



Journeys in the Spirit



Children's work

April 2017

Topical Activity

Earth Day



People all over the world will celebrate Earth Day on 22 April. Earth Day was created to promote awareness and appreciation for the Earth's environment, and occurs each year. It was the idea of a U.S. Senator - Gaylord Nelson after seeing the effects of a massive oil spill in California. On the first Earth Day, 20 million Americans took to the streets and parks to demonstrate for a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable environment. It enabled groups that were already campaigning for environmental issues to see that they weren't alone and was the catalyst for many of the movements we

know about today and the changes that have been brought about so far. This Topical Activity looks at Earth Day and its impact on our world and how our faith can inspire and equip us to care for the earth.

Resources you will need: *Paper for each child, black poster paint, paint brushes, newspaper, several blue and green felt tip pens, cloths or kitchen roll to clean hands, a copy of The Lorax by Dr Seuss or the facility to watch online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aa82mcXO9AQ> .*

Talk with the children about Earth Day. Ask them if they've heard about it and are celebrating it in anyway at school or elsewhere. Wonder with them about if having such a day is important and if it changes things in their local environment, our country or the wider world?

Story

Read, or watch The Lorax (see resources above). After you have read the story, pause for a while for the children to think about what they have heard. The Lorax was written in 1971 by 'Dr Seuss' who wanted to write a children's tale to make the next generation aware of environmental questions. Wonder with the children about how the story of The Lorax is like anything that they might know about today. Who might be the Once-ler be? The Lorax says in the story "I speak for the trees". Who might the Lorax be? The small boy that happens upon 'The Street of the Lifted Lorax' seems so small. Wonder with the children if they think that he might be able to do any good? Do they think that they can change things and how might they do this? The boy in the story was given a tiny seed to plant and so started out small. What could be their 'tiny seed of good?'

Activity

Provide each child with a piece of paper and paintbrush. Each child should paint their hands with the paint and then press them onto the paper with forefingers and thumbs touching. If they don't want to use paint then drawing around their hands and colouring them in will create the same effect. They may need help with this. When dry, get the children to draw a love heart and decorate it with an 'earth pattern'. In creating the earth in the shape of a heart the children are putting their hands around the earth to show how they love and care for it. The children could now write around their hands ideas of how they can help the earth. This could be recycling, organising an Earth Day event at meeting or school, joining Friends of the Earth or holding a litter picking day or even planting trees.

*"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better. It's not."* — Dr. Seuss, The Lorax



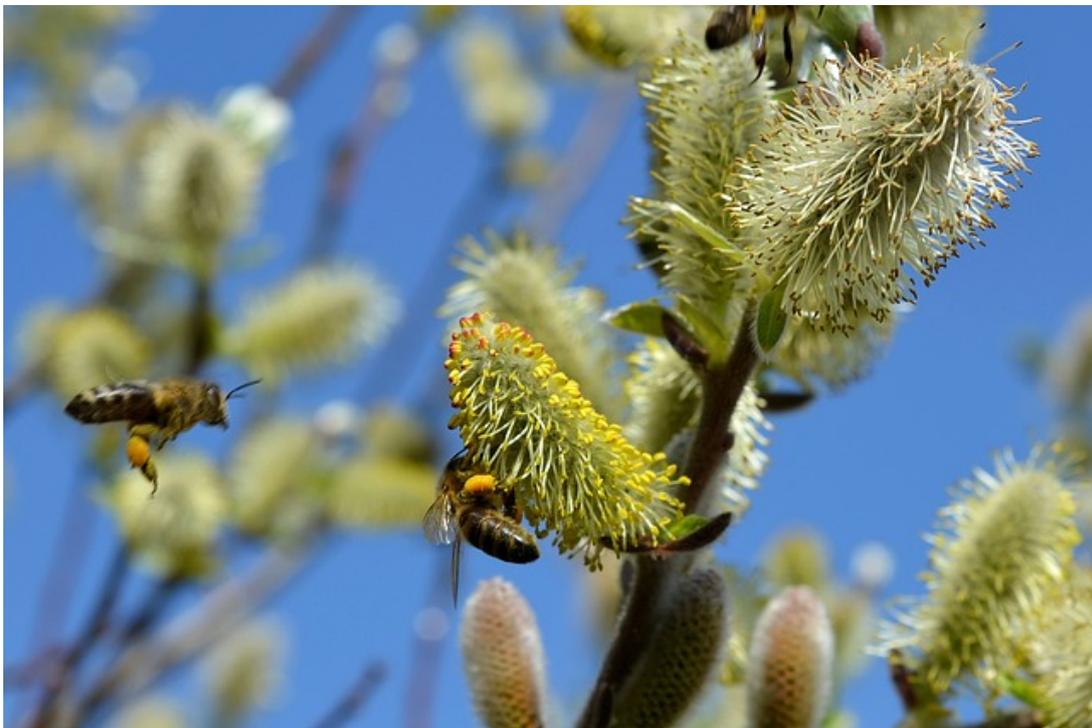


The senator was moved by what he saw to campaign and push for change and so Earth Day was created. <http://www.earthday.org/>. In the Bible in the book of Genesis 2:15 we read 'The Lord God placed man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it'. We need to look after the earth every day, not just on Earth Day.

Quakers believe our faith should translate into action. Share with the children Qf&p 1.02.42 adjusting the language if needed.

'We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation'.

When the Lorax disappears from the barren land, he leaves behind a small pile of rocks with UNLESS carved into them. This is his instruction, just as climate change and an increasing number of endangered species are Mother Nature's instruction, to all of us. We might think of ourselves as the Lorax, and we can help shape and save our environment and then our Earth.



Further Ideas:

There are many books of the subject of climate change and environmental issues. It is important that the books shared are age appropriate and provide the children with hope, and ideas of how we can help the earth rather than overwhelming them with what is a big problem.

Some suggested reading can be found here: <http://www.amightygirl.com/mighty-girl-picks/top-children-s-books-on-the-environment>

There are also many organisations encouraging and equipping children to get involved with change: <http://gowild.wwf.org.uk/> <https://www.rootsandshoots.org/> <https://www.foe.co.uk/> <http://www.rspb.org.uk/>

