

Lesson plan

Me and nature

Recycling, reusing, and reducing

1. **Theme:** Me and nature: **Recycling, reusing, and reducing**
2. **Grade:** 3rd
3. **Lesson type:** for acquiring new knowledge
4. **Duration:** 40 min.
5. **Basic terms:** nature, environment, ecology, recycling, reusing, reducing waste, pollution, species, notions of nature in religion
6. **Pedagogical methods:** storytelling, presentation, discussion, dialog, reflection, individual work
7. **Means:** board (interactive or otherwise), markers, laptop/computer, multimedia (screen/projector), ppt presentation, flipchart (optional), drawing tools

8. Goals:

○ Educational:

The students

- ✓ List examples of what is included in nature (plants, animals, water, air, soil)
- ✓ Explain in their own words how pollution harms water, soil, and air
- ✓ Identify real-life examples of how recycling, reusing, and reducing can protect the environment
- ✓ Compare the differences between polluted nature and clean nature (e.g., sad vs. healthy animals, dirty vs. fresh water)
- ✓ Discuss how different religions care for and protect nature
- ✓ Create ideas that show how they can personally help protect the environment

○ Formational:

The students

- ✓ Pay attention to and show interest in the importance of caring for nature
- ✓ Actively join class discussions, drawing task, and reflection about protecting the environment
- ✓ Express care for animals, plants, and natural spaces by sharing personal reflections and feelings
- ✓ Begin to connect the idea of protecting the environment with their daily routines (e.g., turning off lights, reusing items)
- ✓ Develop a sense of responsibility toward nature, showing readiness to take small, consistent actions that reflect respect for the environment

9. Cross-curricular connections: Biology, Religious studies

10. Intra-subject connections: with the lesson plans on the themes: I support others, Me and my environment, Me and health, and the other modules from the Me and nature theme

11. Expected results:

- ✓ Students can name key elements of nature (plants, animals, air, water, soil)
- ✓ Students can explain, in simple words, how pollution harms water, soil, and air
- ✓ Students can correctly classify everyday items into Recycle, Reuse, or Reduce category
- ✓ Students can create a drawing or idea that shows the difference between polluted and protected nature
- ✓ Students can describe similarities in the ways different religions care for nature
- ✓ Students show care for nature by expressing concern about pollution and suggesting ways to help
- ✓ Students commit to at least one small action (e.g., using less plastic, turning off lights, reusing materials) they can practice at home or school

12. Preparation

○ For the teacher: Reading the theoretical base, downloading the presentation, providing drawing tools

13. Structure of the lesson:

Me and nature: Recycling, reusing, and reducing

1. Nature
 - What is nature and how is it important to us?
2. Saving nature from pollution
 - What are the current challenges
 - How are different cultures and religions helping nature
 - How can we help
3. Activity – drawing task
4. Reflection and discussion
 - The students are prompted to answer several questions on the subject, reflecting on their thoughts and feelings and engaging in a discussion.

14. Structure, content and timeline

1. Introduction (5 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Actualization of prior knowledge on the subject: What do you first think of (your associations) when you hear the word “nature”?; Do you like being in nature – in the mountains, at sea, in the park?; Why do you think nature is important for people, animals, and plants? (3 min.)

- Introduction of new information and terms: (2 min.)

Nature is everything around us that people didn't make. It includes all the plants like trees and flowers, all the animals like birds and fish, the water in rivers and oceans, the air we breathe, and the soil where things grow. The environment is like a big home that we all share with animals and plants. Everything in nature is connected through ecology, which means all living things need each other to stay healthy and happy.

People, animals, and plants all need nature to live. We get our food from plants and animals, drink water from rivers and lakes, and breathe the clean air that trees make for us. Animals need plants for food and safe places to live, while plants need good soil, water, and help from animals to grow strong. When we take care of the environment, we help everyone – people, animals, and plants – have what they need to live good lives. Nature is our home, and we must protect it so all living things can be healthy together.

- Student activity:

- Participation in the dialog, asking questions, active listening

- Methods and tools:

- Methods: dialog, storytelling

- Tools: board, marker or an interactive whiteboard (for outlining the theme and the terms; optional, for writing down student's ideas, thoughts)

2. Stating the theme of the lesson: Me and nature: Recycling, reusing, and reducing (26 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Short presentation, focused on the definition of “nature”, current challenges in protecting the environment, how are different cultures and religions helping nature, what are the recycling, reusing and reducing as processes (6 min.)

- Theoretical overview, performed with the presentation:

Sometimes people accidentally hurt nature by making too much waste and pollution. This harms the environment where we all live together. When people throw trash or put chemicals into rivers and oceans, it hurts the fish and makes the water unsafe to drink. When we litter on the ground or

put harmful things in the soil, plants can't grow well anymore. The smoke from cars and factories also makes the air dirty and it becomes harder for everyone to breathe clean air.

When nature suffers from this pollution, it affects everyone who lives in the environment. Animals get sick when their water and homes become dirty. Plants struggle to grow in polluted soil and dirty air. Even people have problems because we need clean water to drink, healthy plants for food, and fresh air to breathe. The ecology that connects all living things means that when one part gets hurt, it affects everything else too.

This is also recognized by many religions around the world. They teach people to take care of nature and the environment. Even though these religions have different beliefs, they all agree that protecting the Earth is very important.

Christians believe that God created all of nature, including plants, animals, and the land. They think people should be like helpers who take care of God's creation, just like a gardener takes care of a garden. Christians try to protect trees, keep water clean, and help animals because they believe God wants them to be good caretakers of the Earth.

Muslims also believe they should take care of nature because God put them in charge of protecting it. Their holy book, the Quran, teaches them to use only what they need and not to waste things. Muslims try to live in a way that keeps nature balanced and healthy, like using water carefully and not throwing away food.

Jewish people have special laws that tell them to protect trees and be kind to animals. They even have a holiday called Tu B'Shvat that celebrates trees and nature, kind of like Earth Day. Jewish families plant trees and learn about taking care of the environment as part of their religion.

Buddhists believe that all living things are connected to each other, like links in a chain. They try to be kind to all plants and animals and live in a way that doesn't hurt nature. Buddhists practice being mindful, which means thinking carefully about how their actions affect the world around them.

All of these religions show people how to live in ways that help keep the air clean, the water safe, and all living things healthy. No matter what religion someone follows, they can learn important lessons about caring for our shared home on Earth.

Everyone can help protect nature by following the Three R's: Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce. Recycle means turning old things into new things, like when plastic bottles get made into new bottles or even clothes. Reuse means finding new ways to use things instead of throwing them away, like turning an empty glass jar into a holder for pencils or crayons. Reduce means using fewer things so we don't make as much waste, like turning off lights when we don't need them or using a reusable bag instead of getting new plastic bags every time we go shopping.

If we all practice the Three R's every day, we can help keep our air, water, and soil clean and healthy. This means plants can grow strong, animals can stay happy and safe, and people can live in a healthier world. When we take care of nature, nature takes care of us too. Every small action we take helps protect the environment that is home to all living things on Earth.

3. Activity: Drawing task (20 min.)

- ✓ The teacher gives instructions for the students to draw a picture with two sides:

- “On the left side, draw what happens when nature is polluted (dirty rivers, sad animals, trash)”
- “On the right side, draw what happens when people recycle, reuse, and reduce (clean water, happy animals, trees growing)”
 - ✓ The students show their pictures and briefly explain them
 - ✓ The teacher gives short examples of the three R’s:
- Recycle – Putting a plastic bottle in the recycling bin so it can be made into a new bottle
- Reuse – Using a plastic bag more than once
- Reduce – Bringing your own water bottle so you don’t buy many plastic ones
 - ✓ The students think of and propose other ideas for how things can be recycled, reused, or reduced (based on their experience at home, and/or their creative thinking)
- Student activity:
 - Participation in the dialog, taking notice of the presentation, asking questions, active listening, drawing a picture, proposing an idea
- Methods and tools:
 - Methods: dialog, presentation, storytelling, individual work, discussion
 - Tools: interactive board or a screen, laptop/computer, board, marker, flipchart (optional, for writing down students’ ideas), drawing tools
- 4. Reflection and discussion (9 min.)
- Teacher activity:
 - Posing questions for a discussion:
 - ✓ How would you feel if your favourite park, forest, or beach was full of trash?
 - ✓ Can you remember a time when you saw litter on the ground? How did it make you feel?
 - ✓ Why do you think it is everyone’s job to take care of nature?
 - ✓ Which of the 3 R’s (Recycle, Reuse, Reduce) do you think is easiest to do at home? Why?
 - ✓ Which of the 3 R’s do you think is the hardest? Why?
 - ✓ What small thing can you start doing today to help the environment?
 - ✓ How can you encourage your family or friends to care more about nature?
 - Engaging the students with prompts:

- ✓ “When I walk in a park, I feel really calm and happy. How do you feel when you spend time in nature”?
- ✓ “One time, I saw trash on the beach, and it made me feel sad. Have you ever seen something like that”?
- ✓ “I try to bring a reusable bag when I go shopping. What’s one small thing you could do to help nature”?
- ✓ “If I recycle a plastic bottle, I imagine it coming back as something new, like a toy or even clothing! What item would you like to see made from recycled things”?

- Answering questions and clarifying information
- Student activity:
 - Engaging in the discussion
 - Reflection on their ideas and emotions on the subject
- Methods:
 - Methods: reflection, discussion, active listening

15. Variations:

- Providing colouring sheets for the students, available from <https://www.crayola.com/plants-and-animals>, <https://coloringbook.pics/category/coloring-books-for-kids/animals-and-nature/>, and <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/2081/8163/files/Nature.pdf?v=1745924346>
- Role-play: The teacher divides the students into small groups; each group receives a short everyday scenario of a situation (e.g., finishing a bottle of water, having an old t-shirt, packing lunch); each group acts out what happens if someone throws the item away vs. what happens if they Recycle, Reuse, or Reduce it; after each role-play, the class discusses: “Which choice was best for nature?”
- “Trash or Treasure” activity: The teacher names or shows common items (banana peel, cardboard box, broken toy, plastic bag); students respond with “Trash!” if it can’t be reused or “Treasure!” if it can still be used in another way; a brief discussion is organized: Why did you say trash? Why treasure?
- “My promise” activity: Each student shares one small action they promise to try at home or school (e.g., “I promise to turn off the tap when brushing my teeth”, “I promise to use both sides of my sheets of paper”); the teacher writes promises on the board or on a poster titled “Our Class Promises to Nature”

16. Interesting facts (from Workman, B., 2020: <https://www.rts.com/blog/ready-for-these-10-recycling-facts-you-need-to-know/>; Brintha, C., 2022: <https://repurpose.global/blog/post/5-important-facts-about-recycling>; <https://www.funkidslive.com/learn/top-10-facts/top-10-facts-about-recycling/>;

<https://www.businesswaste.co.uk/waste-services/recycling/fun-recycling-facts-for-children/>; and <https://recyclingpartnership.org/communitiesforrecycling/16-fun-recycling-facts-for-kids/>)

- ✓ Every year, 2.4 million tons of recycled glass are used to make new bottles and jars.
- ✓ Glass can be recycled again and again – containers made from recycled glass are of the same high quality as those made from new materials.
- ✓ Recycling helps save energy. If you recycle one glass bottle, it saves enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for four hours, power a computer for 30 minutes, or a television for 20 minutes.
- ✓ What happens to recycled plastic containers? They can be used to make new plastic containers, but it doesn't stop there. Recycled plastic can also be used in creating other things like cell phone cases, playground equipment, clothes, and rugs.
- ✓ Recycling has been around for thousands of years.
- ✓ Across the globe, nearly 1 trillion single-use plastic bags are used every year.
- ✓ There is more plastic in the ocean than there are stars in the Milky Way.
- ✓ Enough plastic bottles are discarded over a year to go around the planet 4 times
- ✓ Every tonne of paper recycled saves 17 trees.
- ✓ Green glass bottles are made with up to 90% recycled glass.
- ✓ It can take just seven days for old magazines and newspapers to be recycled into new ones.
- ✓ Up to 60% of the waste that ends up in the bin could be recycled.