

10. WHOSE JOB IS IT? TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

This Lesson's Goals

- » *To consider the spiritual and ethical dimensions of being responsible for the impacts of our behavior and choices*
- » *To seek ways to take minimize the negative environmental impact of daily activities*
- » *To minimize the production of waste*

Opening [5-10 min.]

Open with silent worship.

Use the scripture parable and the following quote to introduce the theme.

“Now to act with integrity, according to that strength of mind and body with which our creator hath endowed each of us, appears necessary for us all.” – John Woolman

Songs

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands
When I Needed a Neighbor Were You There?
It's a Small World [Alternate verses, chapter 9]
Earth Was Given as a Garden

Sample Agenda

Posting a simple agenda can help both the teachers and the children stay on track.

- 1. Opening:** Silent Worship, Songs, Scripture
- 2. Small Group Activities**
- 3. Closing**
- 4. Sharing Eco-Friendly Survey**

Scripture

Luke 10: 30-37

[A lawyer asked] "And who is my neighbor?" and Jesus replied,

"A man was on his way from Jerusalem down to Jericho when he fell among robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went off leaving him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down by the same road; but when he saw him, he went past on the other side. So, too, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him went past on the other side. But a Samaritan who was making the journey came upon him, and when he saw him he was moved to pity. He went up and bandaged his wounds, bathing them with oil and wine. Then he lifted him onto his own beast, brought him to an inn, and looked after him there. Next day he produced two silver pieces and gave them to the inn-keeper, and said, Look after him; and if you spend any more, I will repay you on my way back." Which of these three do you think was neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He answered, "The one who showed him kindness." Jesus said, "Go and do as he did."

Good Samaritan Discussion

Jesus told this story as an answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Who are our neighbors on this Earth?

In Jesus' story, the person who was least expected to help turned out to be the helper. Who do we expect to care for the Earth and endangered species? Who does? Why might they do that?

Small Group Activities

Select from the activities, allowing for the age and size of your group. If rain or snow makes a litter walk impossible, spend longer on the opening game and careers. Bake bread, rolls, pies, or cookies to give away. You might still be able to do litter skits, with some imagination.

1. Who is responsible for waste? [5-10]

Discuss with the children what we mean by litter. Generally speaking, litter is waste material which has been abandoned by its user. Bring in a food item in a wrapper of some kind. Open the food wrapper and ask the children what we should do with the wrapper. Who is responsible to do something with the wrapper? Why?

Do they think that those who generate the waste should take responsibility? Why or why not. Share that many Friends feel that we are responsible and that we are bound to provide the means for the management of any waste we create in a way which will not impose undue burdens on future generations or nature.

2. Litter Walk [5-15]

Try this as a field trip activity. Before a litter-collecting walk, talk about who and what are hurt by litter. Why would we pick up litter that other people threw out?

1. Take bags along on your walk to collect your findings. Tongs or rubber gloves may be useful for things you don't want to touch. Some items may be toxic or dangerous.
2. Pick up as much litter as your group can in a one block area.
3. Sort the litter. What items can be recycled?

3. Do Disposable Items Make Sense For Us? [10-15]

Materials: Plastic silverware, plastic cup or plate, biodegradable silverware, plate and cup, ceramic plate, drinking glass, metal silverware

Many Friends believe that waste should be managed in a way that provides protection for the health of people and the environment. There is a concern that household waste and byproducts of industrial processes are a serious problem because they persist in the environment – either as physical objects or as toxins in water, air, plants, and animals (including our food).

As background read this article on plastic cutlery: thelmagazine.com/2010/04/the-life-of-a-plastic-fork There is an excellent infographic on why we need to reduce plastics in particular here: treehugger.com/green-home/excellent-infographic-shows-why-we-must-say-no-plastic.html

As an example, share information with the children about the choices we all have when we must decide whether we use products that last a long period of time and can be re-used or ones that are considered disposable. Bring in plastic silverware, a cup or plate. Ask the children if these are made for long term or short term use. What happens to them when you are done using them? Most will say they will go in the trash. If we put these in a compost pile, how long will these take to return to the natural world and do no harm? Note the range of guesses.

Now show them a set of biodegradable silverware, plate and cup. Ask the children how long do you think these will take to decompose? How is going in the compost pile different from going to a landfill?

Finally, show the children a ceramic plate, normal drinking glass and metal silverware. Ask them how many times they think they could use these before they need to be disposed of? Which do they think the meeting should use for serving food? How about for picnics? Ask the children what they think your meeting should use to limit harm. What would they recommend the meeting do?

Suggest they bring their proposal to meeting for business.

4. Lethal Litter: Six-Pack Rings [10]

Birds and small animals can get heads or legs caught in these.

Collect and bring several plastic six-pack rings, one for each child if you can. With scissors, cut open all segments of the rings. This makes them less dangerous to animals. Can the pieces be recycled with plastic bags rather than put into the garbage?

Discuss how little effort it can take for people to prevent animal deaths.

5. Pollution is Litter Too! [10-25]

Many homes and meetings use pesticides and herbicides to kill insects and control weeds. We now know that these chemicals are harmful and leave behind residues that injure living things.

A recent report says: "Of those same 30 lawn pesticides, 19 are detected in groundwater, 20 have the ability to leach into drinking water sources, 30 are toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms vital to our ecosystem, 29 are toxic to bees, 14 are toxic to mammals, and 22 are toxic to birds."

Acquaint yourself with the issues and read the Pesticides and Children fact sheet beyondpesticides.org/programs/lawns-and-landscapes/overview/hazards-and-alternatives?pid=295

Instead of using dangerous chemicals on lawns, what else could we do to not pollute the water or harm fish and other animals with the byproducts of these chemicals? One approach is to transition to planting for wildlife.

Consider the resources for gardens for faith communities.

nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Create/Places-of-Worship/Sacred-Grounds.aspx

6. Preventing Litter: Buy Nothing Day and Swap Day [5-10]

After discussing litter, ask students: "what would prevent so much litter and garbage?"

Acknowledge all their suggestions. If sharing comes up as a suggestion, build on this idea. How could the children create a swap day for toys, clothes or other items? Or collect items they no longer use or need to be shared with other children?



Consider this as a service project the children could organize.

If the children suggest buying fewer things, tell them the story of BUY NOTHING DAY. Depending on their interest, you could develop a Buy Nothing Day for the meeting.

More information at buynothingproject.org

Snack Ideas

Plan a healthy fruit snack which involves no packaging. Have a compost bucket handy for the children to put peels, skins, etc. Comment on the importance of being responsible for our waste. If the meeting doesn't have a compost system, ask a member to take the compost to their pile.

7. Special Plot [5]

Visit your special plot.

Look for natural ways plants and insects have to protect themselves from frost, acid rain, or UV radiation. Are human-made protections of some sort needed? What is our responsibility?

8. Meeting Waste Audit [5-15]

Materials: Save a bag of waste from the meeting from the previous week for this activity

In order to learn how to be responsible for the products we use and then throw away, we need to know what our meeting uses and tosses. Invite the children to do a waste audit. This is a project which sorts and classifies the trash you create in order to decide what you can reuse or recycle.

GreenFaith also has a sample audit sheet for families. Use their how to guide and worksheet. greenfaith.org/resource-center/stewardship/waste-reduction-and-recycling/waste-audits

9. How Eco-Friendly is Your Meeting House? [30]

Use the attached survey from Canadian Yearly Meeting's Ecology-Action Network to do a scavenger hunt around your meeting house to determine how eco-friendly it is. Engage your meeting's Earthcare group or another relevant committee to help.

Closing [5]

Sing one or two of the songs from the opening.

Invite each child to share "Today I learned . . ."

Close with silent worship.

How Eco-Friendly Is Your Meeting House? A Five-Star Rating System

From Canadian Yearly Meeting's Quaker Ecology-Action Network

IS YOUR Meeting House or place of worship an eco-Friendly place which inspires reverence for all Creation? Try this quiz as a starting point to address sustainability and outreach issues inherent in the concept of designated buildings for meeting for worship.

There is a maximum of six points per best practice, but give credit for any points that apply, total them up, and see what your score reflects.

Try it!

Energy Conservation (1-3: check the one item that best applies)

1. We had an accredited energy-use audit done on water and electricity use, but we have not yet acted on these recommendations. ___/1
2. We have instituted some energy-saving measures that are already cost-effective, or will be within five years, and have not sacrificed comfort for efficiency. ___/2
3. We had an accredited energy-use audit done and have instituted all or nearly all of the energy-saving measures recommended, and it is as comfortable than before these efficiency measures were taken. ___/6
4. We generate some of our power from renewable sources like solar or wind, or we access renewable-source energy off the electric grid. ___/4

Water Conservation (Check any that apply)

1. We have aerators on the taps, and they don't drip. ___/2
2. Toilets are low-flow types. ___/3
3. Rooftop runoff is maximized for the garden, and/or we're "off the grid." ___/3

Recycling (1 or 2 / 5 or 6, check only the item that applies)

1. We try to blue-box everything recyclable, but still we often put out some garbage that could have been recycled. ___/1

2. We provide receptacles for kitchen wastes and compost this either for our Meeting House grounds or take it home. ___/2

3. We blue-box everything we can and provide waste containers for different types, throughout the Meeting House and outside. ___/3

4. We try to minimize paper use. ___/1

5. At least some of the paper products we use are partially recycled paper products, and not chlorine-bleached. ___/1

6. All paper products we use are from 100-percent recycled paper or from non-tree sources, and are not chlorine-bleached. ___/3

Cleaning Products (Check any that apply)

1. We use at least some cleaning products that are non-toxic. ___/2

2. All of our cleaning products are non-toxic. ___/3

Landscaping (Check any that apply)

1. We do not use chemical pesticides or fertilizers on our grounds. ___/2

2. We encourage wildlife with birdfeeders, bird houses, and/or edible berry bushes, etc. ___/2

3. We have a space for young Eco-Friends to call their own. ___/2

4. We grow only hardy native species of perennials and shrubs, instead of annuals. ___/3

5. Our grounds are naturalized or near maintenance-free because we have xeriscaped, planted only hardy species, etc. ___/4

Transportation

(Check any that apply)

1. We have a bike rack. ___/1

2. We have adequate bike racks that are user-friendly (re: U-locks). ___/2

3. We actively encourage car-pooling to Meeting or alternate transportation. ___/3

Outreach, Inreach (Check any that apply)

1. We have a Sustainability or Ecology Committee or Working Group. ___/2
2. We encourage communication with other local faith groups who may be addressing these issues, and we have participated in some local workshops together to promote eco-friendliness. ___/2
3. We have helped publicize the success of our efforts in local news media and/or have posted news about our efforts in publications or websites. ___/3
4. We have researched ownership and habitation history of the property. ___/5

Scoring

- Five stars if you get more than 50 points: ***** Dazzling!
Four stars if you get more than 40 points: **** Very bright!
Three stars if you get more than 30 points: *** Quite shiny!
Two stars if you get more than 20 points: ** Twinkling
One star if you get more than 10 points: * Flickering

(Actually, take a bow if you are reflecting any Light at all. Keep up the great work!)

This rating system is a project of the Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN) of Canadian Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). See quaker.ca/qean