



Open-Sky
School



Activity

Nature, the Environment, and You

MATERIALS

One copy per student of the *Actions for a Healthy Planet* webpage article, or one copy to be passed and read aloud.

DURATION

40 MINUTES

Activity Summary

Children's philosophy workshops aim to develop children's ability to think by and for themselves, as well as to introduce them to take a critical look at certain behaviours and social issues.

The objective of this activity is to invite students to reflect on their personal impact on the environment, and that left by past generations, companies and governments, based on the United Nations' *Actions for a Healthy Planet*.

Preparation

- Choose a quiet space in nature where students can sit comfortably in a circle.
- Study the tips from the *Actions for a Healthy Planet* article: <https://www.un.org/en/actnow/ten-actions>
- Reflect: is it the planet that needs to be protected, or rather its ecosystems, natural living environments and biodiversity?



Steps

This workshop consists of a group discussion in which students sit in a circle and share their ideas without being forced to express themselves. Every idea is valid and can lead to new avenues of thought.

Be prepared to ask questions to stimulate discussion, if necessary.

If you notice that the same students often speak at the expense of others, you can limit the number of times each student speaks. For example, you can ask students to find 3 sticks, leaves, rocks or other objects on the ground, and put one object in the center of the circle each time they take a turn to speak, until they do not have any objects left. At that point, the student can continue to listen to what their peers have to say.

A. **Read** the opening line of the article *Actions for a healthy planet:* ...*"Every one of us can make choices to protect nature, tackle climate change, and take care of our planet"*...

B. **Read** through the actions proposed by the United Nations in the article.

- Look at actions that can be beneficial for environmental protection.
- Choose one.
- On your turn, say what you chose and why.

C. Look around you. Listen to the sounds that are near you, and those that are farther away. Feel the the wind, the warmth of the sun on your skin. Think of a place where nature is absent, such as the schoolyard, the mall parking lot, the highways ...

Questions

1. Are you worried about the future of the planet?
(Students can feel greatly affected by the much-talked about environmental crisis. Let students discuss this issue and express their emotions.)
2. Is it planet Earth that is in danger? Or rather Earth's ecosystems, natural living environments and biodiversity?
3. What is an ecosystem?
What is a natural living environment?
What is biodiversity? (You may want to write these words on the board and study the meaning of these concepts when you return to class.)

1. Which action did you choose? Is it easy or difficult for you to do?

1. Do you like being out in nature?
2. Who do you think is responsible for environmental degradation?
3. Do you have a personal responsibility towards the environment? Towards the planet?
4. Suggest an idea to improve the quality of your surrounding environment.

RETURN TO GROUP

1. Discuss environmental issues in students' neighbourhoods and regions. Can students identify any?
2. Discuss the idea of social and civic responsibility towards the planet with students.
3. To what extent are students, their parents, businesses, and local governments responsible for environmental problems in their neighborhood or their region?

REINVESTMENT:

- Regularly revisit discussions about civic responsibility for the environmental crisis.
- Carry out an "Environment Hour" activity once a week, where your class can choose and carry out an act that benefits the environment and nature, e.g., planting bulbs in front of the school in autumn, planting radishes, peas and lettuce in the spring, composting, etc.
- Introduce your students to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and explore ways students can become involved in building a more sustainable planet: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/student-resources/>
- Prepare a table and include some of the actions proposed by The United Nations. Students can check off the actions they take over the course of the school year. You can discuss board entries with the class every 15 days.