

EDUCATIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES: STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is an integral concept that staff at Sierra Club BC integrate in all of our educational programming. It is important for youth to be educated about environmental issues, but without clear actions and ideas to help create positive change, they are not left with much hope for the future.

The Action Challenge component of our in-school programs has been a huge success for classrooms around BC. These activities have motivated and inspired classes to change both classroom and personal behaviours. The simple action of turning off the lights at lunch time or purchasing items with less packaging can be easily measured and children are often amazed to see what a difference they can make over a short period of time.

When teaching about stewardship, the following key words can be helpful:

- ❖ **Stewardship** – The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.
- ❖ **Interconnections** – To connect with one another; mutually connected.
- ❖ **Compost** – Decayed organic matter usable as a fertilizer or soil additive.
- ❖ **Biodegradable** – The ability of a substance to be broken down physically and/or chemically by micro-organisms. For example, many chemicals, food scraps, cotton, wool, and paper are bio-degradable; plastics and polyester generally are not.
- ❖ **Recycling** – Collecting and reprocessing a resource so it can be used again.
- ❖ **Sustainability** – Of, relating to, or being a method of using a resource so that the resource is not permanently depleted or damaged.

CLASS ACTIVITY: RECYCLING RELAY

Purpose

- To have children actively think about what things can be recycled and celebrate recycling successes.
- To create an opportunity to talk about the three R's (reduce, reuse, and recycle), especially noting why they are in that particular order.

Activity Overview: This is a running relay race where children sort through a box of recycling and organize them into the appropriate categories. This works best with two or more teams.

Materials

- A box of recyclable materials (enough so each child can go once or twice).
- Four signs that say: 'Glass', 'Metal', 'Plastic', and 'Paper and Cardboard'.

Time: 15 minutes

Procedure

1. Start your introduction by asking the children if they have heard of the 3 R's. Can they tell you what they are? (If not, remind them that they are Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).

Activity one Cont'd

2. It is important to have children understand that the order of the R's is for a reason, and relates to the amount of energy required to do each step. Reduce encourages us to use less stuff, like bringing a bag to the store instead of getting a new one. Reusing encourages us to find new uses for things that have already been made. The first R uses the least energy; reusing and recycling use proportionately more.
3. Show the group the box of things you've collected and ask them where it should go. Explain that these things are not biodegradable. Ask if anyone knows what *biodegradable* means (that it can rot and turn back into soil). Ask what things they think are biodegradable. Ask where they can put all those extra fruit and vegetable bits left in their kitchen that they don't eat (*compost pile*). Food in a compost pile can be reused in your garden to help plants grow.
4. Let children know paper is also biodegradable. Ask them where paper comes from? (*Trees!*) Trees get mashed up and turned into paper, but we don't have many trees left so we should **reduce** the amount of paper we use and **reuse** the paper we already have. Have the group repeat these words: **reduce** and **reuse**. Ask what else they think happens when we cut down lots of trees? (*animals lose their homes!*)
5. Things like plastic, glass, and tin cans can take thousands of years to break down and turn into soil, so if we throw these in the garbage or the ocean they will still be here when their grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren are born! But, a machine can melt down the glass, plastic, or metal and recycle the material into new things!
6. Explain to the children how a relay race works and that at the end you will be checking to see if everything has gone into the right category.
7. *"You are going to have a race against each other to see which team can pick something from the pile of recyclable things and stick it in the right place the fastest."*
8. Celebrate the proper sorting of the recycling and remind them that the less we throw out and the more we recycle the happier our planet will be for years to come!
9. Review the 3 R's with the children and then go through the piles with them to see how well they did.





STEWARDSHIP LEARNING RESOURCES

PRINT

Downloadable PDF guidebooks: The *For Educators* section of our website has a number of resources, including recommended web links and downloadable guidebooks. The direct link to this is:

http://www.sierraclub.bc.ca/education/ed_educators.

WEBSITES

www.kidsforsavingearth.org – A great website for students and teachers to learn about the land, air, and water around the planet- and ways to help out the earth.

www.sierraclub.bc.ca – Check out Sierra Club BC's website for our current campaigns and what you can do to help protect our province's biodiversity.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) – The CPAWS website contains a well-developed series of online resources, including "Measuring the Success of Environmental Education Programs" and "A Teacher's Guide to Community; Environmental Action". You can also find numerous activity guides and lesson modules, including *Grizzly Bears Forever!* And other biodiversity and conservation activities. **www.cpawscalagry.org**

Wilderness Committee - This not-for-profit organization has offices in Victoria, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto, and welcomes volunteers! Their webpage is: **www.wildernesscommittee.org**.

World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF-Canada) has been active for many years and runs the rare plant rescue program. **www.wwf.ca**.