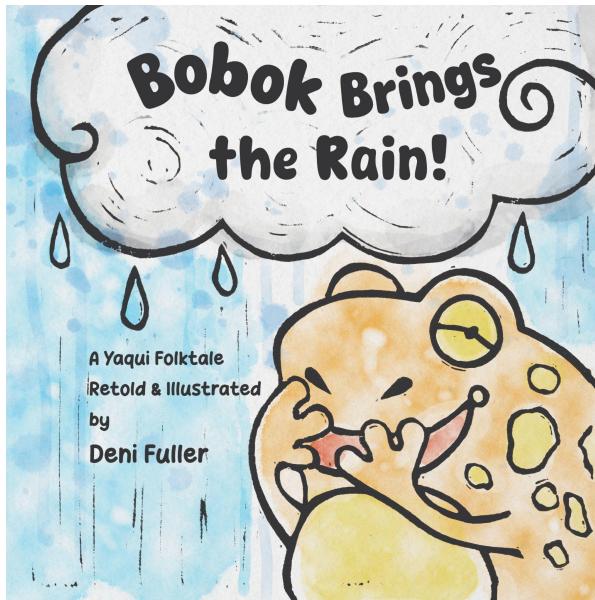


# Bobok's Rain Song: A Journey with the Yaqui Tribe



This preschool lesson plan is designed to introduce young children to the cultural heritage of the Yaqui people and the biological wonders of the Sonoran Desert Toad (represented by "Bobok" from *Bobok Brings the Rain!*).



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## Lesson Overview

- **Target Age:** 3–5 years (Preschool)
- **Objective:** Students will learn about the Yaqui tribe's connection to nature and understand why the Sonoran Desert Toad (Bobok) is a symbol of life and rain.
- **Key Themes:** Helping others, the importance of water, and desert life.

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## Materials Needed

- The book: *Bobok Brings the Rain!* by Deni Fuller.
- Photos of the Sonoran Desert Toad and the desert
- Blue ribbons or scarves (to represent rain).
- Black Construction paper and paper plates (to make "magical bat wings").
- A rain stick or a simple shaker.

## 1. Introduction: Meeting the Yaqui Tribe

- **Circle Time Greeting:** Start by teaching the children a traditional Yaqui greeting: "Lios em chania" (pronounced: lee-os em chah-nee-ah).
- **Who are the Yaqui?** Explain that the Yaqui people are indigenous to the Sonoran Desert in Arizona and Mexico. They have lived there for a very long time and believe that all parts of nature—the sun, the clouds, and even toads—work together.
- **The Thirsty Desert:** Discuss how hot the desert gets. Ask: "What do plants and animals need when they are thirsty?"

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## 2. The Story: Bobok Brings the Rain!

- **Read Aloud:** Read the story of Bobok Brings the Rain! By Deni Fuller. Focus on how Sparrow and Swallow tried their best but got scared or dizzy.
- **The Hero:** Introduce Bobok, the brave little toad who visits Great Turtle to get magical bat wings.
- **The Song:** Encourage the children to join in when Bobok sings: "Ribbit! Ribbit! Follow me, RAIN!" Explain that in Yaqui culture, as long as the toad sings, the rain continues to fall.

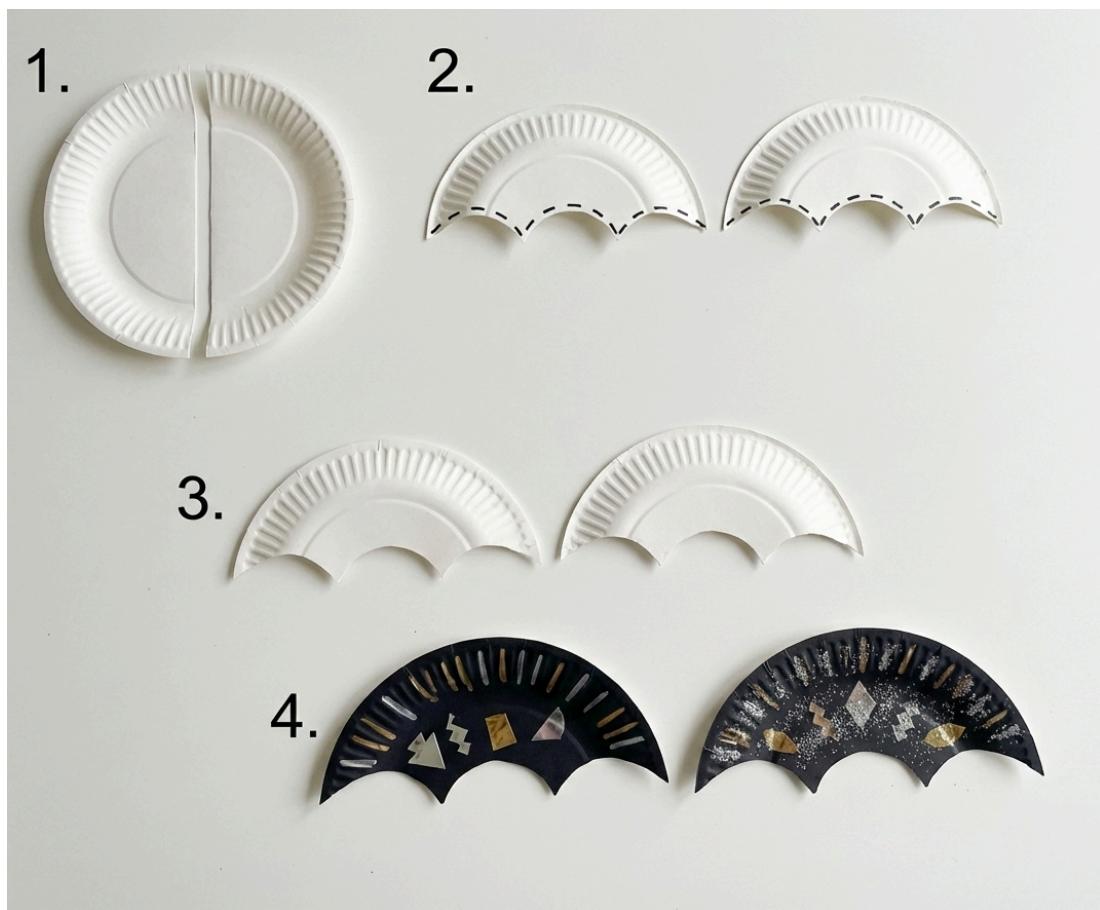
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## 3. Science Connection: Meeting "Bobok"

- **Nature Fact:** Show pictures of the Sonoran Desert Toad. Explain that real Sonoran Desert Toads like Bobok are the largest toads in North America.
- **The "Underworld" Nap:** Share that these toads hibernate underground during the dry season and "wake up" when they feel the vibration of the summer rain.
- **Renewal:** Just like in the story, the real toad's song is a sign that the desert is coming back to life.

#### 4. Activity: The Rain Dance & Song

- **Movement:** Have the children "hop" like Bobok and then use their "wings" to soar like he did in the swirling clouds while the teacher and assistants wave blue ribbons or scarves.
- **Music:** Use a rain stick to make the sound of falling water. Explain that during some Yaqui ceremonies, men mimic the "toad dance" to celebrate the coming of the rain.
- **Craft:** Let children decorate paper plate "wings" with construction paper to remember how Bobok prepared for his journey to see Yuku, the Great Rain Spirit.



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#### 5. Closing: The Gift of Rain

- **Reflection:** Ask the children: "How did Bobok help his people?"
- **Yaqui Values:** Explain that being a good helper is an important part of Yaqui culture.
- **Takeaway:** Remind them that every time they hear a toad "sing" or see rain fall, they can think of Bobok and the Yaqui people who celebrate the desert's renewal.

## Additional Information about the Sonoran Desert Toad:



### Description

- At 7 inches (18 cm) or more this is one of the largest toads native to North America.
- Adults have a uniformly greenish-gray to orange-yellow topsides of the body and creamy white undersides.
- Large white tubercles, or warts are found at the angle of the jaw, but aside from the large parotoid glands and a few large lumps on the hind legs, this species has relatively smooth skin.

### Habitat

- This toad is common in the Sonoran Desert.
- It lives in a variety of habitats including creosote bush, desert scrub, grasslands up into oak-pine woodlands, and thornscrub and tropical deciduous forests in Mexico.



## Range

- Found from Central Arizona to southwestern New Mexico and Sinaloa, Mexico.
- Historically entered southeastern California, though it has not been seen there since the 1970s.



## Life Span

- This species lives at least 10 years, and perhaps as many as 20 years.

## Prey / Food

- Sonoran Desert toads feed upon a variety of insects throughout their lives.
- Adults eat primarily beetles, although large individuals will occasionally eat small vertebrates including other toads.

## Babies / Nests

- Eggs are laid in temporary rain pools and permanent ponds.
- Larvae metamorphose after 6 to 10 weeks.

## Native American Folklore

Since ancient times Yaqui people have worshipped the toad named Bobok believing that the toad holds the power to bring the rain. Rain represents renewal, the rebirth of life to the desert they inhabit. Bobok represents a spiritual, helper figure within the traditional narratives that explain the natural world and the cultural history of the Yaqui people in Sonora, Mexico.

Every year desert monsoons bring the toads from their underworld hibernation to the earth's surface to feed and breed in the temporary pools created by these hard rains, before returning to the comfort of their underground world for another year. In one renewal ceremony, some Yaqui men will sing to Bobok and dance to celebrate life's renewal, the coming of the rain.

Yaqui people tell the story of how Bobok the Toad saved the world. They say that long ago the Yaqui people were suffering through a terrible drought. Water holes dried up, so did old wells and crops shriveled up and died.

To break this drought Yaqui elders sent Bobok to speak to Yuku, the spirit of rain who lived in the Sky World. Bobok borrowed a set of bat wings to make the journey. Bobok was successful and convinced Yuku to send rain down to the Yaqui people.

As long as Bobok continued to sing (croak) the rain would continue to fall, if he stopped so would the rain. Singing all the way down, Bobok made it safely to the Yaqui lands and so did the rain.

Since that time the toads have multiplied, and whenever they sing, the rain comes looking for the toads to bless the earth with water.

**Source:** <https://libertywildlife.org/ambassador/desis/>