"What do you suppose they said?" asked the teacher.

"Peep, peep," answered the children.

