

"The River of Life" Song

www.TheGreatStory.org/river-of-life-song.pdf

*This song was written by Connie Barlow in August 2006, to teach and celebrate our evolutionary relationship with all life on Earth. The verses are in descending order of relatedness, using scientific facts drawn from the 2004 book by Richard Dawkins, Ancestors' Tale. This song can be sung on its own, or as the culmination of the 2-hour outdoor, "**River of Life Ritual**" (www.TheGreatStory.org/ancestors-tale.html), or The River of Life kids curriculum. The ritual uses 40 stations (and the curriculum 40 lessons) below:*

(1) chimpanzees; (2) gorilla; (3) orang utan; (4) gibbons; (5) Old World monkeys; (6) New World monkeys; (7) tarsiers; (8) lemurs; (9) tree shrews; (10) rodents & rabbits; (11) Laurasiatherian mammals; (12) Xenarthran mammals; (13) Afrotherian mammals; (14) Marsupial mammals; (15) Monotreme mammals; (16) reptiles & birds; (17) amphibian; (18) lungfish; (19) coelacanth; (20) ray-finned fishes; (21) sharks; (22) lampreys & hagfish; (23) lancelets; (24) sea squirts; (25) starfish; (26) mollusks, worms, crustaceans, insects & spiders; (27) primitive flatworms; (28) jellyfish; (29) comb jellies; (30) placozoans; (31) sponges; (32) single-cell eukaryotes; (33) drips; (34) fungus; (35) amoebozoan; (36) plants & algae; (37) Giardia, diatoms, forams, & brown algae; (38) Archaea; (39) Eubacteria; (40) Origin of Life

The melody is a steady 3-count, with emphasis on count 1. There are no changes in note duration throughout. The chorus line is to be sung twice at the end of each verse. Emphasized syllables are in ALL CAPITALS. Some difficult words are spelled phonetically (eg., Xenarthran / Zee-NAR-thran).

*There are no pauses to take a breath, so we suggest singing it as a duet or by a choir in two parts. **Blue** sings the chorus line first, and then **red** sings it the second time. It is fun to sing this song while swaying side to side. The last verse is meant for religious contexts only and can be deleted for secular venues. Decide how you are going to end (see suggestions at end of song).*

*To **LISTEN TO THE TUNE** and several verses being sung, go to:*

www.thegreatstory.org/songs/river-of-life-song.mov

Feel free to use and adapt (evolve!) this song in any context. The author does not need to be credited, nor do you need to seek permission. Just go ahead and use it. And let us know if you suggest any improvements.

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1.

CHIM-pan-zee, BO-no-bo
A-fri-can GO-ril-la
A-sian o-RANG-u-tan
GIB-bons of MAY-lay-sia
THESE • • ARE • our TAIL-less ape REL-a-tives. (2x)

2.

MON-keys of AF-ri-ca
AND South A-MER-i-ca
TAR-siers with BIG round eyes
LE-murs and LOR-is-es
THESE • • ARE • our PRI • mate REL-a-tives. (2x)

3.

TREE shrews who LIVED with the
CRE-ta-ceous DI-no-saurs.
RO-dents and RAB-bits who
EAT leaves and SO much more.
THESE • • ARE • some MAM-mal-ian REL-a-tives. (2x)

4.

COY-o-tee, TI-ger, Rhi-
NO-cer-os, CAR-i-bou
CA-mel and HY-en-a
BAT, seal, and DOL-phins too
THESE • • ARE • laur-A-sia-theer REL-a-tives. (2x)

5.

ANT-eat-ers, TREE sloths and
GROUND sloths of LONG ago
ALL South a-MER-i-can
'CEPT Ar-ma-DILL-e-oh.
THESE • • ARE • zee-NAR-thran REL-a-tives. (2x)

6.

AARD-varks and GOL-den moles
HY-rax-es, EL-e-phants
ALL born in AF-ri-ca
E-ven the MAN-a-tees.
THESE • • ARE • our AF-ro-theer REL-a-tives. (2x)

7.

KO-a-la, KAN-ga-roo

WOM-bat and BAN-di-coot

ALL just Aus-TRAL-yan `cept

VIR-gin-ya O-poss-um

THESE • • ARE • *mar-SU-pi-al REL-a-tives. (2x)*

8.

NOT quite a MAM-mal are

AUS-tral-ian EGG-lay-ers

SPI-ny ee-kID-na and

DUCK-bill-y PLAT-y-pus.

THESE • • ARE • *our MON-o-treme REL-a-tives. (2x)*

9.

BIRDS of the SKY and the

MAR-shy mud CROC-o-diles.

LIZ-ards and TUR-tles and

SNAKES that are SO a-gile

THESE • • ARE • *rep-TILE and bird REL-a-tives.*

10.

LAY eggs in PONDS and streams

ALL frogs and TOADS it seems

SAL-a-man-DERS and newts

WEAR a wet BIRTH-day suit.

THESE • • ARE • *am-PHIB-i-an REL-a-tives. (2x)*

11.

LUNG-fish and COEL-a-canth

BACK to the SEA ad-vance

SWIM-mers the RAY-finned fish

SAM-mon and TU-na-fish

THESE • • ARE • *our FINE fish-y REL-a-tives. (2x)*

12.

FROM now on NO more bone

CAR-til-age STANDS a-lone

IN ev-'ry SHARK and ray

THEY func-tion FINE that way.

THESE • • ARE • *some FER-o-cious REL-a-tives. (2x)*

13.

LAM-preys then LANCE-e-lets

NO gills: get USED to it.

BREATHE through your SKIN and lose

BRAIN like a TUN-i-cate.

THESE • • ARE • our CHOR • date REL-a-tives. (2x)

14.

STAR-fish and SAND dol-lar

SEA ur-chin, BRIT-tle star.

RA-di-al SYM-me-try

QUITE un-like YOU and me.

THESE • • ARE • e-KINE-o-derm REL-a-tives. (2x)

15.

IN-sects and SPI-ders too

ALL join in ONE fell swoop

RI-ver of LIFE grows big

WITH worms and CLAMS that dig.

THESE • • ARE • all VER-y cool REL-a-tives. (2x)

16.

FLAT-worms and JELL-y-fish

COR-als, a-NEM-on-ees.

POOP and eat THROUGH one hole.

STAY a-live THAT's the goal.

THESE • • ARE • • A-maz-ing REL-a-tives. (2x)

17.

COMB jell-ies LAS-soo prey.

PLAC-o-zo-AN at play.

SPONG-es dis-IN-te-grate

CHO-an-o-FLAG-el-late

THESE • • ARE • some VER-y strange REL-a-tives. (2x)

18.

DRIPS are all PAR-a-sites

FUN-gi can GROW at night

MUSH-rooms and MOLD on bread

A-me-bas HAVE no head.

THESE • • ARE • some REAL biz-zarr REL-a-tives. (2x)

19.

THINK of your FA-v'rite tree
AND red and GREEN al-gae
LET-tuce and LI-ma beans
ALL feed on SOL-ar beams
THESE • • ARE • our LIGHT eat-ing REL-a-tives. (2x)

20

RA-di-o-LAR-i-a
MAKE shells of SIL-i-ca
DON'T drink gi-AR-di-a
FOR-a-min-I-fer-a
THESE • • ARE • some SING-le cell REL-a-tives. (2x)

21.

FIND these in REAL hot pools
AND in your STINK-y stools
THEY don't like BREATH-ing air.
THEY'RE sing-le CELL-u-lar
THESE • • ARE • our ARK-e-a REL-a-tives. (2x)

22.

Oh! eu-bac-TER-i-a,
SOME bring dip-THER-i-a,
OTH-ers re-CY-cle trash
WITH-out them WE would crash.
THESE • • ARE • bac-TER-i-al REL-a-tives. (2x)

23.

RIV-er of LIFE starts in
O-cean of OR-i-gin
MYS-t'ry of MYS-ter-ies
THIS makes us FAM-i-ly
WE • • HAVE • a VER-y big FAM-i-ly. (2x)



24.

THIS song de-MANDS du-et
TOO fast to BREATHE through it
SAME with bi-OL-og-y
IT'S all e-COL-o-gy
WE • • LOVE • • ALL of our REL-a-tives (2x)



25.

SOME want to KNOW how this

FITS with re-LI-gious myths

IF we think NEST-ing dolls

SURE-ly there ARE no walls

GOD • • IS • a SAC-red name FOR the whole. (2x)

NOTE: Choose to end the song with verse 23, 24, or 25 — or create your own! Connie likes to end with **Verse 23**, and to sing it the second time slowly and substitute for the final line, "We LOVE our very big family." It is also fun to sing the final verse three times in a row as a **ROUND**. Start half the room and then begin the other half when the first half finishes the line, ". . . us family"