

Amazing Metamorphosis

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Have you ever noticed that children's bodies don't change much as they grow into adults? You get bigger, but for the most part, your bodies work the same way when you're five as when you're fifty. Some insects, though, go through a complete metamorphosis. That means "change of form". Butterflies, for example, change their bodies completely as they mature and even their mouth parts change!

Complete metamorphosis consists of four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. In the case of butterflies, the female adult lays its eggs in a protected place, usually on a source of food. When the egg hatches, a tiny caterpillar or larva comes out. The caterpillar then eats and eats, and grows and grows, shedding its skin as it grows. If you ate as much as a Monarch caterpillar does, you'd weigh as much as a school bus just three weeks after you were born! When the larva has reached its full size, it's time for the pupal stage. The larva forms a chrysalis or pupa and inside that form, changes completely into an adult. When the change is done, the adult breaks out of the pupa and starts its life as a butterfly.

Our project this month is from the Junior Master Gardener Handbook; you'll be making a metamorphosis bracelet or belt. After everyone has finished reading this newspaper, color in and cut out the four pictures included here. You can make more pictures on regular paper if you like. Use a hole punch or the tip of your scissors to cut out the tiny circles and use colored yarn or string to tie the pictures together. Leave a few inches of extra yarn at the ends of the bracelet to tie it onto your wrist. You can add beads or extra pictures if you'd like to make it long enough for a necklace or belt.

My favorite metamorphosis story is *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle, but your library or book store will have lots of books about butterflies and other insects. Check one out!

