

The green ark



Lesson Plan

Lesson title	The green ark 2
Learning objective	Pupils will learn the value of giving and the importance of balancing human needs and the needs of other animals and plants. With particular reference to green arks surrounding buildings of religious significance.
Pupils will:	Reflect on values of giving and respecting others' needs in relation to the role of humans in the environment. Learn what plants and animals require to live in balance with the environment. Survey and map their local area for green arks. Think about positive and negative human impacts on the environment.
Key words	Green ark, community, giving, balance, National Park, botanic garden, seed bank, empathy, impacts, solutions

Plan	Resources
<p>Introduction As a class listen and watch or read the story Alejandro's Gift by Richard E Albert (see Resources).</p> <p>Ask the class for meaning of the story. This is about Alejandro who lives on the edge of a desert. He wants to do something good for the wildlife community around him but when he does the results are not what he expected. How does he put it right?</p> <p>Alejandro's actions follow those of the humanist belief as he made an ethical decision based on reason, empathy and a concern for other living things. The value of giving is an important value for various religions including Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.</p> <p>Ask the children: what was important in the way that Alejandro gave his gift to the animals? Making a gift is not about giving what we think others want, but is about understanding the their needs. ['others' meaning living beings (people, plants, other animals)].</p> <p>Ask the children to think about what animals need to survive in the desert. Get feedback. They may suggest food, shelter, water, a suitable temperature and space.</p>	<p>Albert, R.E. (1994), Alejandro's Gift, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, U.S. ISBN 0-8118-1342-8</p> <p>Narrated book: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRSIXe8rEF0&noredirect=1 This link takes you to an episode of the Reading Rainbow TV series for children. The book is narrated by Fransisco Rivela. Scroll to the start of the story at 02:39 and it finishes at 07:55.</p> <p>Resource 1: Images of green arks (pdf)</p>

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<p>The desert is a harsh environment but the plants and animals that live there are perfectly adapted to the conditions, the desert is their 'green ark'. Show the class some images of green arks (Resource 1).</p> <p>Ask the children to look on their way home for green arks in their local area – places where plants and animals are living. This could be a park, garden, tree, area of wasteland, rooftop garden, hedge, window box or road verge. They need to make a record of where it is and what they think is living there.</p>	
<p>Activity 1</p> <p>Make a Green Ark map of your community by adding all the green arks collected to a large scale map of the area with the school marked too. Look at the results. Ask the children whether they think that the community needs more green arks, fewer green arks or is it just right?.</p>	<p>Materials required: A large scale map of the area, labels and pens or pencils.</p>
<p>Activity 2</p> <p>Read the quote from the Islamic Prophet Muhammed <i>"The Earth is green and beautiful and God has made you His stewards over it. He sees how you acquit yourselves"</i>. What do you think he is asking his followers to do? (to behave responsibly towards the planet and to look after all the plants and animals within it).</p> <p>Ask the children to think about their school by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the school one of the green arks on the map? ● If not what can be done to make it one (think back to what makes an area a good place for plants and animals to survive). ● If the school already is a green ark, can it be improved? ● What animals visit the school's green ark? <p>Ask the children to imagine they were one of these creatures living in their school grounds or local green ark. Working in pairs ask them to interview each other to find out what their creature would need to entice it to make a home at the school or how the school green ark is a great place to live.</p>	



Plan

Activity 3

Green arks can take many forms (**Resource 2**):

Sometimes plants and animals are looked after in their natural environments e.g. within National Parks which are large areas created to protect wildlife and plants. Some plants and animals are taken from their natural environment and looked after elsewhere e.g. botanic gardens grow and protect plants from all over the world in one place; seed banks which store thousands of different types of plants from around the world as seeds.

The protected grounds of religious buildings can also be green arks (**Resource 3**). Traditionally the gardens surrounding Hindu temples are filled with plants that are beautiful to look at and some will also have medicinal uses. Fruits and flowers that are used in the daily offerings are also grown within these green arks.

Within the *Living Churchyards* project more than 6,000 British churchyards are being managed as sacred sanctuaries for wild flowers, birds, bats, reptiles and insects. These green arks are looked after by their local Christian communities and to encourage wildlife they don't use any pesticides and some even grow fruit and vegetables for the community.

Ask the class to find out where the nearest National Park, botanic garden, seed bank or Living Churchyard is. Can you arrange a family or a class visit? Are there opportunities to become stewards for these green arks e.g. through volunteering or by taking part in a community event?

An unusual example of a green ark is found at Kingston Mosque in London. To help support dwindling bee populations the mosque has beehives on its roof. Local beekeeper Munir Ravalia says 'during the time of the prophet, the mosque was like a community centre – it provided everything. I want mosques to become centres of learning for Muslims about all types of issues affecting our lives including the environment and supporting the bee population' (**Follow the link in resources for more information**).

Resources

Resource 2: Images of National Park, seedbank and botanic garden

Resource 3: Images of gardens surrounding religious buildings

Link to the beehive project at Kingston Mosque
<http://www.greenprophet.com/2012/05/london-mosques-beekeeping/>



Plan	Resources
<p>Ask the children why they think bee numbers are dwindling and what they can do to help support them in their school's green ark.</p>	
<p>Activity 4 Popular green arks such as the Peak District national Park in Derbyshire suffer from too much love by visitors (Resource 4). The pressure of such large numbers visiting can create problems for the landscape e.g. erosion of paths.</p> <p>Ask the children to look back at the green ark map and imagine if every weekend everyone in their town or city visited it. Working in teams see if they can think of up to 6 things that could happen and write each idea on a separate card. Ask the children to put them in the order of biggest to smallest impact on the green space.</p> <p>Ask the children to move around the room and have a look at what the other groups have listed to see if there are similarities or differences in their choices. Can the class suggest ways of reducing the impact of visitors to their school green ark during school extra curricular activities such as school fairs?</p>	<p>Resource 4: Images of visitor impact on the environment</p>
<p>Plenary Ask the pupils to develop the programme for a day event in their community (run by their school) that will showcase the local Green Arks. Ask them to include in the programme a short introduction on the importance of Green Arks and then create a list of the proposed activities including title, short description of the activity and aim of the activity.</p> <p>This plenary is a whole class activity during which the teacher is the facilitator, collecting and putting together pupils' ideas on the community event run by the school.</p>	