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

**LESSON 2: Grades K-3**

**HABITAT, WHAT IS THAT?**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 6; Science: 3, 4 & 8; Social Studies: 5; Fine Arts: 4

**Objectives:**  Students will demonstrate their understanding of several broad habitats by matching up animals with their habitats. They will realize the importance of leaving wild animals alone in their natural habitats and will gain an appreciation for the tenacity and lifestyle of various creatures within their natural habitat. They will share what they’ve learned with others by making “Leave Wild Animals in the Wild” artwork to hang in a high-traffic area.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.3-4.1—Engage effectively in 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 link to remarks of others.**

Ask students to discuss the meaning of ‘habitat’. What is this and how does it affect animals? What does a habitat provide for an animal? What impact can a destroyed habitat have on animals?

Make a list of **all** aspects of a habitat and encourage students to discuss what factors can build up or tear down the environment of another creature. What is the resulting impact on the animals?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

Being the guardian of our environment is very important. You hold the welfare of plants and animals in your hands. It is vital that you do what you can to make the world a better place by building UP the environment and avoiding actions that tear DOWN the habitats of other living creatures.

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

**3-ESS3-1—Cause and effect relationships are routinely identified, tested, and used to explain change.**

**3-ESS2-1; 3-ESS2-2—Patterns of change can be used to make predictions.**

Cause and Effect are powerful observation tools that can predict patterns. How can cause and effect predict the future of a specific habitat? How can it be a mirror of the health of an environment?

**Materials:**

* Pictures or posters of a few broad habitats (ideas: mountains, oceans, tropical rain forests, deserts, grasslands, polar-regions and deciduous forests).
* Pictures of various animals who live in the selected broad habitats and include a picture of a firefly (from magazines, books, clip art, etc.)
* Tape
* The book *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe, 1986 (if possible)
* Glass jar or other clear see-through container
* Handful of grass, a small branch with leaves, a flower and a tiny lid of water to put in the see-through container
* Large copies of drawings of animals in a nearby habitat for children to color and cut out (drawings of deciduous forest animals are included below).
* Markers, crayons or colored pencils

**Method:**

1. Hang up the posters/pictures of the chosen habitats and clearly label each one. Introduce the word **habitat, an animal’s natural home**. Begin by discussing the characteristics of one of the habitats close to you with which the students are familiar. In our case, because we live in Missouri we might choose the grassland or the deciduous forest habitat to begin. Explain that all the creatures in a habitat need the following to survive and write them on the board: **proper food, water, shelter and other creatures of their own species with which to interact**. Each animal also has a job in his/her habitat (pollinating, scavenging, provide food for others, etc.) Choose a picture of one of the animals who live in your habitat and ask the students to help you identify the animal’s food, water source and shelter in that habitat.
2. Hand each child a picture of an animal and ask them to hang it beneath the habitat where they think he lives, keeping in mind food, shelter, etc. when making the choice. Help them by asking leading questions. Discuss their choices and make modifications if needed. Stress that each animal has an important job to do in his/her habitat and point some of these out.
3. While looking at the animals, have students determine, which if any, they have tried to take out of their habitat? Focus on the firefly and ask if anyone has tried to catch a firefly before. What did you put in the container with him/her? What happened? If we created a firefly habitat in this jar and provide the fireflies with everything they needed, would they still be able to survive? Maybe, not for long, but….what wouldn’t be provided in the jar that the firefly would have in its natural environment (space, freedom, the ability to do their “job” in the habitat)? Who would miss them (the animals who eat them and depend on them for food)? What ‘job’ in nature wouldn’t be accomplished if this species was missing? Emphasize the fact that when we take wild animals from their habitat, we are not only harming that particular animal, but other animals who depend on that animal. (chain reaction, cause/effect) Also important to point out is that wild animals aren’t used to people and are usually afraid of us. They might end up hurting us trying to defend themselves.
4. Read the book Fireflies to your students and discuss it with them, making the same connections with all animals (especially those in your habitat that children might try to keep as pets).

**Call to Action:** Have each child color a picture of local animals from your habitat that you have drawn and provided, half of which have happy faces and half with sad. Decorate a bulletin board with one half depicting an outdoor scene of a nearby habitat on one side and animals in captivity on the other. For example, for a deciduous forest habitat you could draw bushes, trees, flowers and a stream on one side and a giant jar, cage, aquarium, etc. on the other. Put the happy fireflies on the side with the bushes and trees and the sad ones in the giant jar that you’ve drawn on the other side of the board. Example titles: Leave wildlife in their habitats, Respect the wildlife and leave them in their homes, etc. You could even write caption bubbles above some or all of the animals with thoughts they may be having (happy and sad).

**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.

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