

# TEACHERS ACTIVITIES



## Theme:

The earth's gifts are shared by all of its life forms.

## Topics For Discussion:

The poem, *Our Big Home*, mentions many of the earth's "gifts." Brainstorm with students what some of these gifts are and write them on the board.



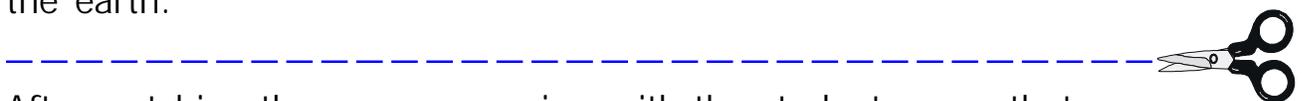
The sun, water, earth, and air connect plants, animals and people in a web of life. Discuss with students ways in which this interconnection works and how they are a part of it.



Discuss the concepts of "volunteerism" and "donations." Ask students ways in which people volunteer to assist others and the types of items they might donate to help.



Discuss with students ways in which they can be responsible for caring for the earth.



After watching the program, review with the students ways that young people were able to make a difference in their world.

## Curriculum Extension Activities:

Enlist the help of the library media specialist and gather some world atlases and books that have straightforward explanations of the earth's geographical features. Give students the task of finding definitions and examples of the following terms: continent, island, ocean, sea, mountain, country, state, peninsula, desert, river, lake, prairie, jungle, equator, pole, glacier, volcano, forest, canal, and swamp. Each student needs to find only one term and be able to explain it the rest of the class. Have each researcher make one page for a geography "reference book," to write a definition and draw a picture of one of the terms. Place the book in the classroom library.

Have students draw pictures of themselves in their world. Encourage them to include details that show the interrelationship of plants, animals, and people around them.



In the **Reading Rainbow** program, LeVar is admiring the flags on the United Nations plaza in New York City. Have students use the internet to research flags of the world and complete a fact sheet containing the following information: name of country, colors in the flag, symbols (if any) in the flag, reason why the flag looks as it does, and a sketch of the flag. If there is color printing capability, a small picture of the flag may replace the sketch. Assemble all of the students' research pages into a "Flags of the World" book for the classroom library. These internet sites will be useful:

- "Flags of the World" shows the flags by country and gives a bit of history about the designs. Downloadable black-and-white outlines that can be printed and colored in are available. URL: <http://www.fotw.net/flags/>
- "World Flag Database" gives a detailed picture of the flags and facts about the country. URL: <http://www.flags.net/>



Assemble students into groups of three or four. Have each group plan and then dramatize a scene in which they are helping people or their environment. Possible dramatizations include: planting a tree, picking up trash on a neighborhood street, tidying up the classroom, doing chores for an elderly neighbor, collecting food for the Food Bank, making a friend of someone new to the school, helping someone learn to read, etc. After they have had a chance to rehearse, videotape the final products. Have each group end the scene by looking into the camera and saying, "YOU can make a difference!" Share the video with other classes.



Work with other classrooms in the building and plan a "multicultural fair." Each room chooses a country of the world to research. Have students find information about the country's location on the map, the primary language spoken there, the flag, famous landmarks or geographical features, foods, clothing, holidays and other special days, occupations of the people, and the like. Read folk tales and other stories set in the country. Enlist the help of the music teacher to learn songs and the art teacher to make projects that can be used to "decorate" the classrooms to represent their countries. Solicit parent volunteers to help students prepare simple foods typical of each country. Have students plan a short program of stories, songs, and information to present to other classrooms. Set aside time for students to "visit" the other countries.



Contact universities or local cultural centers or utilize resources in the neighborhood to locate people who might visit the school and talk about their native cultures. Invite them to share artifacts, tell stories, sing songs, etc. Follow up the visits with discussions about similarities, as well as differences, regarding the lives of the students and the lives of the guest speakers.

Give students a piece of drawing paper cut in a 3 ½-inch square and instruct them to draw a picture of something in nature—a plant, an animal, a scene, etc. Mix up a batch of inexpensive clay dough. (See directions below.) Roll the dough 3/16 to ¼ inch thick, cut it into 3 ½ inch squares, and allow the squares to dry. (This dough is easy to handle, and the pieces will dry over night.) Give each student a square and have her/him paint the picture from the paper onto the “tile.” Allow the pictures to dry and arrange them in table-top display called “Our Big Home.”

Directions for making the clay dough:

Stir 1 cup corn starch and 2 cups baking soda in a saucepan together with 1 ¼ cups cold water and 1 Tbsp. cooking oil. Stirring constantly, cook over medium heat until mixture reaches the consistency of slightly dry mashed potatoes. Mixture will come to a boil, then start to thicken, first in lumps and then in a thick mass—it should hold its shape. Pour the mixture onto a plate and cover with a damp cloth until cool. After it is cool, place it on a surface dusted with corn starch and knead it until smooth.



Rainbows are often symbols of unity and hope. Work together with the entire school to make a rainbow that can be placed in a prominent place, such as near the entrance hall or in the cafeteria. Have each grade level take a different color in the rainbow. Give every student construction paper in that color and have them make a tracing of their hand and cut it out. Assign the task of assembling all the handprints in rainbow color order on the wall to classes of older students. Title the array, “Dream a Rainbow,” and invite students of all ages to write what that statement means to them. Display the writings next to the rainbow.

### Supplemental Books:

IF THE WORLD WERE A VILLAGE: A Book About The World’s People  
by David J. Smith, illus. by Shelagh Armstrong (Kids Can Press)

TO BE A KID  
by Maya Ajmera & John D. Ivanko (Charlesbridge)

THE EARTH AND I  
by Frank Asch (Gulliver Green/Harcourt)

ALL IN A DAY  
by Mitsumasa Anno and eight other artists from around the world (Philomel)

IN MY WORLD  
by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt)

ALL THE COLORS OF THE EARTH  
by Sheila Hamanaka (Morrow)

THE COLORS OF US  
by Karen Katz (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)

DAY THE EARTH WAS SILENT

by Michael McGuffee, illus. by Edward Sulliver (Inquiring Voices Press)

THE BLUE & GREEN ARK: AN ALPHABET FOR PLANET EARTH

by Brian Patten, illus. by 11 different artists (Scholastic)

EARTHDANCE

by Joanne Ryder, illus. by Norman Gorbaty (Henry Holt)

DEAR CHILDREN OF THE EARTH: A LETTER FROM HOME

by Schim Schimmel (NorthWord Press)

PEOPLE

by Peter Spier (Doubleday)

WHAT A WONDERFUL WORLD

by Bob Thiele & George David Weiss, illus. by Ashley Bryan (Atheneum)

SOMEWHERE TODAY: A BOOK OF PEACE

by Shelley Moore Thomas, illus. by Eric Futran (Albert Whitman)

FOR EVERY CHILD

adapted by Caroline Castle from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, illus. by 14 artists from around the world (Phyllis Fogelman/Penguin Putnam)

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