

CHILDREN IN THE
WILDERNESS



Celebrates



*“Never doubt that a **small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the **only thing that ever has.**”***

—Margaret Mead



INTRODUCTION

The issue of environmental protection and education is so important these days that World Environmental Education Day is celebrated more than once a year. The World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC) holds the observance on October 14, but many other environmental organisations celebrate Environmental Education Day on January 26.

If we want to make sure that we protect and look after the environment, we need to pay careful attention to environmental education. Environmental education aims to teach individuals and communities, how people can manage their behaviour and ecosystems to live sustainably.

In other words, environmental education is designed to teach us how to live in harmony with nature and reduce human impact on the environment.

The main task of World Environmental Education Day is to emphasize the importance of environmental education as a scientific discipline that pays special attention to the social dimension of environmental problems and focuses on creating the awareness, knowledge, skills and motivation to address, solve and prevent these problems.

LESSON PLAN

Read through the lesson plan in order to organise your Eco-Club session. Thereafter, follow the numbered steps in order to conduct your lesson. Make sure that you work through this step by step to make sure all parts of this important lesson are covered.



STAGE 1 – ENERGISER



ACTIVITY - ELEPHANT, LION, SPRINGBOK

Time – 15mins

Location – Outside in an open space

Objectives: Children will try guess their partners character

Materials: None

Procedure: Teach the children how to act out each of the three characters. As you teach each character, have the group enthusiastically repeat back the character name and the motions that go with it.

- **Elephants:** use your arm to make a trunk.
 - **Lions:** Use your hands to make a mane, while you make your face look as though you are growling like a lion.
 - **Springbok:** Spring up and down like a springbok.
1. Ask the group to get into pairs.
 2. With their backs to one another, after the count of 3 they must jump around facing their partner doing one of the characters actions.
 3. The aim is to communicate with their actions to guess which character you partner is thinking of.
 4. Now that they have the idea of how the game works, the children should come up with their own animals. For example: cheetah, zebra, tortoise, fish or bird. They could even try guide, poacher or rhino.
 - a. The idea is that the action to show this animal should be clear to identify
 5. Repeat the process again. With their backs to one another, after the count of 3 they must jump around facing their partner doing one of their characters actions.
 6. The children then have a chance to guess their partner's animal / character

STAGE 2 – THEORETICAL LESSON



OBJECTIVES

Children are introduced to what environmental education (EE) is all about, and about the celebration of World EE itself.



DISCUSSION

Time – 15mins

Materials – Paper and pens / markers

Location – Under the trees. Children should bring a piece of paper along so that they can take notes about what they have learnt.

1. Use the notes below to teach and talk to the children about World Environmental Education day.

Do not just read the notes to the children, but rather try to engage them during the lesson. You can do this by asking them for their opinions. Encourage them to try to answer questions you



might ask around these notes (for example, you could ask: “What do you think Environmental Education is?” or “Why do you think EE is important?”).

What is Environmental Education?

- Environmental education is a process that allows people to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment.
- As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions, in order to protect the environment.
- The components of environmental education are:
 - Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges
 - Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
 - Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain good environmental quality
 - Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
 - Participation in activities that lead to the resolution, or solving of environmental challenges

What is World Environmental Education Day all about?

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If we want to make sure that we protect and look after the environment, we need to pay careful attention to environmental education. Environmental education aims to teach individuals and communities, how people can manage their behaviour and ecosystems to live sustainably.

In other words, environmental education is designed to teach us how to live in harmony with nature and reduce human impact on the environment.

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How CITW, and you, are making a difference through EE:

The Children in the Wilderness (CITW) programme is an environmental education and life skills programme for children, focusing on the next generation of decision-makers; inspiring them to care for their natural heritage and to become the custodians of these areas in the future.

In other words, the CITW programme (both your weekly Eco-Clubs and annual camps) is hoping to teach you about the environment so that you will learn to love it, and as a result, want to protect it.





STAGE 3 – DIRECT EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVES

You're going to play a typical game that touches on environmental issues. **Stress the importance of environmental education, and how learning can be fun!**

ACTIVITY

Activity – Judge Nature

Time – 20mins

Location – Outside in an open space

1. Find a nice big open area where the children can run around. It's ideal to have a few 'things' in this playing area, like a few trees, or other features that are easy to identify and see. This is because the children will be running around, and trying to hide from time to time 😊
2. Every player chooses the name of a wild animal they would like to represent. You might want to try and help the children with this. They should look at animals like: lions, rhinos, wild dogs, impala, cheetah, wildebeest, buffalo, leopard, springbok, etc.
 - a. The children should write their animal on a piece of scrap paper, and make sure it's visible – perhaps pin it somewhere on their clothes, they could lick and stick it to their foreheads, etc.
3. Explain that you're creating a little eco-system - an ecosystem includes all of the living things (plants, animals and organisms) in a given area, interacting with each other, and also with their non-living environments (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate, atmosphere)
4. The teacher / Eco-Mentor will be JUDGE NATURE.
5. All the children stand in the middle of the open area where you are playing.
6. Animals follow the instructions given by Judge Nature. Judge Nature can call out any of the instructions they like, in any order they like.
7. If animals should happen to 'die' during the game, they **go and sit** to a designated area (perhaps choose a tree or a specific spot) called "SOIL". ***Explain to the children, that when animals die in nature, their bodies would naturally decompose, and in so doing, become part of the soil as nutrients.***
8. Judge Nature can call out any of the following instructions. BUT before calling out the instructions, must talk about the issue, which is touched on in ***bold italic letters***. Go through each instruction carefully before you start the game. Have the children repeat it back to you to make sure they remember what they have to do.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

In nature, generally speaking, the strongest, biggest, fastest, fittest animals will survive. In English, there is a saying that it is 'survival of the fittest'.

- Players run from the starting point, around a designated tree and touch Judge Nature. The first 15 players back remain alive - the others die.



DROUGHT

A drought is a natural disaster of below-average rain in a given region, resulting in prolonged shortages in the water supply, whether atmospheric (moisture in the air), surface water or ground water.

- Players run from their starting point, to an area designated as the water hole (perhaps around a different tree) and touch Judge Nature. The first 5 back live, and the others die.

POACHER COMING!

Poaching has been defined as the illegal hunting or capturing of wild animals. It is having a huge impact on certain animals, which are being illegally hunted into endangerment or extinction.

- This hunter (which will be judge nature) 'shoots' every animal he sees, so all animals run and hide. If any are caught by judge nature (the poacher), they die and go and sit in the 'soil'.

FAMINE

A famine is a widespread scarcity of food. Imagine that there is a famine in your eco-system. The remaining animals need to try and catch their food – it must be realistic (so no impalas catching wildebeest, for example 😊)

- Among the remaining players, there must be some sort of animal that each player can feed from (in the natural environment). The children start from their starting point, and try to either run away from someone trying to eat them, or try and catch someone they want to eat. If their prey is caught, the prey dies. If a predator is left without food, that animal dies too.

HABITAT DESTRUCTION / SHIRKING SPACES

When a natural habitat is altered so dramatically that it no longer supports the species it was originally able to sustain, we call this habitat destruction. Due to an increase in infrastructure (roads, buildings, factories, more houses, more space needed to build homes, etc.), natural habitats and ecosystems are being destroyed, and animals are pushed out of areas where they usually would live and thrive. Their habitats are being destroyed and changed negatively.

- You are now going to halve the playing area, imagining that the habitat you've created is shrinking due to habitat destruction and humans building infrastructure etc. Make sure that the children are aware of the new boundaries of the playing area.
- Judge Nature is now going to try and catch as many animals as possible. The animals must run and hide, but any animals that are caught go to the soil.

STAGE 4 – DEBRIEF



At the end of a lesson, ask the children to turn to a partner and tell them as much as they can remember about the lesson in two minutes. The teacher times this activity, and after two minutes, signals it is time to change roles. The second person now takes two minutes to tell as much as they can remember about the lesson.



Important Debrief for the Eco-Mentor

Make sure you have summarised the key points with the children **before they leave the Eco-Club lesson:**

- What is environmental education?
- Why is it important to protect the environment?
- What are some of the issues your community faces that could potentially affect the environment? Are any of the issues you talked about in the game affecting your community?
- Name one things you're going to do today to help your environment (eg. Pick up litter, plant a tree, etc.)