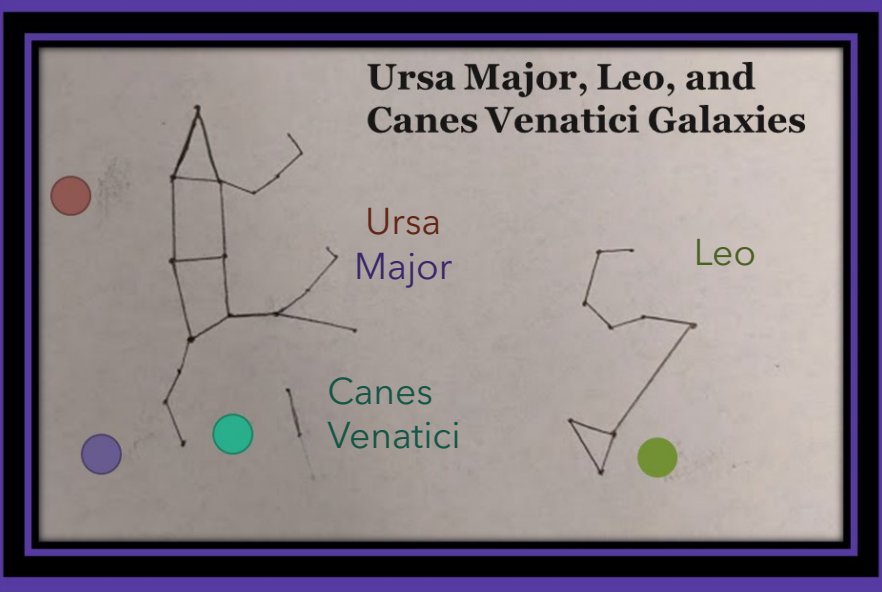


Late March to Mid-May is the best time of year to find some amazing galaxies near the Big Dipper. A telescope or binoculars are required to see these distant galaxies, but you can also witness our galaxy from your own backyard!



- Bode's Galaxy (M81) and Cigar Galaxy (M82)
- Pinwheel Galaxy (M101)
- Leo Triplet (M65, M66, NGC 3628)
- Whirlpool Galaxy (M51)



## Bode's Galaxy (M81) and Cigar Galaxy (M82)



Bode's Galaxy (Left) is a grand design **spiral galaxy**. Its diameter is about 20 thousand light years smaller than the Milky Way at 90,000 light years across. The Cigar Galaxy (Right), on the other hand, is a **starburst (irregular)** galaxy. Both galaxies are approximately 12 million light-years away from Earth, located in Ursa Major.

## Pinwheel Galaxy (M101)

The Pinwheel Galaxy is another type of spiral galaxy referred to as a face-on **spiral galaxy**. This galaxy is the second closest to Earth (out of the galaxies mentioned here) at 21 million light-years away. The Pinwheel Galaxy is also located in Ursa Major. *Do these galaxies look like their names? Why or why not?*



## Whirlpool Galaxy (M51)



Like Bode's Galaxy, the Whirlpool Galaxy is an interacting grand-design **spiral galaxy**. It can be found in the constellation Canes Venatici, near Ursa Major. Its distance from Earth is about 31 million light-years away and its diameter is 76 light years across, making it smaller than Bode's Galaxy by comparison.

## Leo Triplet (M65, M66, NGC 3628)

Also similar to the grouping of M81 and M82, the Leo Triplet (known as the M66 Group) is a group of 3 **spiral galaxies** located close together in the night sky. This group, as indicated by the name, can be found in the constellation Leo. The Leo triplet is the farthest from Earth out of this group, located about 35 million light-years away.



## How to see our own galaxy!

Optimal viewing of the **Milky way** for the Northern Hemisphere is typically in the summer. However, if you face southward before sunrise on a clear night in the spring, you should be able to see the heart of our beautiful **spiral galaxy**.  
*How many stars can you see? Can you count them all?*

### Best Times to View

April: 4 AM to Sunrise

May: 3 AM to 6 AM

June: 10 PM to 2 AM

July: Sunset to Midnight

August: Sunset until 10 PM

September: Sunset until 9 PM

## Craft Corner: Draw your own Galaxy!

After learning about a few of the galaxies in the night sky, why not create your own? Galaxies come in all shapes and sizes so there are no limitations when it comes to drawing a galaxy. When you're finished, look up the type of galaxy you drew. Either **elliptical, irregular, or spiral**.  
*Maybe there is one similar that already exists. If so, what is its name and where can you find it?*

## **Share your drawings with us on social media:**

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