

Value: Non-Violence



Lesson 1.25

Objective: *I can care for the world around me*

Context: *Love of Nature*

Key Words: *communication, creatures, darkness, earth, East, embankment, energy, gratitude, horizon, light, monsoon, moon, nature, special, sun, surface*

QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK

OUR WORLD IS SPECIAL

(Show the children picture flash cards, some showing beautiful things in nature and others showing unpleasant things, such as pollution damage, guns, litter. Ask them which are things that make our world beautiful. Let the children call out 'yes' or 'no' as they see the pictures.)

SILENT SITTING

Step 1: Firstly, sit in a comfortable position on your chairs, or cross legged on the floor. Make sure your back is straight and head is upright. Take a deep breath and relax as you breathe out.

Take another deep breath ... and another ...

Step 5: Imagine you are a tiny seed under the earth ...

It is dark and you send down your roots to find water ...

You begin to push upwards, although you don't know what it is you are looking for ... Suddenly, you break through the earth into the light ...

It feels wonderful!

The sun warms you and you stretch higher ...

You feel healthy and strong ...

Feel the rain as it seeps into the ground and you drink the cool refreshing water

After a lot of growing you discover who you really are ...

You may be a flower, a tree, a vegetable or a bush ...

Picture what you are in your mind and admire yourself ...

You are something beautiful that has come from the earth with the help of the sun and rain ...

Step 6: Now bring your attention back to the classroom, open your eyes and stretch, as the exercise has finished. Smile at the person next to you.

How do you feel?

ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE

Step 1: Firstly, sit in a comfortable position on your chairs, or cross legged on the floor. Make sure your back is straight and head is upright. Take a deep breath and relax as you breathe out.

Take another deep breath ... and another ...

Step 5: Think, I can care for the world around me. Our world is special – the trees, and bushes, flowers that smell so sweet, vegetables that we eat – they are all special and I am special too.

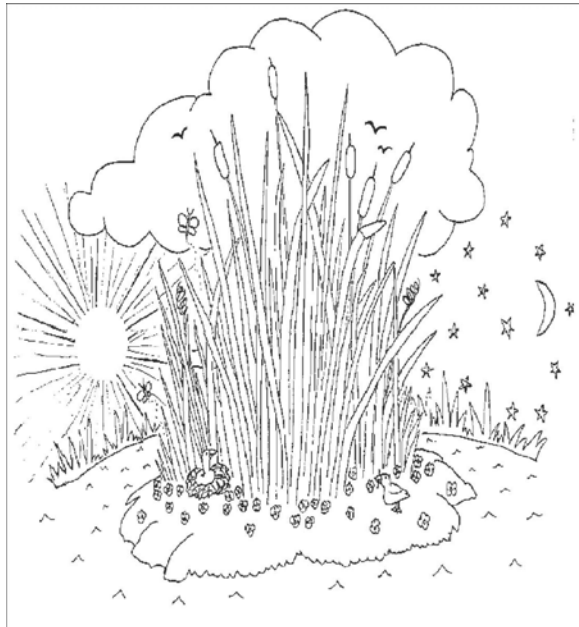
Step 6: Now bring your attention back to the classroom, open your eyes and stretch, as the exercise has finished. Smile at the person next to you. How do you feel?

STORY TELLING

THE LITTLE REED

An extract from 'The Flute' by Milena Kunz Bijno (translated into English by Gisela Robinson)

The strip of land along the river had slowly started to dry up after the monsoon. At first it turned into a reddish mud and then, in the heat of the sun, into a crust which slowly split into large irregular cracks. A young and tender reed grew among many of his kind on this strip of land. For as long as one could remember there had been reeds on this embankment - slender yet majestic plants, crowned by large fan-like leaves. After every monsoon new plants burst through the crust of the earth and grew quickly, nurtured by the water, the mud of the river and the Indian sun. Human beings called this river Yamuna; the reeds called it the "Big Water".



The little shoot struggled to dig his way through the earth, pushed on by the irresistible energy of growing up and of life itself. One day he managed to reach the surface. One final enormous burst of energy which nearly exhausted him completely, and he entered this world and saw the light. It dazzled him. The pale green of his little head seemed almost white in the glowing sunlight. He remained still for a long time and enjoyed the lightness of the air and the colours.

He felt the pleasant limpness that we feel when we have finally reached our goal and when we have been freed from pressures and strains. He had not understood the reason for his struggle when he had still been underneath the ground. He had asked himself: "Why must I fight against these hard lumps of earth?" and, "Where am I going?"

The darkness which surrounded him within the lap of the earth was somehow comforting and really he would have been content to just remain quiet and still. But for some reason an inexplicable energy seemed to stir within him and drive him against his will.

Having arrived at the surface, the whole strenuous process seemed like a bad dream but now he understood the reason for his struggle. He felt happy to be alive, to be able to see the sun, to have won the first battle. But when the evening arrived and the sun disappeared below the horizon, the newly-born reed began to get anxious. Did he have to return into the earth? Had he reached the end of his journey? Where else should he go?

As the night wore on, however, the little reed became accustomed to the darkness. He realised that the darkness of the night was less dense than that of the earth and his fears began to fade away. Then, one by one, tiny twinkling lights started to appear in the dark sky and they were followed by a large, pale sun.

Once again his mind was filled with questions. Had this sun just been born, as he himself had been born only a few hours earlier? After all, just like himself, this sun was pale and sad and obviously limp from the strain of growing - the little shoot knew about such things.

He was hungry for answers to his questions and so with his faint voice he asked a larger reed next to him, "From which earth was this pale sun born?" The larger reed answered with a friendly giggle, "This is not the sun. This is the great Queen of the Night and of the Water. This is the moon."

The baby shoot did not want to look stupid and so he did not ask any more questions. But in his mind he thought of one question after another. Night? Water? Was the night of a different darkness, a darkness made of air instead of earth? Did he have to pass through this darkness as well? Were those gigantic relatives next to him, whose heads he could not see, already beyond the night?

Still engulfed in amazement and fright, the little shoot did not notice that the Queen of the Night had slowly retreated from the sky and that the first rays of light had announced themselves in the East. The horizon started to turn pink and then deep yellow, and the golden sun appeared again. The little shoot was already one day old.

Over the course of time he learned many things. He learned to enjoy the smooth caresses of the wind which sometimes tickled him quite boldly, bending him this way and that. He concentrated on drawing the moisture of the earth into his roots in order to sustain him for the long days under the blazing sun. He learned to absorb the morning dew which formed on his leaves and he whispered a little prayer of gratitude for every refreshing drop. The little reed also started to observe his surroundings and he learned how to communicate with the other inhabitants of the reed grove.

QUESTIONS:

- 1 How did you feel when you heard the story?
- 2 Did it remind you of anything in your own life?
- 3 What is a monsoon?
- 4 What did the little reed experience as it grew out of a tiny seed?
- 5 Why did the little reed feel anxious?
- 6 What did the little reed mistake the moon for?
- 7 Is it good to ask lots of questions like the little reed?
- 8 What do you like most in nature?

GROUP SINGING

LET'S CARE

(music by Stuart Jones, lyrics by Sara John)

Let's care, let's share
Our beautiful world.
All creatures and people
Together, forever.

(Repeat x 3)

GROUP ACTIVITY

1. THE WEBBING CIRCLE *(Demonstrates environmental interdependence).*

The children stand in circles of about 8.

One child is the Caller.

Begin with one child pretending to be a flower and holding the end of a ball of string.

The Caller says, "Who needs the flower?"

The first child to answer

(e.g. an animal will eat the flower;

a bird will eat its seeds;

a bee will drink its nectar, etc.)

takes the ball of string, unwinding it, but keeping it taut across the circle. The

Caller then says, "Who needs the?)"

Continue in this way, forming a web of string as children guess more things that are dependent on one another in nature.

When all the children are holding a part of the web, keeping it taut, ask one child to collapse down on to the floor pulling the string down.

Now ask whether the others feel this effect of being dependent on each other and on nature.

2. Draw or paint a picture of the beauty of nature using the children's own imagination, or a painting of a famous landscape artist.

Close the lesson: If the teacher wishes, the lesson can be closed by asking the children to form a circle and say to the child on either side, *“I can care for the world around me. Our world is special and we are special too.”*

Link up : See 'Values and Visions' ISBN No. 0340 64412 5 section on Valuing the Earth, Activity 8 page 49, 'The Banyan Tree'

Extension Exercise / Links to Other Subjects:

Science: the class plants some seeds and watches them grow, observing and logging any changes in a record sheet.

Dance and movement: the children move to a specially chosen music piece pretending to be the reed. The teacher can then adapt to add different weather conditions and the various moods of the seasons.