Suitable for Pre-Kindergarten to Second Grade

Overview:
In this educational and fun planetarium program, the students are given a tour of the day and night sky with the help of an animated talking Sun and his starry friends. Facts about the Sun, life on Earth, the Earth's motions, the planets of the solar system, and the stars of the night sky are presented as the Sun and his friendly stars interact with the students. We also get close up views of the planets, search out a few star patterns (like the Big Dipper), tell a few constellation stories, and see the Earth rotate through an entire night.

Suggested Pre-visit Activities
1. Discuss that stars can be connected to make pictures called constellations.
2. Have students make their own pictures out of a full page of dots.
3. Discuss that the Sun is a star and compare to other stars.
4. Talk about how the Moon changes each night.
5. Discuss if it is possible to see planets in the sky and talk about what they might look like.

Concepts Covered During Visit
The daytime sky is blue.
The real Sun is not safe to stare at.
The sky changes over time.
The Sun seems to move across the sky, but it is really the Earth moving, not the Sun.
The Sun is a star.
The Sun is the closest star to the Earth.
The Sun and the Earth are shaped like balls (spheres).
The Sun is made of hot, glowing gases.
The Sun gives light and heat that life on Earth needs.
The planets in our Solar System:

   Rocky planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.

   Gas planets: Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

   (Pluto is now called a dwarf planet.)

We have night and day because Earth spins (rotates).
Stars are objects like the Sun.
Stars look small because they are very far away.
Stars are balls also; they do not have points, even though people often draw them that way.
Groups of stars form pictures called “constellations.”
Earth rotates to give us night and day.

Suggested Post-visit Activities

1. Using an unlabeled star map, have students make their own constellation pictures.

2. Students can reinforce the idea that as the Earth turns we see different objects, by standing and slowly rotating in place. As they do this they will see different parts of the classroom. Ask the students to pick an object and face it, and then ask how far they have to rotate until they see it again. This is analogous to the part of the Earth that you live on turning to face the Sun once a day.