



Earth Day Lesson Plan Elementary

Objective:

To introduce students to the concept of Earth Day, its significance, and foster an understanding of how they can contribute to taking care of the planet.

Time:

55 minutes + Up to an hour and a half of optional extension activities

Materials Needed:

- Visual aids depicting nature, recycling, and Earth (slides included in lesson plan)
- "Earth Day Promise Tree" worksheet OR large paper and construction paper to create a class Promise Tree
- "Sort and Recycle" worksheet
- Children's books related to Earth Day (suggestions provided below)
- Bird Feeder Craft supplies (optional): old newspaper or paper bags, toilet paper rolls, string, peanut butter, bird seed
- Planet Aid Earth Day coloring sheet (optional)

Vocabulary:

- **Pollution**
- **Waste**
- **Recycle**
- **Compost**

Introduction

1. Engagement (5 minutes): Show visuals of Earth, nature, and pollution. Ask students what they notice about these images.

You can use the slideshow from National Geographic Kids:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/pollution>

- Students will notice animals living and interacting with pollution.

2. Introduce the concept of Earth Day (5 minutes): "Today, we're going to learn about Earth Day, a special day when people all around the world celebrate and take care of our planet." Show one of the following videos for engagement:

Video from Sesame Studios: Earth Day Activities with Marvie (1:31 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6x9FZrbSpd8>

Video from Sesame Street: Earth Day Song with Elmo and Friends (2:17 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I435O6hErkY&list=PL8TioFHubWFsGR693IBFJQV0ZJlbYmSyl&index=4>

Instruction & Guided Learning

Discussion (10 minutes):

3. Explain the importance of Earth Day: "Why do you think Earth Day is important?"

4. Discussion: Discuss why the pictures of pollution in the National Geographic Kids slideshow are problematic. Brainstorm ideas about keeping the planet clean, protecting wildlife, etc. Discuss simple ways kids can help the Earth. Answers may include recycling, conserving water and energy, picking up trash, and reusing items in a creative way.

Interactive Activity (20 minutes):

5. Play a sorting game: Point to items in the room and ask the class if they think the item can be reused, recycled, composted, or trashed. After some practice, distribute the "Sort and Recycle" worksheet for independent practice.

6. Create an "Earth Day Promise Tree": Students can write or draw their promises to help the Earth. Distribute the Promise Tree worksheet for independent work (only applicable to students with writing skills). For a group activity, create a visual of a tree on the board or a large piece of paper. Use construction paper to create paper leaves and have the students write/draw their promises and tape them to the class Promise Tree.

Extension Activity (Choose One)

Supplemental Reading (15 minutes):

7. Read Aloud: Read aloud a children's book related to Earth Day. Suggestions: "The Earth Book" by Todd Parr, "Michael Recycle" by Ellie Bethel, "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss, or "Fancy Nancy: Every Day is Earth Day" by Jane O'Connor.

Art/Craft Activity (20-30 minutes, optional):

8. Bird Feeder Craft: Engage students in a simple craft activity that combines recycling with caring for living things!

1. On the days leading up to Earth Day, have your students bring in their old toilet paper rolls.
2. Cover the students' workspace with old newspapers, grocery bags, or big pieces of scrap paper. Don't buy anything new... remember, we want them to think about reusing things!
3. Direct students to slather their toilet paper rolls in peanut butter and then roll them in the bird seed.
4. String yarn or thread through the toilet paper roll and tie it at both ends so that the bird feeder can be placed on a tree.



5. Bring the students outside and instruct them to hang their bird feeders on a tree or fence. A tree visible from the classroom window would be ideal, as students can watch the birds feed and make observations.
6. After the bird feeders have been exhausted, be sure to bring the students back outside to clean them up. Ask them to think about the best way to dispose of the waste. (i.e. They can put it in a compost bin!)

Conclusion

Conclusion (5 minutes):

9. Review: Review what was learned and encourage students to remember their promises to help the Earth.

10. Reflection: Assign a simple Earth Day-related task to do at home, like planting a seed, turning off lights when leaving a room, or picking up litter in their neighborhood.

Supplemental Extension Activities (for multiple days):

- Nature Walk: Take students on a nature walk to observe and appreciate the environment.
- Writing Activity: Have students write a short story or draw a picture depicting a clean and healthy Earth.
- Watch Sesame Street's full Earth Day episode: "Abby Cadabby's Earth Day Clean Up!" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygh5u_KDZd0 (25:55 min) Students can color the Planet Aid Earth Day coloring sheet while watching for a combined visual and tactile learning experience.

Remember, adapt the activities based on the age and abilities of the students. The goal is to instill a sense of responsibility and appreciation for the planet in an engaging and understandable way!