



SEDONA RECYCLES

KEEPING THE RED ROCKS GREEN SINCE 1989

The Earth Needs You

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Overview

The earth is hanging in the balance between extreme environmental damage and increasing social awareness that can remedy some of this harm. We often do not recognize ourselves as contributing to environmental degradation because we are so ingrained in our habits. This activity helps students recognize the individual and collective impact our choices make.

Objectives

- Identify habits that are detrimental to the environment.
- Understand the need for diligence and awareness to change these habits.
- Explore strategies for helping your school become more environmentally friendly.
- Compare the actions and situations that lead to a polluted planet.

Grade Level: 3-8

Suggested Time: 30 minutes - 1 hour

Multimedia Resources

- <http://www.dodofilms.com> (how to make a home compost bin, how to reduce fast food trash)
- <http://www.earthshare.org.green-tips.html>

Materials

- “The Earth Needs You” question list (at end of lesson plan).
- Masking tape, chalk, or yard stick to mark 3 points on the floor.

Before the Lesson

- Measure 10 feet of space, mark the beginning, middle, and end.
- Print out “The Earth Needs You” sheet. Cut into strips, 1 question per strip.

The Lesson

Part I: How Much Do We Affect Our Planet?

1. Tell students that you would like them to think about all the things they do during the day that help or harm the planet. What could they do better that they often do not?
2. Does one person make a difference? What about a small group? What if no one acted until they were sure everyone would?
3. Our earth is hanging in the balance between health and disaster. This activity will help us to think about which direction we are pushing the environment.
 - a. Choose two student volunteers, one to be earth moving toward health, one to be earth moving toward pollution.
 - b. Have them stand on the middle marked line, both facing the same direction. The forward facing line is health, the backward facing line is pollution.
 - c. Have each student in the remaining group read a question from the strips, one at a time. Have the group of students raise their hands if their answer is yes to the question. Count the yeses.
 - d. If the majority is yes, have the healthy earth move forward one step. If the majority is no, have the polluted earth step backward. Note: You will need to agree on the size of a step.
 - e. Go through the questions until one of the earths reaches one of the lines.
4. Explain to the students that our everyday actions do add up. We create the type of environment we live in, healthy or polluted, by our actions.

Part II: What Can We Do Better at School?

1. Ask students if they notice anything at school that might push the earth in either direction.
2. Why do you think the environmentally harmful things happen?
3. Can the damaging habits be corrected? How?
 - a. Break students into groups and have each pick an unsustainable practice at school to work on.
 - b. Create an action plan to change the behavior.

Extension (Optional)

- <http://www.cbkassociates.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/The-Five-Stages-of-Service-Learning.pdf>

Check for Understanding

- What does it mean to take care of the environment?
- Whose job is it?
- Can any of us afford not to be environmentally conscious?
- If a corporation or business does not follow earth friendly practices, what are some things you can you do?

“The Earth Need You” question list

Do you take short showers?

Do you shut off water while brushing your teeth?

Do you shut off water while washing hands?

Do you remind your family to save water?

Do you recycle EVERYTHING you can?

Do you ask your parents not to buy things that aren't recyclable?

Do you use scrap paper instead of brand new paper?

Do you carry a reusable water bottle?

Do you do a zero waste lunch at school?

Do you eat organic vegetables?

Do you grow some of your own food?

Do you compost food scraps?

Do you turn off lights when you leave a room?

Do you shut off electronics when not in use?

Do you unplug electronics when not in use?

Do you walk or bike places?

Do you buy things from environmentally responsible companies?

Do you use non-toxic cleaning supplies?

Do you pick up litter off the ground?

Do you use washable towels instead of disposable paper towels and napkins?

Do you buy clothes or toys from thrift stores?

Do you Reduce, Reuse, and then Recycle, in this order?

Do you share what you have learned with your family?

Do you choose having experiences over buying stuff?