**SAVE THE EARTH: IT’S EVERYONE’S HOME!**

**LESSON 1: Grades 4-6**

# LET’S CLEAN UP OUR ACT AND THE EARTH!

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Comm. Arts: 1, 4, 6; Science: 3, 4, 8; Social Studies: 5 & 7

**Objectives:** Students will develop an understanding that the earth is everyone’s home and each one of us must do our part to protect and preserve it. They will learn they can begin saving the earth today by simply picking up the trash on the school grounds.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.5.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.**

**SL.3-4.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions and make comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**

**SL.5.5—Use visual displays in presentations to support main ideas or themes.**

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility, Citizenship

**Responsibility:** We all have a responsibility to walk lighter on this earth, to preserve our resources and take responsibility for our actions as they relate to the impact on all that share our world. Our actions (or lack of action) are like tossing a pebble in a lake. The ripples the tossed pebble cause spread outwards, causing movement within the water, changing it. Same with the earth. It’s important to remember that even the slightest action, i.e. breaking a bottle in an abandoned lot, can have lasting effects on other living creatures. (Remember, animals go barefoot. A cut on the foot of a stray cat can become infected and possibly cause the loss of her leg.)

**Citizenship:** We must all share in the well-being of our earth within our school, our community and our homes. Get involved and make a difference today!

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**5-ESS3.C—**Human Impacts on Earth Systems…Human activities in agriculture, industry and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth’s resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1) Encourage students to discuss various ways we are hurting and helping the earth. What can THEY do to make a positive difference?

**Materials:**

* Portable flip chart or dry erase board
* Marker
* Inflatable or desk top globe
* Watch
* Trash bags (recyclable, biodegradable)
* Paper
* Colored pencils, markers, etc.

**Method:**

1. Begin this lesson outside, with the earth beneath you! Have the students sit in a circle on the ground. Using a soothing voice, ask them to sit quietly for a moment, listening to the sights and sounds around them. You want them to become aware of the environment around them.
2. After about 3 minutes of quiet contemplation ask students to share what they noticed or became aware of (sights, sounds, smells, feelings, etc.).
3. Surely someone will have noticed birds chirping or flying overhead, an ant hill nearby, a rabbit darting beneath a bush, squirrels scurrying up a tree, beautiful flowers or bright green grass. Point out that sometimes we humans get so wrapped up in our lives and what we are doing that we forget we share this earth with many other creatures, great and small. We are **responsible** for the choices we make that affect them and the earth. Write the word **responsible** in the middle at the top of the flipchart and point out that it means “taking care of people, animals and the things around you and making good choices”.
4. Draw a vertical line down the center of the paper and write the word “Home” at the top of the left hand column. Ask the students to list as a group, the many things they are responsible for doing at home (make bed, pick up after yourself, feed pets, do homework, mow lawn, etc.). Discuss why it is necessary to do these things.
5. Write the word “Earth” at the top of the second column and ask them to brainstorm a list of the things we, as humans, are responsible for doing to take proper care of the earth. Remind them that Earth is not just our home, it is home to the many creatures you noticed here today and millions more around the world. Use the globe as a visual aide to spark ideas about how humans should respect the earth everywhere (oceans, deserts, mountains, city parks, etc.). We can’t depend on others to be responsible. Each one of us is responsible for respecting the earth and preserving her for generations to come. We don’t own the earth, rather we are merely borrowing and maintaining it for future generations of animals, plants and people to thrive on!
6. Practice the “5 Minute Difference.” Explain that they will be given five minutes to do something for the environment around them. What can they do in five minutes? Pick up litter on the school grounds or park (wherever you are). Give them five minutes to gather as much trash as they can find in a designated area. (\*You may want to ask them to bring your attention to any broken glass so you can carefully pick it up yourself.)
7. After five minutes, have them return to the circle and examine all of the trash collected. Look at the amount and type of trash. Where did most of the trash come from? Undoubtedly from careless humans. Emphasize the fact that in just five minutes, they cleaned up the area and made it safer for all who share this environment!

**Call to Action:** Ask each student to select one piece of trash that he/she collected from the grounds and create a poster educating others about why it is important to put this piece of trash where it belongs! Use the paper, colored pencils, markers and any other supplies. For example; you could draw a picture of a glass soda bottle with a raccoon standing near it with an injured paw. The caption could be: “Lend a helping paw to wildlife; Put your trash in the can!” Hang these educational messages in high traffic areas in your school.

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**

[www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org)

[www.environmentalconcerns.org](http://www.environmentalconcerns.org)

[www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm)

[www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)

[www.kidsface.org](http://www.kidsface.org)

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

[www.ikecoalition.org](http://www.ikecoalition.org)

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/)

Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for additional animal-related web sites.