



Living Values™
Education



RAINBOW LIBRARY VALUES ACTIVITY SERIES



Living Values Activities for Young Adults

Unit 5 – Simplicity and Caring for the Earth and Her Oceans - Part A

For Educators and Parents Everywhere

Material and Activities in this Rainbow Values booklet are adapted from *Living Values Education Activities for Young Adults, Book 1* by Diane G. Tillman and educators around the world.

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Education

**Living Values Education
Activities for Young Adults, Book 1
Unit 5. Simplicity and
Caring Our Earth and the Oceans**

Part A – Activities 1 – 11

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Includes bibliographical references

ISBN: 9781731097590

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This is a sampling of the larger book , *Living Values Activities for Young Adults*,. The expanded version has two volumes, Book 1 and Book 2, and is published independently by the Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE), a non-profit Swiss Association, through Kindle Direct Publishing.

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For information about professional development workshops and LVE generally, please visit ALIVE's website at www.livingvalues.net.

Cover design: Ris Designs, Gold Coast Qld Australia

The development and advancement of Living Values Education is overseen by the **Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE)**, a non-profit-making association of organizations around the world concerned with values education. ALIVE groups together national bodies promoting the use of the Living Values Education Approach and is an independent organization that does not have any particular or exclusive religious, political or national affiliation or interest. The development and implementation of Living Values Education has been supported over the years by a number of organizations; UNESCO, governmental bodies, foundations, community groups and individuals.

LVE continues to be part of the global movement for a culture of peace following the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

C O N T E N T S

Setting the Context	5
LVE's Purpose and Aims	6
The Living Values Education Approach	5
Exploring and Developing Values	7
Values-based Atmosphere	11
Simplicity Activities	13 - 52

PLEASE REFER to the "Overview and Introduction" book for the full information of Living Values Education to maximise your classroom Values delivery and implementation opportunity.



VALUES ACTIVITIES IN THIS BOOKLET SERIES

*Peace I - Respect I - Love and Caring - Tolerance -
Simplicity and Caring for our Earth and Her Oceans - Honesty
Happiness - Optional Unit on Substance Abuse - Responsibility*

A note from the author

I have had the privilege of being involved with Living Values Education (LVE) for 23 years, writing educational resource books and traveling around the world to conduct workshops and seminars – at UNESCO, schools, universities, retreat centers and refugee camps. When I initially became involved with LVE, I focused on developing a program that would help all young people explore and develop values. I wanted to develop something that would involve and inspire marginalized youth and also act to challenge privileged youth to look beyond their usual circles. I was yet to deeply understand the importance of values or values education. Twenty-two years later, I now see the world through a values lens. I am honored to be part of the global LVE family as we continue to co-create LVE.

I've often felt devastated, as I'm sure you have, when reading of violence and atrocities toward children and adults, the continuing plight of women and children in many parts of our world, the misery of refugees, and the horrors of violence in so many countries around the globe. I believe nurturing hearts and educating minds is an essential component in creating a sensible peaceful world of wellbeing for all.

A lack of basic education leaves young people incredibly vulnerable, apt to be taken advantage of and usually condemned to a life of poverty. They are susceptible to believing whatever those in authority tell them. For example, if you were a young person



without an education and a powerful soldier handed you a rifle and offered wellbeing for you and your family if you killed.... Yet, in developed countries where there are functional education systems, thousands of young people have traveled to join radical groups.

Many of these young people are marginalized and want to belong to a larger “family”, to be in a place where their courage and qualities are admired. The first instance decries the lack of basic education, the second the lack of providing safe nurturing, supportive environments and educating hearts. The importance of Education for All and the development of a values-based learning environment as an integral part of values education cannot be overstated.

If we were to expand this view outward, we could ask how humanity became embroiled in a state of seemingly continuous violence. What are the anti-values that create violence and war? What are the values, attitudes and communication skills that create peace, equality, dignity, belonging and wellbeing for all? What do we want in our world?

What young people learn is later woven into the fabric of society. When education has positive values at its heart, and the resulting expression of them as its aim, we will create a better world for all. Values such as peace, love, respect, honesty, cooperation and freedom are the sustaining force of human society and progress.

Thank you for joining the Living Values Education family to help make a positive difference for children, educators, families, communities, and the world.

Diane G. Tillman





SETTING THE CONTEXT

Living Values Education is a global endeavor dedicated to nurturing hearts and educating minds. LVE provides an approach, and tools, to help people connect with their own values and live them. During professional development workshops, educators are engaged in a process to empower them to create a caring values-based atmosphere in which young people are loved, valued, respected, understood and safe.

Educators are asked to facilitate values activities about peace, respect, love and caring, tolerance, honesty, happiness, responsibility, simplicity, caring for the Earth and Her Oceans, cooperation, humility, compassion, freedom and unity to engage students in exploring and choosing their own personal values while developing intrapersonal and interpersonal skills to “live” those values.

The sixteen values units in the updated Living Values Education Activities books include other related universal values such as kindness, fairness, determination, integrity, appreciation, diversity, gratitude, inclusion and social justice. Students soon become co-creators of a culture of peace and respect. A values-based learning community fosters positive relationships and quality education.

The Need for Values and Values Education

The values of peace, love, respect, honesty, cooperation and freedom create a social fabric of harmony and wellbeing. What would you like schools to be like? What would you like the world to be like? Reflect for a moment on the school or world you would like....

Children and youth grow toward their potential in quality learning environments with a culture of peace and respect. Relatively few young people have such a values-based learning atmosphere. A culture of judging, blaming and disrespect is often



closer to the norm and is frequently mixed with varying levels of bullying, discrimination, social problems and violence.

The challenge of helping children and youth acquire values is no longer as simple as it was decades ago when being a good role model and relating moral stories was usually sufficient. Violent movies and video games glorify violence, and desensitize youth to the effect of such actions. Youth see people who display greed, arrogance and negative behavior rewarded with admiration and status. Young people are increasingly affected by bullying, social problems, violence and a lack of respect for each other and the world around them. Social media often negatively impacts teens who are already emotionally vulnerable. Cyberbullying and sexting have been linked to the increase in the suicide rate of pre-teens and teens.

Marginalized and troubled young people rarely achieve their potential without quality education. Feelings of inadequacy, hurt and anger often spiral downward and meanness, bullying, drug use, drop-out rates, crime and suicide increase.

As educators, facilitators and parents, there are many things we can do to reverse this downward trend and create wellbeing ... for young people and our world. As Aristotle said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."

LVE's Purpose and Aims

The purpose and aims of Living Values Education were created by twenty educators from around the world when they gathered at UNICEF's headquarters in New York in August of 1996. The purpose remains unchanged. The aims have been slightly augmented as has our experience and understanding since that time.

LVE's purpose is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is



comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

The aims are:

- ◆ To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community, and the world at large;
- ◆ To deepen knowledge, understanding, motivation, and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices;
- ◆ To invite and inspire individuals to explore, experience, express and choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- ◆ To encourage and support educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development, and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence, and purpose.

The Living Values Education Approach

After ten years of implementing Living Values Education, a team of LVE leaders around the world gathered together to describe what they felt LVE was ... and had become.

Vision Statement

Living Values Education is a way of conceptualizing education that promotes the development of values-based learning communities and places the search for meaning and purpose at the heart of education. LVE emphasizes the worth and integrity of each person involved in the provision of education, in the home, school and community. In fostering quality education, LVE supports the overall development of the individual and a culture of positive values in each society and throughout the world, believing



that education is a purposeful activity designed to help humanity flourish.

Core Principles

Living Values Education is based on the following core principles:

On the learning and teaching environment

1. When positive values and the search for meaning and purpose are placed at the heart of learning and teaching, education itself is valued.
2. Learning is especially enhanced when occurring within a values-based learning community, where values are imparted through quality teaching, and learners discern the consequences, for themselves, others and the world at large, of actions that are and are not based on values.
3. In making a values-based learning environment possible, educators not only require appropriate quality teacher education and ongoing professional development, they also need to be valued, nurtured and cared for within the learning community.
4. Within the values-based learning community, positive relationships develop out of the care that all involved have for each other.

On the teaching of values

5. The development of a values-based learning environment is an integral part of values education, not an optional extra.
6. Values education is not only a subject on the curriculum. Primarily it is pedagogy; an educational philosophy and practice that inspires and develops positive values in the classroom. Values-based teaching and guided reflection support the process of learning as a meaning-making process, contributing to the development of critical thinking, imagination, understanding, self-awareness, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and consideration of others.



7. Effective values educators are aware of their own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behavior and sensitive to the impact these have on others.
8. A first step in values education is for teachers to develop a clear and accurate perception of their own attitudes, behavior and emotional literacy as an aid to living their own values. They may then help themselves and encourage others to draw on the best of their own personal, cultural and social qualities, heritage and traditions.

Exploring and Developing Values

The choices of young people are critically important, not only for their own happiness and wellbeing at this vulnerable time in their lives, but also for their future. If they are to resist the powerful messages of negativity ubiquitous in our society and on social media, and move toward a love for values and positive socially-conscious choices, they need positive role models and the opportunity to cognitively discern the difference between impact of values and anti-values on their lives, the community and the world.

LVE values activities are designed to motivate students, and to involve them in thinking about themselves, others, the world in relevant ways. The activities are designed to evoke the experience of values within, and build inner resources. They are designed to empower, and to elicit their potential, creativity and inner gifts. Students are asked to reflect, imagine, dialogue, communicate, create, write about, artistically express and play with values. In the process, personal social and emotional skills develop as well as positive, constructive social skills. This is done most effectively when there is a values-based atmosphere and when teachers are passionate about values.

The Living Values Education Activities resource books are arranged to present a series of skills that build sequentially. However, it is important for educators to integrate values



throughout the curriculum; each subject opens a window to view the self and values in relation to the world.

Three Core Assumptions

LVE resource materials are built on three assumptions. The first assumption is drawn from a tenet in the Preamble of the United Nations' Charter, *"To reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person"*

- ◆ Universal values teach respect and dignity for each and every person. Learning to enjoy those values promotes wellbeing for individuals and the larger society.
- ◆ Each student does care about values and has the capacity to positively create and learn when provided with opportunities.
- ◆ Students thrive in a values-based atmosphere in a positive, safe environment of mutual respect and care — where students are regarded as capable of learning to make socially conscious choices.

Values-based Atmosphere

Feeling Loved, Valued, Respected, Understood and Safe

As values must be caught as well as taught, the adults involved are integral to the success of the program, for young people learn best by example and are most receptive when what is shared is experienced. The establishment of a values-based atmosphere is essential for optimal exploration and development. Such a student-centered environment naturally enhances learning, as relationships based on trust, caring, and respect have a positive effect on motivation, creativity, and affective and cognitive development.

Creating a "values-based atmosphere" is the first step in LVE's Developing Values Schematic. During LVE Educator Workshops, educators are asked to discuss quality teaching methods that allow students to feel loved, respected, valued, understood and safe.



Why were these five feelings – loved, valued, respected, understood and safe – chosen? Love is rarely spoken about in educational seminars. Yet, isn't it love and respect that we all want as human beings? Who doesn't want to be valued, understood and safe? Many studies on resiliency have reinforced the importance of the quality of relationships between young people and significant adults in their lives, often teachers. What happens to the learning process when we feel loved, valued and respected? What happens in our relationships with educators who create a supportive, safe environment in the classroom?

Real Learning Comes Alive in a Values-Based Atmosphere

Achievement automatically increases as real learning increases. Real learning and motivation come alive in values-based atmospheres where educators are free to be in tune with their own values, model their love of learning and nurture students and the development of cognitive skills along with values.

This is not to say that excellent teaching will always occur when there is a values-based atmosphere; a values educator must also be a good teacher.

Modeling the Values from the Inside

In LVE Workshops, educators are asked to reflect on the values in their own lives and identify which are most important to them. In another session, they are asked to share quality teaching methods they can use to create their desired class climate.

Modeling of values by adults is an essential element in values education. Students are interested in educators who have a passion to do something positive in the world and who embody the values they espouse, and are likely to reject values education if they feel teachers are not walking their talk. LVE educators have shared amazing stories of change with angry and cynical pre-teens and teens, when they were able to stick to their values in challenging circumstances.

Teaching values requires from educators a willingness to be a role model, and a belief in dignity and respect for all. This does not mean we need to be perfect to teach LVE; however, it does require a



personal commitment to “living” the values we would like to see in others, and a willingness to be caring, respectful and non-violent.

Skills for Creating a Values-based Atmosphere

Showing interest in and giving respect to students while pointing out well-done relevant characteristics over time can be used to build the ability of students to analyze their own behavior and academic skills, and develop positive self-assessment and intrinsic motivation. In this approach, there is a focus on human relationships as well as sensitivity to the level of receptivity and needs of the students.

Skills for creating a values-based atmosphere also include: active listening; collaborative rule making; quiet signals that create silence, focus, feelings of peace or respect; conflict resolution; and values-based discipline. Active listening is useful as a method of acknowledgement with resistant, cynical and/or “negative” students.

If you are implementing LVE independently, it may be easier to focus on the values that fit best into your curriculum. A bit of reflection about values or an interesting discussion here and there, can help students become more engaged – and see the difference values make.

Do I need to do every activity?

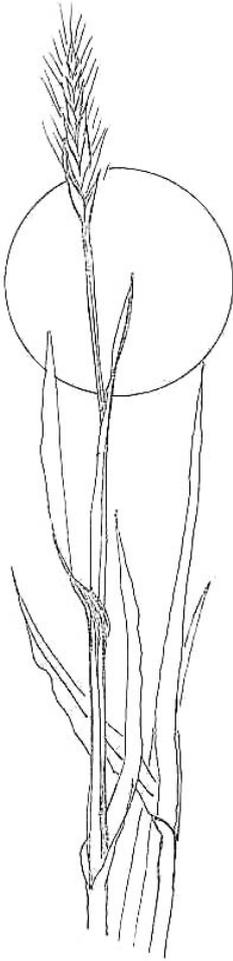
No. While it is good to include a variety of values activities, educators may choose not to do some lessons or may wish to substitute material. In many of the lessons you will find scripted questions and content. This has been provided as many educators have requested such specificity. Please feel free to adapt the questions to your own personal style, the needs of the students, the culture, and your particular setting.

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UNIT FIVE: SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS

ACTIVITIES PART A (1 - 10)



Each value is important, but the importance of simplicity and taking care of our Earth and her oceans at this point in time is paramount as human demands on the planet's resources increase and global climate change imperils human existence.

Simplicity as a value is addressed in a few ways: enjoying the simplicity and beauty of nature, valuing the simplicity and wisdom of indigenous cultures, simplicity as a value that helps us create sustainable development and simplicity as a way to reduce our material demands on the planet.

The Caring for the Earth and Her Oceans lessons begin with an article by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, responding to the concerns of youth on climate change. The key provision of the Paris Climate Change Agreement, to try to keep the global temperature to rising only to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial age, and definitely below 2 degrees Celsius, is used to branch into the variables creating the increase in temperature. Young adults are presented with specific scientific information about greenhouse gases, what is causing them, and the harmful effects of human actions on the ocean, rivers, animals, air and ground – and on human beings themselves.

Students are encouraged to explore daily options to reduce their carbon footprint, reduce their use of plastics, to research an area of interest and do a service-learning project to benefit the environment. Please add your own ideas and help them do what is most needed in



the local community. Please allow them to go with their interests, motivation and project ideas – allow them time to research, do projects and be constructively creative.

Paulo Barros contributed several activities to this unit for young adults. He has highlighted the importance of exploring the effects of not only man on the environment but how social prejudice, anti-values and injustice impact us all, and our Earth, a concept reinforced by the UN Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

Enjoy doing the activities with the students. We will be happy to post news of your projects, poems and songs in our newsletter or on the international website.

Thank you for helping take care of our Earth and her oceans.

Simplicity and Caring for the Earth and Her Oceans Reflection Points

- ◆ Simplicity is natural.
- ◆ Simplicity is learning from the earth.
- ◆ Simplicity is beautiful.
- ◆ Simplicity is relaxing.
- ◆ Simplicity is being natural.
- ◆ Simplicity is staying in the present and not making things complicated.
- ◆ Simplicity is learning from the wisdom of indigenous cultures.
- ◆ Simplicity is giving patience, friendship, and encouragement.
- ◆ Simplicity is appreciating the small things in life.
- ◆ Simplicity is freedom from material desires and emotional desires to simply “be.” – *Contributed by students at West Kidlington School*
- ◆ Simplicity is putting others first with kindness, openness, pure intentions – without expectations and conditions. – *Contributed by students at West Kidlington School*
- ◆ Simplicity avoids waste, teaches economy, avoids value clashes complicated by greed, fear, peer pressure, and a false sense of identity.
- ◆ Simplicity is appreciating inner beauty and recognizing the value of all actors, even the poorest and worst off.



- ◆ Simplicity helps create sustainable development.
- ◆ Simplicity teaches us economy – how to use our resources keeping future generations in mind.
- ◆ Simplicity calls upon people to rethink their values.
- ◆ Simplicity asks whether we are being induced to purchase unnecessary products. Psychological enticements create artificial needs. Desires stimulated by wanting unnecessary things result in value clashes complicated by greed, fear, peer pressure, and a false sense of identity. Once fulfillment of basic necessities allows for a comfortable lifestyle, extremes and excesses invite overindulgence and waste.
- ◆ Simplicity helps decrease the gap between “the haves” and “the have nots” by demonstrating the logic of true economics: to earn, save, invest, and share the sacrifices and the prosperity so that there can be a better quality of life for all people regardless of where they were born.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 1 Simple Things

Begin with a song about the beauty of nature or a melody from a native musical instrument.

Write the following Reflection Points on the board.

- ◆ Simplicity is natural.
- ◆ Simplicity is learning from the earth.
- ◆ Simplicity is beautiful.
- ◆ Simplicity is relaxing.
- ◆ Simplicity is being natural.
- ◆ Simplicity is staying in the present and not making things complicated.

Explore general concepts of simplicity through questions and discussion:

- What is simplicity?
- What simple things do you enjoy?
- What things do you enjoy that cost very little or no money?



- What can we learn from the Earth?
- When can life be too complicated?
- In what ways can life be simplified?

Activity

Do a simple activity. If possible, take a walk at a nearby park or go to a place of natural beauty. While there, ask them to walk slowly in silence for 15 minutes and observe the simple things in nature, such as the light on a leaf, buds or tiny flowers, clouds, birds, the bark on trees, etc. If it is not possible to for a walk, perhaps invite them to paint something simple or write a poem to themselves from a bird or another animal – advising them about the simple beauties of life.

Invite the students to share if they would like to do so.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise of your choice.

Homework: Give the students the following Simplicity-Is-Relaxing and Simplicity-Is-Not-Making-Things-Complicated homework. Ask them to spend ten minutes every day for one week relaxing, without electronics. They may wish to focus on a tree, a flower, or a light as they relax. Or go for a walk and observe simple things. Perhaps lie under a tree and watch the leaves or lie on the ground and watch the sky. For a few minutes, simply be an observer, free from desires. Focus on the beauty of what is natural. Think about what it would feel like to know that the natural you is beautiful.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 2 Simply Being

Begin with a song and a Relaxation/Focusing Exercise.

Discuss/Share

Ask about their experiences doing the Simplicity-Is-Relaxing and Simplicity-Is-Not-Making-Things-Complicated homework. Listen with interest and respect and acknowledge their experiences.



List the Reflection Points on the board. Ask the students to form small groups and discuss the points.

- ◆ Simplicity is staying in the present and not making things complicated.
- ◆ Simplicity is freedom from material desires and emotional desires – permission to simply “be.”
- ◆ Simplicity is putting others first with kindness, openness, pure intentions – without expectations and conditions.

➤ Ask:

- Many people overthink and worry about things. When that happens, what are simple things we can do to help ourselves relax? (Such as take a deep breath, take a walk, tell yourself that everything will be okay, talk to a close friend, etc.)
- Sometimes people say that we walk around like “human doings” rather than “human beings”. Do you feel like that sometimes? If so, what simple things help you relax and “be”, easing the stress of doing?

Activity

Each small group can choose to write one of their own Relaxation/Focusing Exercises or make up a slogan on simplicity. Allow them different options to decorate the slogan. They might wish to use things from nature.

Close with one of the relaxation/focusing exercises they created.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 3 Learning from Indigenous Cultures

Note to Educator: Do one or more lessons about indigenous cultures. Educators who teach anthropology or social studies will be great resources. Or, have the educators in those departments simply focus on simplicity and honoring the wisdom of indigenous cultures when



doing the regular curriculum. The United Nations Global Assessment Report on biodiversity and ecosystems acknowledges the positive contributions of Indigenous Peoples to sustainability and suggests learning from Indigenous Peoples.

Purpose: To get in touch with the wisdom of indigenous cultures in your own country or in other countries. In ancient traditions, natural simplicity, wisdom, and respect for the earth were inherent in almost every practice. The needs of the people and the methods to satisfy those needs were simple and without waste.

To explore this, look at the natural simplicity in the lives of your country's Indigenous Peoples. Discover ways in which Indigenous Peoples have used resources by reading a story, visiting a museum or a library with an exhibit, or viewing films or videos. Invite members of the community who can share artifacts or crafts from your heritage. Perhaps invite someone from the community who can share about an indigenous culture and the relationship of their people to the environment. It seems each indigenous culture has a way to honor the Earth.

Begin with a song about the beauty of nature, or a melody from a native musical instrument.

Discuss the Reflection Points:

- ◆ Simplicity is learning from the Earth.
- ◆ Simplicity teaches us economy – how to use our resources wisely, keeping future generations in mind.
- ◆ Simplicity is learning from the wisdom of indigenous cultures.

Activity

Step 1. Invite the students to form small group and study one indigenous culture. All the groups could study one culture or different cultures around the globe.

- Ask each group to explore:
 - ❖ The practices of the indigenous culture being studied.
 - ❖ How the people of indigenous cultures were wise in their use of resources.



- ❖ How they honored the Earth or her ocean.
- ❖ Which values were inherent in their different practices?
- ❖ Which aspects of their wisdom they think would be beneficial to practice in today's world.

Step 2. Invite each group to share their findings. They may wish to showcase one or more elements of the culture, such as sharing music, art, shelter, attitudes toward nature, etc.

Close by sharing some music from an indigenous culture and a few reflective statements about the values within that culture or one of the relaxation/focusing exercises created by students during the last lesson.

Advanced Study Option: Explore some of the following questions.

- What factors contributed to the destruction and/or decline of native cultures?
- Have these same factors negatively affected other elements of our current society or the environment?
- What values were behind their beliefs and practices? How did those become affected by the imposition of the current culture?
- What practices would have been beneficial to the perseverance of that culture?
- Which of those practices would serve to help other segments of society or the environment now?

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 4 Climate Change: Let's listen to the world's young people

Begin with a song about nature, indigenous music, recordings of whales or another choice related to nature and/or simplicity.

Lesson Content

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, in an op-ed article in The Guardian (15 March 2019), featured as "The climate strikers should inspire us all to act at the next UN summit," said



leaders need to listen to the concerns of youth on climate change and presented plans for the Climate Action Summit in September (2019) for concrete and ambitious solutions. He wrote:

“Tens of thousands of young people took to the streets on Friday with a clear message to world leaders: act now to save our planet and our future from the climate emergency.

These schoolchildren have grasped something that seems to elude many of their elders: we are in a race for our lives, and we are losing. The window of opportunity is closing – we no longer have the luxury of time, and climate delay is almost as dangerous as climate denial.



FacebookTwitterPinterest Photograph: Neil Hall/EPA

My generation has failed to respond properly to the dramatic challenge of climate change. This is deeply felt by young people. No wonder they are angry.

Despite years of talk, global emissions are reaching record levels and show no sign of peaking. The concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is the highest it has been in 3m years. The last four years were the four hottest on record, and winter temperatures in the Arctic have risen by 3-4°C in the last 50 years. Sea levels are rising, coral reefs are dying and we are starting to see the life-threatening impact of climate change on health, through air pollution, heatwaves and risks to food security.



Thankfully, we have the Paris agreement – a visionary, viable, forward-looking policy framework that sets out exactly what needs to be done to stop climate disruption and reverse its impact. But the agreement itself is meaningless without ambitious action.

That is why I am bringing world leaders together at a climate action summit later this year. I am calling on all leaders to come to New York in September with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their nationally determined contributions by 2020, in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45% over the next decade, and to net zero by 2050.

The summit will bring together governments, the private sector, civil society, local authorities and other international organisations to develop ambitious solutions in six areas: renewable energy; emission reductions; sustainable infrastructure; sustainable agriculture and management of forests and oceans; withstanding climate impacts; and investing in the green economy.

The latest analysis shows that if we act now, we can reduce carbon emissions within 12 years and limit global warming to 1.5C. But if we continue along our current path, the consequences are impossible to predict.

While climate action is essential to combat an existential threat, it also comes with costs. So action plans must not create winners and losers or add to economic inequality: they must be fair and create new opportunities for those negatively impacted, in the context of a just transition.

Business is on our side. Accelerated climate solutions can strengthen our economies and create jobs, while bringing cleaner air, preserving natural habitats and biodiversity, and protecting our environment.

New technologies and engineering solutions are already delivering energy at a lower cost than the fossil-fuel driven economy. Solar and onshore wind are now the cheapest sources of new bulk power in



virtually all major economies. But we must set radical change in motion.

This means ending subsidies for fossil fuels and high-emitting agriculture and shifting towards renewable energy, electric vehicles and climate-smart practices. It means carbon pricing that reflects the true cost of emissions, from climate risk to the health hazards of air pollution. And it means accelerating the closure of coal plants and replacing jobs with healthier alternatives so that the transformation is just, inclusive and profitable.

Momentum is building, people are listening and there is a new determination to unleash the promise of the Paris agreement. The climate summit must be the starting point to build the future we need.

I will close with a message for those who marched on Friday. I know young people can and do change the world.

Many of you are anxious and fearful for the future, and I understand your concerns and your anger. But I know humankind is capable of enormous achievements. Your voices give me hope.

The more I see your commitment and activism, the more confident I am that we will win. Together, with your help and thanks to your efforts, we can and must beat this threat and create a cleaner, safer, greener world for everyone.”

Discuss/Share

Inform: Protests by millions of school children and young people around the world are bringing attention to the urgency of dealing with climate change.

- Ask:
- How did you feel about UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ comments?
- Are there any other thoughts you’d like to share about his article?
- Have you been part of the protests?



- What are the main concerns of those protesting?
- What are your concerns about climate change?
- What would you like to tell leaders of governments about this?
- There is a saying: Think globally, act locally. How does this relate to climate change?

Activity

Divide the students into small groups and ask them to research information about climate change and prepare a presentation to the class.

Group One: Invite them to study the effects of climate change. There are some interesting videos available on UN sites and other internet sites.

Group Two: Invite them to study the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and subsequent UN Climate Action Summits.

Group Three: Invite them to study the Global Assessment Report produced by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. A three-year study released in May 2019 it includes information that one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction within decades unless there is transformative change. (Item 4 in the Appendix includes information about this report.)

Allow time for each group to present.

Close with the relaxation/focusing exercise which follows the Resources/Information section.

Resources/Information

Science related to climate change:

Source: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.

Their extensive report: “Global Warming of 1.5 °C”.

UN Climate Action Summit:

Source: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>



“The impacts of climate change are being felt everywhere and are having very real consequences on people’s lives. Climate change is disrupting national economies, costing us dearly today and even more tomorrow. But there is a growing recognition that affordable, scalable solutions are available now that will enable us all to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient economies.

The Paris Agreement adopted in 2015, was an essential step to address climate change. It has the central goal of keeping global average temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The 2015 Paris Agreement marked a historic turning point. World leaders from across the globe clinched a new, universal agreement under the umbrella of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Last December at the UN Climate Change Conference COP24 in Poland, governments set to agree the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement, thereby unleashing its full potential.

As of November 2018, 184 states and the European Union have joined the Agreement, which entered into force with record speed.”

Global Assessment Report:

Source:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2019/05/nature-decline-unprecedented-report/>

Produced by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. “UN Report: Nature’s Dangerous Decline ‘Unprecedented’; Species Extinction Rates ‘Accelerating’.”

“PARIS, 6 May – Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history – and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely, warns a landmark new report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy



Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the summary of which was approved at the 7th session of the IPBES Plenary, meeting last week (29 April – 4 May) in Paris.

“The overwhelming evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment, from a wide range of different fields of knowledge, presents an ominous picture,” said IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson. “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

“The Report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,” he said. “Through ‘transformative change’, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.”

Please note: In order to accommodate those without internet access, the first part of this article can be found in the Appendix, Item 4.

Sending Peace to the Earth Relaxation/Focusing Exercise

“Sit comfortably and let yourself be still inside. . . . Be aware of how your body is feeling. . . . Relax the body and breathe in the light of peace. . . . Let the light of peace surround you Breathe out any tension . . . and breathe in the light of peace. . . . Breathe out any tension . . . and breathe in the light of peace. . . . Invite the peace to relax your muscles more. . . . This peace is quiet and safe . . . it reminds me that I value peace. . . . Let yourself be very still and think . . . I am me . . . I am naturally full of peace and love. . . . Let your body relax even more . . . and focus on surrounding yourself with the light of peace. . . . The more you concentrate on peace, the more that peace will naturally go outward to nature . . . to the mountains and streams . . . to the clouds and the ocean . . . to the dolphins and the whales . . . to the birds . . . to the animals large and small. . . .



Concentrate on peace and see that peace flowing outward to our planet . . . to the rivers and ocean . . . to the trees and the meadows . . . to the mountains and the sky. . . . I am full of peace. . . . I am one who is acting to help our Earth be healthy again. . . . This will happen in time. . . . Our planet will be well. . . . I picture the light of peace all around the Earth . . . and our beautiful oceans being healthy again . . . our beautiful Earth being healthy again. . . . Feeling relaxed and peaceful . . . begin to be aware of where you are sitting and bring your attention back to this room.”

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 5 What is causing climate change?

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.

Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson. Allow them time to share their thoughts. Listen and acknowledge.

Lesson Content

Inform: In our last lesson we looked at the effects of climate change, the Paris Agreement and subsequent UN Climate Action Summits. The Paris Climate Change Agreement set the goal of “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C (2.7°F). . . . Human activities have already warmed the planet about 1°C (1.8°F) since the pre-industrial era”¹, that is the latter half of the 19th century. “At the current rate of warming, Earth would reach the 1.5°C threshold between 2030 and 2052.”

“Limiting warming to 1.5°C is not easy and requires drastic changes to our energy, transportation, food, and building systems. Net CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions need to drop 45 percent from their 2010 levels by 2030, and reach net-zero by 2050 (meaning that any

¹ Climate Central, April 2019



remaining CO₂ emissions would need to be offset by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere).

Meeting this goal involves a large jump in renewables for the global energy supply, providing 70-85 percent of electricity use by 2050.” ... It is also important to remove some “CO₂ from the atmosphere.” (The remainder of this article from Climate Central is in the Appendix, Item 3.)

Say, “So let’s look at how we humans contribute to the warming of the planet.

The warming of the planet is called the greenhouse effect.”

➤ Ask one of the students to read the following aloud to the group as you list the things that are causing global warming.

How do humans contribute to the Greenhouse Effect?

Source: West, Larry. *What is the Greenhouse Effect?* May 11, 2018. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-greenhouse-effect-1203853>

“While the greenhouse effect is an essential environmental prerequisite for life on Earth, there really can be too much of a good thing.

- The problems begin when human activities distort and accelerate the natural process by creating *more* greenhouse gases in the atmosphere than are necessary to warm the planet to an ideal temperature.
- Burning natural gas, coal and oil – including gasoline for automobile engines – raises the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- Some farming practices and land-use changes increase the levels of methane and nitrous oxide.
- Many factories produce long-lasting industrial gases that do not occur naturally, yet contribute significantly to the enhanced greenhouse effect and “global warming” that is currently under way.
- Deforestation also contributes to global warming. Trees use carbon dioxide and give off oxygen in its place, which helps to



create the optimal balance of gases in the atmosphere. As more forests are logged for timber or cut down to make way for farming, however, there are fewer trees to perform this critical function.”

- Ask another student to read the following aloud to the group as you continue to list the things that are causing global warming. Perhaps ask another student to help you mind map in order to keep up with the material being read.

What are the main man-made greenhouse gases?

Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/feb/04/man-made-greenhouse-gases>

“The strength of the Earth's [greenhouse effect](#) is determined by the concentration in the atmosphere of a handful of greenhouse gases. The one that causes the most warming overall is water vapour – though human activity [affects its level in the atmosphere indirectly rather than directly](#).”

The greenhouse gases that humans do emit directly in significant quantities are:

- **Carbon dioxide** (CO₂). Accounts for [around three-quarters](#) of the warming impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. The key source of CO₂ is the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, though deforestation is also a very significant contributor.
- **Methane** (CH₄). Accounts for [around 14%](#) of the impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. [Key sources](#) include agriculture (especially livestock and rice fields), fossil fuel extraction and the decay of organic waste in landfill sites. Methane doesn't persist in the atmosphere as long as CO₂, though its warming effect is much more potent for each gram of gas released.
- **Nitrous oxide** (N₂O). Accounts for [around 8%](#) of the warming impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. Key sources



include agriculture (especially nitrogen-fertilised soils and livestock waste) and industrial processes. Nitrous oxide is even more potent per gram than methane.

- **Fluorinated gases** ("F gases"). Account for [around 1%](#) of the warming impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. Key sources are industrial processes. F-gases are even more potent per gram than nitrous oxide.

Human activity also changes the planet's temperature in other ways. For example, vapour trails from planes, soot from fires and tropospheric ozone created indirectly by local pollution all tend to increase warming.

On the other hand, aerosol particles produced by some vehicles and industrial processes tend to bounce sunlight away from the earth, temporarily counteracting some of the warming caused by man-made greenhouse gases.

Discuss/Share

Share: "This list on the board is the things that are causing the warming of our Earth's atmosphere. It is the beginning of a list of the things that we can impact. Each one of us has an impact on the environment; we can make a difference. We will be adding to this list in the next couple of weeks."

➤ Ask:

- Discussion? Does anyone have a question about any of this?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

➤ Say, "Let's pick areas to explore in terms of the greenhouse gases that humans emit directly in significant quantities. Let's start with carbon dioxide (CO₂). This accounts for [about 'three-quarters'](#) of the warming impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. The key source of CO₂ is the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas.' Deforestation is also a very significant contributor.'"

Activity – Decreasing CO₂ Emissions



Step 1. Inform the students that you will be asking them to work as small groups to discuss ways to reduce CO₂ emissions. One way to decrease the use of coal, oil and gas is to use renewable energy sources.

Share the following news: As of April 2019, a third of global power capacity was based on renewable energy, a huge increase over ten years before.

Source: UN Climate Change News, 3 April 2019. <https://unfccc.int/news/renewable-energy-accounts-for-third-of-global-power-capacity-irena>

“The decade-long trend of strong growth in renewable energy capacity continued in 2018 with global additions of 171 gigawatts (GW), according to new data released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The annual increase of 7.9 per cent was bolstered by new additions from solar and wind energy, which accounted for 84 per cent of the growth. A third of global power capacity is now based on renewable energy.

Say, “We still have a long way to go, but we are moving in the right direction.”

Step 2. Divide students into small working groups. Ask them to discuss/research:

- current renewable energy industry methods being used to decrease the use of coal, oil and gas
- things people can do in their daily lives to decrease use of coal, oil and gas. Perhaps research the decrease in emissions if using a bicycle versus a car fueled by gasoline; how can we organize our lives to use less energy
- things people can do to decrease deforestation
- planting trees as something people and communities can do to combat climate change

Step 3. Ask each group to prepare a presentation to the class. These can be given during the next lesson.

Close with the Sending Peace to the Earth relaxation/focusing exercise.



SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 6 Decreasing Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.
Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson.

Allow them time to share their thoughts. Listen and acknowledge.

Activity

Step 1. Allow the small groups to prepare for their presentations.

Step 2. Invite each small group to present. As they present, create a list titled What We Can Do Daily on a large piece of paper or on the board of things people can do to decrease carbon dioxide emissions. After the first group, only list new actions. Keep that list in a prominent place. Lead the applause after each presentation.

Step 3. Ask them to think about increasing awareness of this challenge. Is everyone aware of the causes of climate change, the importance of decreasing emissions and what practical things they can do to help in this important task?

Step 4. Invite the small groups to create a song, poster, slogan or campaign to raise awareness.

Step 5. Invite them to share their creation with the entire group.

If there is time, close with a relaxation/focusing exercise of their choice.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 7 Deforestation and the Exchange Between Trees and Humans

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.

➤ Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson. Allow them time to share their thoughts. Listen and acknowledge.



➤ Ask:

- Are there any other practical things you have thought of that each of us could do to decrease carbon emissions? If so, add it to the viewable What We Can Do Daily list created during the previous lesson. (A sample What We Can Do Daily List is in the Appendix, Item 5.)
- How about turning off the television or putting on sleep a computer or tablet when not using it? Each one can do that.

Lesson Content

Source: National Geographic.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation/>

Climate 101: Deforestation

By Christina Nunez, published 7 February 2019

“As the world seeks to slow the pace of [climate change](#), preserve wildlife, and support billions of people, trees inevitably hold a major part of the answer. Yet the mass destruction of trees – deforestation – continues, sacrificing the long-term benefits of standing trees for short-term gain.

Forests still cover [about 30 percent](#) of the world’s land area, but they are disappearing at an alarming rate. Between 1990 and 2016, the world lost 502,000 square miles (1.3 million square kilometers) of forest, [according to the World Bank](#) – an area larger than South Africa. Since humans started cutting down forests, [46 percent of trees have been felled](#), according to a 2015 study in the journal Nature. About [17 percent](#) of the Amazonian rainforest has been [destroyed](#) over the past 50 years, and losses recently [have been on the rise](#).

We need trees for a variety of reasons, not least of which is that they absorb not only the carbon dioxide that we exhale, but also the heat-trapping greenhouse gases that human activities emit. As those gases enter the atmosphere, [global warming](#) increases, a trend scientists now prefer to call climate change. Tropical tree cover alone can



provide 23 percent of the climate mitigation needed over the next decade to meet goals [set in the Paris Agreement](#) in 2015, [according to one estimate](#).

Causes of deforestation

Farming, grazing of livestock, mining, and drilling combined account for [more than half of all deforestation](#). Forestry practices, wildfires and, in small part, urbanization account for the rest. In Malaysia and Indonesia, forests are cut down to make way for producing [palm oil](#), which can be found in [everything from shampoo to saltines](#). In the Amazon, cattle ranching and farms – particularly soy plantations – are [key culprits](#).

Logging operations, which provide the world's wood and paper products, also fell countless trees each year. Loggers, some of them [acting illegally](#), also build roads to access more and more remote forests – which leads to further deforestation. Forests are also cut as a result of growing urban sprawl as land is developed for homes.

Not all deforestation is intentional. Some is caused by a combination of human and natural factors like [wildfires](#) and overgrazing, which may prevent the growth of young trees.

Why it matters and what can be done

Deforestation affects the people and animals where trees are cut, as well as the wider world. Some [250 million people living in forest and savannah areas](#) depend on them for subsistence and income – many of them among the world's rural poor. Eighty percent of Earth's [land animals and plants live in forests](#), and deforestation threatens species including the [orangutan](#), [Sumatran tiger](#), and many species of birds. Removing trees deprives the forest of portions of its canopy, which blocks the sun's rays during the day and retains heat at night. That disruption leads to more extreme temperature swings that can be harmful to plants and animals.

Yet the effects of deforestation reach much farther. The South American rainforest, for example, influences regional and perhaps



even global water cycles, and it's [key to the water supply](#) in Brazilian cities and neighboring countries. The Amazon actually helps furnish water to some of the soy farmers and beef ranchers who are clearing the forest. The loss of clean water and biodiversity from all forests could have many other effects we can't foresee, [touching even your morning cup of coffee](#).

In terms of climate change, cutting trees both adds carbon dioxide to the air and removes the ability to absorb existing carbon dioxide. If tropical deforestation were a country, according to the [World Resources Institute](#), it would rank third in carbon dioxide-equivalent emissions, behind China and the U.S.

The numbers are grim, but [many conservationists see reasons for hope](#). A movement is under way to preserve existing forest ecosystems and restore lost tree cover. Organizations and activists are working to fight illegal mining and logging – National Geographic Explorer Topher White, for example, has come up with a way to use recycled [cell phones to monitor for chainsaws](#). In Tanzania, the residents of Kokota have [planted more than 2 million trees](#) on their small island over a decade, aiming to repair previous damage. And in Brazil, [conservationists are rallying](#) in the face of [ominous signals](#) that the government may roll back forest protections.

For consumers, it makes sense to examine the products and meats you buy, looking for sustainably produced sources when you can.”

Discuss/Share

➤ Ask:

- Would anyone like to share their response to the article?
- Any other responses or questions?
- Trees benefit us by taking in the carbon dioxide we exhale and producing oxygen. How else do trees benefit us?
- Do you have a favorite tree? Why do you love that tree?

★ The United Nations Environmental Protection Agency has a project asking people to plant one tree per person to help offset our



carbon footprint. There was a one billion tree project in China and they achieved their goal of planting one billion trees.

•Would you like to plant some trees as a class project?

➤ If the response is yes, discuss the practicalities for your situation and make a plan. *Consider:*

Would you like to do something schoolwide/university-wide or in cooperation with your town/city?

Or, would you like to plant more trees at your home or in a deforested area?

What trees would most benefit your area and the people in it?

Activity

Ask each student to write a message to the world from a tree or an animal in a forest. It can be a simple message or it can take the form of a poem or a song. Allow those who wish to share their message, poem or song to do so. If some have created songs, sing them as a group. If there is time, allow the students to write a response back to the tree – and share those.

Close with playing music with the sounds of nature and invite the young adults to share a line from their poem or song.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 8 Plastic, Toxic Gyres and the Effect on Marine Life

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.

Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson. Allow them time to share their thoughts and comment about the tree planting plan, if it's on. Listen and acknowledge.

Lesson Content

Inform: Eight to ten percent of the total oil supply goes to making plastic, adding significantly to the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. However, plastic is also causing other problems.



- If students have the ability to do internet research in the classroom, allow them to do so, and then invite them to share in small groups. Or, share with them the following information.

The processing of 17 million barrels of oil for one country to make bottles of water produced more than 2.5 million tons of carbon dioxide. It took three liters of water to produce one liter of bottled water.²

“The manufacture of one pound of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic can produce up to three pounds of carbon dioxide. . . . The manufacture of plastic resins accounts for the highest percentage of a plastic bottle's carbon footprint. During processing, hydrocarbons in petroleum and natural gas are heated to extremely high temperatures to break down large hydrocarbon molecules into smaller ones.” Processing plastic resins and transporting plastic bottles contribute to a bottle's carbon footprint in a major way. Estimates show that one 500-milliliter (0.53 quarts) plastic bottle of water has a total carbon footprint equal to 82.8 grams (about 3 ounces) of carbon dioxide.³

Plastic Bags in Our Oceans⁴

“Plastic bags in our oceans are a source of dioxin and other pollutants that are changing marine habitats and polluting our food chain. . . .

Thousands of marine animals choke and die from ingesting this plastic, and many more are being slowly poisoned by the dioxin and other pollutants introduced by this mass of plastic. Dioxin is an endocrine disrupter, a so-called gender-bender pollutant because it causes gender mutations in fish and land animals that eat fish, like sea bass, seals, and even polar bears.

² <https://pacinst.org/publication/bottled-water-and-energy-a-fact-sheet/>

³ <https://sciencing.com/carbon-footprint-plastic-bottle-12307187.html>

⁴ <https://1bagatatime.com/learn/plastic-bags-oceans/>



The plastic in our oceans affects us all. It enters our food chain. It contributes to extinction. It pollutes the very water that replenishes our planet.”

Ocean Gyres

Source: <http://5gyres.org>

“Our oceans are dynamic systems, made up of complex networks of currents that circulate water around the world. Large systems of these currents, coupled with wind and the earth’s rotation, create “gyres”, massive, slow rotating whirlpools. There are five major gyres in the oceans of the world in which plastic trash has accumulated.”

Plastic Pollution Affects Sea Life Throughout the Ocean

Source: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2018/09/24/plastic-pollution-affects-sea-life-throughout-the-ocean>

“According to the United Nations, at least [800 species](#) worldwide are affected by marine debris, and as much as 80 percent of that litter is plastic. It is estimated that up to 13 million metric tons of plastic ends up in the ocean each year – the equivalent of a rubbish or garbage truck load’s worth every minute. Fish, seabirds, sea turtles, and marine mammals can become entangled in or ingest plastic debris, causing suffocation, starvation, and drowning. Humans are not immune to this threat: While plastics are estimated to take up to hundreds of years to fully decompose, some of them break down much quicker into tiny particles, which in turn end up in the [seafood we eat](#).”

- Please share the following story, taken from LVE’s *Green Values Club* book, Chapter Three. In Chapter Two, Katie and George have found and caught an injured seagull at the beach in the previous chapter. Katie is George’s older sister.



Share a Story: Toxic Plastic Soup

Katie and George took turns carrying the gull home after they tied the dinghy next to Papa's boat.

"He's heavier than he looks," panted George.

"I'll take him for a while," Katie replied, holding out her arms for the gull.

Papa and Mama were at the kitchen table when they got home. "Still hungry?" asked Papa. "You both did a lot this morning."

George and Katie told their story as they sat at the table while Papa poured some yummy smelling soup into two bowls.

Mama had taken the gull into her lap and was gently examining its wing. "He's had a rough time with that plastic bag, it looks like. Besides being underweight, it looks like he has a broken wing."

Mama soon had gauze tape wrapped around the gull to hold the broken wing still. "He should be almost as good as new in two or three weeks, unless he's been eating plastic," she said. "George, can you find a big box for him?"

"The beach was full of trash today," said Katie, "more than I've ever seen. Plastic caps and bottles, plastic cups and bags, food wrappers, Styrofoam cups, soda cans – it was terrible."

Papa frowned. "People!" He said it like a swear word.

"Papa, you sound more upset than usual about the trash," said George, bringing in a big cardboard box.

"Yeah, I am," said Papa. "Here, let me give you a hand." He grabbed a knife and helped George cut the top of the cardboard box for the gull.

"I've known for years that sea birds, dolphins, whales, seals, sea turtles and many marine animals get caught in nets, fishing wire and human trash, but I just learned last week that *over 60 percent* of marine mammals and seabirds get entangled in human trash or eat marine debris. When they eat plastic trash it causes internal injury, intestinal blockage and starvation. I had no idea the percentage of animals being hurt was that high."

"And the gyres in the ocean are growing," said Mama softly. "There are now five huge gyres in different parts of the world where the plastic trash is accumulating. The plastic breaks down into small pieces over time and the animals are mistaking it for food and eating it."



Papa and George had finished cutting off the top of the box. The family went outside with the box, Katie cradling the gull. The gull seemed to know it was being cared for. It had stopped squawking when Mama immobilized his broken wing. It was bright and beautiful outside, with a soft breeze. The trees gave some needed shade to the patio.

“You’re going to be just fine,” said Katie as she and George petted the gull. Katie brought some food for the gull and George brought some water. They were happy to see the gull eating. They arranged the box so the gull was safe, putting a heavy grill over the box and anchoring it with four stones so a cat couldn’t get him.

“What can we do about it?” Katie asked.

“About what?” said Mama.

“About the animals getting all entangled and the gyres.”

Papa and Mama looked at her and then at each other.

“You know, Katie, you and George are terrific about not trashing our world, and your Papa and I shop carefully, but I think it’s time to think more and do more and spread the word. Our Earth, our ocean, is in trouble.”

“I want to help,” said George.

“Great,” Mama smiled. “I think not being a litterbug is important and our family never uses Styrofoam which is full of toxins, but it’s time to do much more than that. We need to not buy things that harm the Earth. What’s creating the gyres in the ocean is plastic. Some of them are thousands of miles by thousands of miles – it’s like toxic plastic soup! The North Pacific Gyre is twice the size of the United States.”

“How about we don’t buy plastic?” asked George.

“Well, not buying any plastic is not practical,” said Mama slowly.

“A lot of things are made of hard plastic, like computer keyboards, games and certain car parts. We can recycle those things when they get old – and buy fewer things. It’s mostly the one-use disposal plastic that is the problem. So not buying that is a great idea. If we really try, we could probably cut buying one-use disposable plastic things by at least 90%.”



“Do you mean like plastic cups, plastic bags and water in plastic bottles?” asked Katie.

“Exactly,” said Mama.

“That’s going to be a little hard,” said George. “Does that mean no sodas in plastic bottles?”

“Yes. Can you do that?” asked Papa with a questioning look.

George winched. “Maybe for the gulls and the seals and the dolphins I could.”

“And we could bring our own cloth shopping bags to the store,” said Katie. “We could use a glass bottle or metal bottle when we want to bring water somewhere and we could use it over and over again.”

“Terrific idea,” said Mama. “And I could shop locally at Farmers Markets and try to not buy food wrapped in plastic. And we can wash our sandwich bags and reuse them, or use waxed paper or banana leaves.”

“Your mother and I have been talking about this a lot the last few days,” said Papa. “We’re going to see if the city council will ban plastic bags. Would you like to come to the city council meeting with us?”

“Maybe some of our friends could come too,” said Katie.

“Wow,” said George, his face lighting up, “what if everyone did this? Maybe we could stop the gyres growing. Toxic plastic soup does not sound good for animals or the ocean. What do you think Mr. Gull?” he asked, looking at the seagull.

Did the seagull just nod in approval?

➤ Ask:

- What values did you perceive in the story?
- Which of the ideas in the story about not contributing to plastic waste would work in your life?
- Do you have other ideas about not contributing to plastic waste?

Lesson Content

Please share the following content with students.

Source: <http://5gyres.org>

“Just a generation ago, we packaged our products in reusable or recyclable materials – glass, metals, and paper, and designed



products that would last. Today, our landfills and beaches are awash in plastic packaging, and expendable products that have no value at the end of their short lifecycle.

The short-term convenience of using and throwing away plastic products carries a very inconvenient long-term truth. These plastic water bottles, cups, utensils, electronics, toys, and gadgets we dispose of daily are rarely recycled in a closed loop. We currently recover only 5% of the plastics we produce. What happens to the rest of it? Roughly 50% is buried in landfills, some is remade into durable goods, and much of it remains “unaccounted for”, lost in the environment where it ultimately washes out to sea.

In the ocean, some of ... plastics ... and foamed plastics float on the oceans' surface. Sunlight and wave action cause these floating plastics to fragment, breaking into increasingly smaller particles, but never completely disappearing – at least on any documented time scale. This plastic pollution is becoming a hazard for marine wildlife, and ultimately for us.

The North Pacific Gyre, the most heavily researched for plastic pollution, spans an area roughly twice the size of the United States – though it is a fluid system, shifting seasonally in size and shape. Designed to last, plastic trash in the gyre will remain for decades or longer, being pushed gently in a slow, clockwise spiral towards the center. Most of the research on plastic trash circulating in oceanic gyres has focused on the North Pacific, but there are 5 major oceanic gyres worldwide, with several smaller gyres in Alaska and Antarctica.

We must demand zero tolerance for plastic pollution. Reducing our consumption and production of plastic waste, and choosing cost-effective alternatives will go a long way towards protecting our seas – and ultimately ourselves.”

- Ask:
 - Does anyone want to share their response to this information?



- Can you think of other ideas to prevent plastic becoming trash in fields and rivers?
- Can you think of other ideas to help not contribute to plastic waste?
- It's hard to do some of these things sometimes. What thought would encourage you to commit to not using single-use plastic items?

Activity

Step 1. Show the students pictures of the gyres. There are many websites on this subject.

Step 2. If there is time, allow the young adults to divide into small groups to further research this topic, such as the effects of Styrofoam and how plastic particles in the ocean “act as sponges for waterborne contaminants such as PCBs, DDT and other pesticides, PAHs and many hydrocarbons washed through our watersheds.” (Same as source cited above.)

Step 3. Invite each small group to create a poster with their message.

Step 4. Invite each group to display their poster. They may wish to display their posters around the class and school, and post pictures of their posters and messages on social media sites.

Close with the Sending Peace to the Earth relaxation/focusing exercise. Perhaps add a line or two more about the ocean and marine animals and seabirds.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 9 Nitrous Oxide Emissions and the Ocean's Dead Zones

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.

Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson. Allow them time to share their thoughts. Listen and acknowledge.

Lesson Content

Share: “We learned in prior lessons that . . .

Nitrous oxide (N₂O). Accounts for [around 8%](#) of the warming impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. Key sources include



agriculture (especially nitrogen-fertilized soils and livestock waste) and industrial processes. Nitrous oxide is even more potent per gram than methane.”

Please read the abbreviated version of Chapter Four of the *Green Values Club* below.

Share a Story: We Can Make a Difference

Katie talked to some of her friends at school on Monday. They were amazed to hear about how she and George helped their father cut the netting off the trapped whale, rescued the seagull with the broken wing, and totally didn’t know about the gyres.

“Why don’t you talk to the teacher?” asked Carol. “Let’s see if she’ll let you tell the class about the gyres and the animals that die because they eat plastic. Maybe we can all get involved in helping.”

“You really think everyone will want to?” asked Katie.

“Well maybe not everyone,” said Kinesha, “but kids our age have really good hearts. We care about our planet – and our animal friends.”

The girls talked to their science teacher at break and she was delighted. “Yes,” Ms. Bennett said. “Katie, it would be great to have you share your story, and then let’s see what ideas everyone comes up with. Learning about things is good, but doing something for our Earth is proof that we care.”

Katie shared her story about the whale, the seagull and learning about the gyres with the whole class. She was a little nervous, and kept clearing her throat. She shared the ideas she and her family had come up with about reducing their use of one-use disposal plastic by 90 percent. Katie was amazed at the interest and the willingness of most of the students to commit to using less plastic.

“No more plastic bottles for me,” offered Dana.

“My aunt brings her own cup when she travels on planes,” offered Ta.

“No more plastic cups or straws when I’m out,” said Maria, “I can ask for a real cup or bring my own.”



“Great ideas,” said Todd. “If it’s going to help, I’m willing to not buy plastic bottles of stuff. But, what if it’s really, really hot and I really want a soda? What if I buy it in a can?”

“Well, using an aluminum can is taking something you don’t need from the Earth,” said Ms. Bennett, “but IF you recycle it’s not so bad. It’s much better than using plastic.”

“Well, I don’t know,” said a girl named Pam in a doubting voice, “why should we even try? If just a few of us do this, it’s not going to help. We can’t affect thousands of square miles of toxic plastic soup.”

“Think of the one whale and the one seagull,” said Katie, all of the sudden feeling confident. “It was a few people that made a difference for them. Small groups of people can make a difference – and imagine what would happen if kids all over the world did this. Some adults are really into this already. What if all the kids got all their parents to help?”

Katie shared her parents’ idea about going to city council to ask for a ban on using plastic bags and plastic straws in the city. “I asked if I could invite some friends to go with us. Would anyone like to help?”

“Me,” “me,” “me” was heard all around the room.

Ms. Bennett divided them into three action groups on Friday. One group was going to make posters to support the ban on plastic bags and straws and another group was going to make up banners with slogans on respect for the ocean and the Earth by reducing the use of disposable plastic. The third group was going to create a petition to the school superintendent to ban all Styrofoam and reduce the use of plastic.

George and Katie talked on the way home. Katie told all him all about Ms. Bennett’s science class on the environment.

“She told us,” said Katie, “that there are dead zones in the ocean where there is little or no oxygen due to fertilizer-run-off and nitrogen pollution. She said that there are 405 reported dead zones and that they are doubling every ten years!”

“That’s terrible,” said George. “So what happens in these dead zones?” asked George. “There isn’t enough oxygen for most fish to live?”



“Good thinking,” said Katie. “Unfortunately, the fertilizer-run-off and nitrogen pollution and pesticides kill the kelp. She showed us some pictures of these really cool kelp forests. They are so beautiful. The kelp forests provide food and shelter to thousands of species – and 50 percent of the world’s oxygen! Ms. Bennett said it’s just as important to keep the kelp forests healthy as it is to keep the rain forests healthy!”

“So how do we stop the fertilizer-run-off and nitrogen pollution?” asked George.

“George, that’s a really great question. We didn’t think to ask it,” said Katie. “Let’s ask Mama and Papa when we get home.”

Katie’s mind flashed back. What had Ms. Bennett said?

“The chemical fertilizers and pesticides pollute the rivers and ocean,” Ms. Bennett had said. “Unfortunately, this can also impact the ground water and negatively affect the quality of the soil. Food grown with pesticides has been shown to have harmful effects on humans, contributing to many different kinds of disease.”

Ms. Bennett had assigned different groups to research specific components of fertilizers and pesticides. Tanya was part of the group Katie was in. “Wow,” Tanya had whispered to Katie, “no wonder we have dead zones in the ocean! Gyres and dead zones. We humans are not taking good care of our world.”

Ms. Bennett overheard, “You’re right, Tanya,” she smiled. “It’s important to take care of our world.”

Lesson Content

Source: The following excerpts were taken from the website of One World One Ocean.



The ocean is in trouble. **90% of the big fish are gone.** Tuna, swordfish, halibut, cod, and flounder populations have been devastated by overfishing. Many of the fish caught today never even have the chance to reproduce.



“There are a reported 405 ocean ‘dead zones’ — areas where there is little to no oxygen due to fertilizer run-off and nitrogen pollution. Dead zones are doubling every ten years.

Our oceans account for 71% of the planet, but less than 2% of our oceans are protected. We have protections in place for nearly 12% of all land (through areas like national parks).

The ocean is at a tipping point. Oceanographer Sylvia Earle says human actions over the next 10 years will determine the state of the ocean for the next 10,000 years.”

Lesson Content

Please read, or have one of the students read, the following information.

Source: Dolphin Research Center.

“Toxins enter the marine environment through land-based runoff and air pollution as well as ocean dumping. Things we use every day, like automobiles, air conditioners, and household products, create many toxins. Researchers routinely find high levels of toxins in the blubber of stranded marine mammals.

For years we dumped heavy metals and organic pollutants into our oceans thinking it was a resource so vast it could absorb any and all materials. It now seems that the oceans are finally becoming saturated. The evidence is in the marine life itself. Fish, turtles, and, most recently, dolphins are now growing cancerous tumors. There is also evidence that pollution in our oceans is weakening the immune systems of marine mammals.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), which are linked to immune system suppression and reproductive failure, exist in extremely high levels in the blubber of dead dolphins and whales in many parts of the world. PCBs are a form of industrial waste.

Sewage and runoff from excess fertilizer feeds the growth of algae, which not only produce toxins, but also rob the water of huge



amounts of oxygen needed by other forms of aquatic life to survive. Anything that upsets the delicate balance of the natural food web can ultimately destroy those species at the top: dolphins, whales, and humans.

Certain chemicals such as DDT and PCBs disrupt biological processes and cause widespread sterility, cancers and genetic abnormalities in populations of land animals.”

Discuss/Share

Invite the students to share their reactions to the given information, acknowledging their concerns and answering any questions.

Ask:

- Have you ever seen green algae growing on rocks near the ocean’s coast? (That is actually algae growing as a result of fertilizer contamination and is an indicator that the ocean in that area is polluted.)

Activity

Step 1. Ask the young adults form small groups and think about possible solutions. They may wish to do some further research.

Step 2. Ask each group to share their discussion and thoughts about possible solutions. Begin a Possible Actions list as they report. Is there anything they can do now?

End with the relaxation/focusing exercise, Sending Peace to the Earth.

SIMPLICITY AND CARING FOR THE EARTH AND HER OCEANS LESSON 10

Methane Emissions and Diet

Begin with a song with lyrics about nature.

Ask how they are and if they have been thinking about the last lesson. Allow them time to share their thoughts. Listen and acknowledge.



Lesson Content

Share: “We learned a couple of lessons back that: Methane (CH₄). Accounts for [around 14%](#) of the impact of current human greenhouse-gas emissions. [Key sources](#) include agriculture (especially livestock and rice fields), fossil fuel extraction and the decay of organic waste in landfill sites. Methane doesn't persist in the atmosphere as long as CO₂, though its warming effect is much more potent for each gram of gas released.”

Inform the class that you are going to share an excerpt from another chapter of the *Green Values Club*.

Share a Story: An Organic Garden

Katie announced at dinner one night, “I’ve decided on my answer to Ms. Bennett’s homework question about one thing we can do that will most benefit the planet.”

“What’s that?” asked Mama.

“Be a vegetarian that eats organic food,” said Katie.

“How would that help?” asked George looking puzzled.

“Well,” said Katie enthusiastically, “if everyone was a vegetarian then people wouldn’t fish and we wouldn’t be overfishing and killing millions of fish, and if we all ate organic food then we wouldn’t be poisoning the ocean and creating dead zones and the oceans would have healthy kelp forests and enough oxygen for a healthy ocean and enough fish again for the whales, and then the whales and dolphins wouldn’t be getting trapped in nets because no one would be using nets!”

“You’ve really been thinking about this,” said Papa, looking a little surprised.

“And,” said Katie with a big smile, “that’s not all. If everyone was a vegetarian, then we wouldn’t be deforesting the Amazon because of the production of cattle and the demand for meat and the output of greenhouse gasses would be less so the whole planet would be healthier.”

“Good reasoning,” said Mama.

“But you’re not really going to do it are you?” asked George.

“Do what?” asked Katie.



“Be a vegetarian.”

“Well,” said Katie, with a pause and a pleading look at her parents, “I was thinking that maybe I can’t be a vegetarian that eats *only* organic food, but I could be a vegetarian that eats as much organic food as we can get.” She took a deep breath as she looked at Mama and Papa. “I would really like to try it. Can I please? I really do think it would help our planet.”

Mama looked at Katie, and then at Papa. “Luke?”

Papa looked at Mama. “It’s okay with me. She has some great reasons. Is it okay with you?”

“Oh Katie,” Mama said with a tiny worried look. “You would have to promise me that you would eat healthy.”

“The World Health Organization says it’s the healthiest diet for human beings,” said Katie.

“If you eat healthy,” said Mama firmly. “Promise?”

“Yes.”

“Okay. Then it is okay with me,” Mama said.

Katie sprang up and gave Mama and then Papa a big hug.

“I am proud that you’ve really thought about it and want to help our planet,” said Mama.

“Is it okay if I’m a vegetarian with her for two months and see if it works for me?” Papa asked Mama with a quizzical look.

Mama just laughed as she looked at her husband. Then she looked at her son with a questioning look. “George?”

“Not me,” cringed George. “It wasn’t my homework!”

“Okay,” laughed Mama. “Two veggies and two non-veggies. But if you two don’t eat healthy, I’m changing my mind!”

Discuss

- What do you think the best human diet would be to help our Earth and the ocean?

Activity

Divide the young adults into two or four groups, as you wish, and study the following.

Group One: The impact of the production of cattle, chickens and other animals in response to the demand for meat and the



relationship of this to climate change. Include the output of greenhouse gasses and deforestation as a result of cattle production.

Group Two: Study the effect of different diets on your carbon footprint: meat-based diet, vegetarian diet, vegan diet.

Group Three: Study the effect of nitrogen-based fertilizers versus organic fertilizers on the Earth and her rivers and oceans. They may wish to create a mind map or a flow chart of the effects. They could include the benefits or harmful effects of non-organic versus organic food on the human body. Invite each group to share their findings.

Close with a relaxation/focusing exercise of your or their choice.

We hope you and those with whom you work enjoy and benefit from Living Values Education.

Thank you for your dedication to young people and nurturing hearts as well as educating minds.



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Notes

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