

Lesson Plan - April

Kindness to the Earth

- Every April we celebrate Earth Day and there are so many ways to celebrate that can be impactful year-round.
- Appreciating nature is the first step to caring for the Earth and our ecosystems.
- It's important to get students outdoors where they can explore the symbiotic relationship between us and our planet.

The Earth Takes Care of Everyone

- Everyone (literally) lives on the Earth, so we should take care of the planet; after all, the planet takes care of us in multiple ways.
- The Earth provides all the food we eat (even the junk food!)
- The oxygen we breathe is all thanks to the trees and plants we live with everyday.
 - Did you know that most of the oxygen on the planet is produced from tiny phytoplankton that live in our oceans?
 - These organisms provide as much oxygen as a trillion trees!
- Studies from the University of Derby showed that interacting with nature everyday for 30 days made people happier, healthier, and more connected to nature.

Earth Day Tips

- Fresh water isn't unlimited: to cut down on water usage, make sure to turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth, don't dilly-dally in the shower, and embrace new technologies that use water more efficiently.
 - Ask your class if they can think of ways to use less water. Are there ways to better use the water we have, like rain water or grey (used) water?
- The Earth likes to look nice and clean, throwing away trash is awesome, but finding ways to reduce the amount of trash we produce is going the extra mile.
 - One of the best ways is using reusable items, like water bottles, bags, straws etc.
 - Ask your students if they use any reusable items.
 - Can they brainstorm what items could be made reusable?

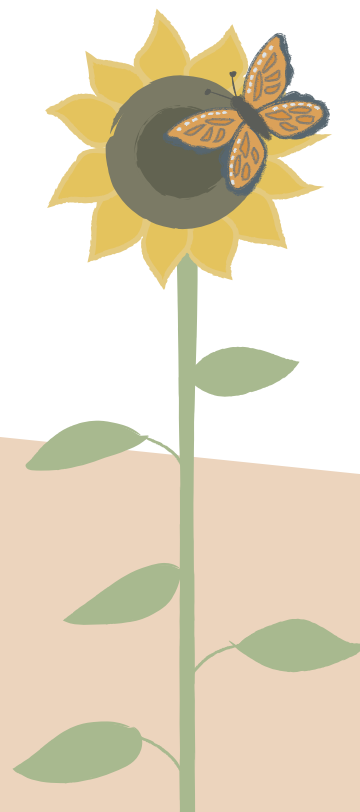
Show kindness to the Earth because it shows kindness to you.



Activity 1 - Turning a New Leaf

The goal of this activity is to have students foster an appreciation toward nature by exploring their outside environment.

- Materials: Paper, pencil, and coloring utensils
- First, take students to an outside area with natural elements.
- Tell them to find 3 leaves; they could be from a tree or bush.
 - Leaves that are durable and sturdy are best.
- Once students are finished, return back inside and pass out paper.
 - This paper can be any size you choose, but standard letter size is fine.
- Students will then make a tree by using the samples they collected as stencils for the leaves.
 - There is no wrong way to do this; variety and creativity should be encouraged!
- Once they find a composition they are happy with, they can start coloring in their artwork.
 - Remind students that trees have multiple colors of leaves like green, yellow, orange, red, even purple!
- After finishing, ask students what they observed when they were outside.
 - Did they see any animals?
 - Did they notice something they've never noticed before?
 - Why did they choose their particular leaves?



Activity 2 - Portrait of Spring

The goal of this activity is to have students foster an appreciation toward nature by exploring their outside environment.

- Materials: White construction paper, plastic bag, glue, camera, printer
- First, take students to an outside area with natural elements.
 - A location with a variety of natural items is best (grass, trees, bushes, flowers, rocks, etc.)
- Tell them to collect at least ten different small samples of nature to take back to the classroom.
 - This can include leaves, twigs, flowers, rocks, etc.
 - Variety of items is key, so let students know to only grab one or two of each type.
 - Optional: You can pair students in teams of two.
- Once students are finished, return back inside and pass out white construction paper.
 - This paper can be any size you choose, but bigger sizes give students more space to compose.
- Instruct students to use their materials to make an abstract piece of art/mosaic.
 - When placing samples down make sure to keep them visible; a good rule is to not let samples touch each other.
 - Encourage students to be creative and remind them that there is no wrong way to do this.
 - It's all about having fun!
- Optional: Take a picture of the creations and print out the images later.
- After finishing, ask students what they observed when they were outside.
 - Did they see any animals?
 - Did they notice something they've never noticed before?
 - What was their favorite piece they found from today?

