

Comet Quest

This activity will familiarize children and parents with the features of a comet, how they form, and where they come from in our solar system.

What You Need:

- ✎ 8 sheets of poster board in different colors
- ✎ Large print-outs of the questions and answers
- ✎ Color images related to the questions
- ✎ Cover sheets for the answers
- ✎ Glue or tape to adhere the questions to the poster board
- ✎ One Comet Quest Answer Card for each child
- ✎ Crayons or pencils or markers for each child

What to Do:

Each of the following questions should be made into a big, bold, colorful poster with related images. Make sure the answer is covered by a page labeled "lift me" that hides the answer.

Provide each child with a Comet Quest Answer Card and a crayon or pencil. Invite the parents and children to examine the posters and complete the Comet Quest!

The frozen center of a comet is called the _____?

- A. Coma
- B. Nucleus
- C. Tail
- D. All of the above

Answer:
B. Nucleus!

Comets are most commonly from which part of our solar system?

- A. Kuiper belt
- B. Black holes
- C. Saturn's rings
- D. All of the above

Answer:
A. Kuiper belt!

Comets are almost invisible except when they get near to _____?

- A. Earth
- B. The Sun
- C. A black hole
- D. All of the above

Answer:
B. Sun!

Can you name a comet that made newspaper headlines?

Possible Answers:
Hale Bopp, Comet Shoemaker-Levy, Comet Halley

Comets are made of which of the following?

- A. Dust
- B. Frozen carbon dioxide
- C. Ammonia
- D. All of the above

Answer:
D. All!

The cloud of dust and gas surrounding the solid center of a comet is called the _____?

- A. Tail
- B. Coma
- C. Nucleus
- D. All of the above

Answer:
B. Coma!

Why are comets important?

- A. They are the main source of ice cream in our solar system
- B. They are cool to watch in the night sky
- C. They contain stuff left over from the formation of our solar system 4.6 billion years ago and may provide water to planets and moons

Answer:
C. They are old and may provide water!

A comet's tail is shaped by the _____?

- A. Solar wind
- B. Moon
- C. Lots of people blowing on it
- D. All of the above

Answer:
A. Solar Wind!

Possible Images for Posters

The following links provide nice images for the posters.

Astronomy Picture of the Day Search Engine:

http://antwarp.gsfc.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/apod/apod_search

Planetary Photojournal's Small Body Images:

<http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/target/Other>

Windows to the Universe Comet Images:

http://www.windows.ucar.edu/tour/link=/comets/comet_il.html

Amazing Space – Anatomy of a Comet

<http://amazing-space.stsci.edu/news/archive/2005/02/ill-01.php>

Astronomy Picture of the Day – Comet Halley's Nucleus

<http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/ap961210.html>

Astronomy Picture of the Day – Exploring Comet Tails

<http://antwarp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap000413.html>

Space Today Online – Comet Halley

<http://www.spacetoday.org/SolSys/Comets/CometsFamous.html>

Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Top 20 Images of Comet Shoemaker-Levy

<http://www2.jpl.nasa.gov/sl9/top20.html>

COMET QUEST

A comet's tail is shaped by the ____?

Answer

Comets are made of what?

Answer

Why are comets important?

Answer

The cloud of dust and gas surrounding the solid center of a comet is called the ____?

Answer

The frozen center of a comet is called the ____?

Answer

Comets are most commonly from which part of our solar system?

Answer

Comets are almost invisible except when they get near the ____?

Answer

Can you name a comet that made newspaper headlines?

Answer
