

**Touchstones REACH**

***Touchstones REACH* (Religious Education Arts Clearing House)**

**Lifespan RE Resources for Creation**

**Introduction**

This packet provides resources on the theme of Creation. It is supported by our seventh principle, “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,” our first source, “Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life” and our sixth source, “Spiritual teachings of Earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.” In addition to creation, there are also extensive resources provided regarding nature and care of the earth.

**List of Resources**

**1.0: Pins**

**Resources for Children**

**2.0: Children’s Homilies, Sermons, Time for All Ages & Resources**

**2.1:** *What the Turtle Taught Theodore* by Rev. Gary Kowalski (440 words)

**3.0: Wisdom Stories**

**3.1:** *Russell* by Rev. Jose Ballester (425 words)

**3.2:** *Trout Are Made of Trees* by April Pulley Sayre (182 words)

**3.3:** *The Change the World Kids* (857 words)

**3.4:** *Sun Mother Walks the Earth* (574 words)

**3.5:** *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco

**3.6:** *Maui and Pele Create Hawai’I* (473 words)

**3.7:** *The Rebirth of the Sun* (697 words)

**3.8:***The Big Bang Theory* (246 words)

**3.9:** *Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey* by Gail Forsyth-Vail (632 words)

**3.10:** *Luís and Mika* (1,072 words)

**3.11:** *Brave Enough* by Noreen Kimball (430 words)

**3.12:** *Things We Still Can’t Explain* (968 words)

**3.13:** *The Grumpy Gecko* (994 words)

**3.14:** *Green Like the Wind* by Julie Simon (653 words)

**3.15:** *Enough Stuff* by Julie Simon (738 words)

**3.16:** *Noah’s Wife, The Story of Naamah* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (1,096 words)

**3.17:** *Snail Girl, a Navajo Story* (1,527 words)

**3.18:** *The Clearwater* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer.(1,443 words)

**3.19:** *Creation* (835 words)

**3.20:** *You’re Saved by Something Green* by Charlene Brotman (400 words)

**3.21:***We Got Here Together* by Kim Stafford (247 words)

**3.22:** *The Teachings of the Rain God* (525 words)

**3.23:** *One Flower in a Field* (1,252 words)

**3.24:** *The Great Kapok Tree*, A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest (916 words)

**3.25:** *Mabouya, Chief of the Well*, adapted from a Haitian tale (545 words)

**3.26:** *The Caican Water Project* (1,030 words)

**3.27:** *Henry David Thoreau and the Cottage* by Tracey L. Hurd (943 words)

**3.28:** *The Dog at the Well* by Marilyn McFarlane (730 words)

**3.29:** *Rachel Carson Shapes Tomorrow* by Greta Anderson (878 words)

**3.30:** *Swimming Home* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (919 words)

**3.31:** *How Coyote Stole Fire* **I. Short version (577 words) II. Long version (1,235 words)**

**3.32:** *We Are All One* (1,078 words)

**3.33:** *Amrita’s Tree* (1,137 words)

**3.34:** *The Farmer’s Legacy* (726 words)

**3.35:** *Habitat at Home* by Julie Simon (628 words)

**3.36:***The Green Man* by Rev. Dr. Sophia Lyon Fahs (788 words)

**3.37:** *A Caterpillar Grows Up* (1,197 words)

**3.38:** *And It Is Good* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (875 words)

**3.39:** *The Way of the Otter* by Julie Simon (565 words)

**3.40:** *Trees for Kenya* (543 words)

**3.41:** *The Noble Ibex: A Jataka Tale* by Sarah Conover (1,046 words)

**3.42:** *The Most Beautiful Bower in the World* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (1,095 words)

**3.43:** *Treasure Stones* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (825 words)

**3.44:** *Cooperation,*a French parable retold by Margaret Silf (388 words)

**3.45:** *The Golden Chain: an Ife Creation Story* by Erica Shadowsong (1,081 words)

**4.0: Children’s Books about Creation, the Earth, and Nature**

# 4.1: *The Blessing Seed: A Creation Myth for the New Millennium* by Caitlin Matthews, author and Alison Dexter, illustrator (1999)

# 4.2: *Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun* byGeri Keams, author and James Bernardin (1995)

# 4.3: *The Earth Made New: Plains Indian Stories of Creation* by Paul Goble, author, foreword by Joe Medicine Crow (2009)

# 4.4: *All Our Relatives: Traditional Native American Thoughts about Nature* by Paul Goble, author (2005)

**4.5:** *Born With a Bang: The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2002)

**4.6:***From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth Story* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2003)

# 4.7: *Mammals Who Morph: The Universe Tells Our Evolution Story Book 3* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2006)

# 4.8: *Older Than the Stars* by Karen C. Fox, author and Nancy Davis, illustrator (2010)

**4.9:** *Mr. and Mrs. God in the Creation Kitchen* by Nancy Wood, author and Timothy Basil Ering, illustrator (2005)

**4.10:** *Why the Snake Crawls on its Belly* by Eric Kimmel, author and Allen Davis, illustrator (2001)

**4.11:** *First Light, First Life: A Worldwide Creation Story* by Paul Fleischman, author and Julie Paschkis, illustrator (2016)

**4.12:** *How the Tiny People Grew Tall: An Original Creation Tale* by Nancy Wood, author and Rebecca Walsh, illustrator (2005)

**4.13:** *The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico* by Nina Jaffe, author and Enrique O. Sanchez, illustrator (2005)

**4.14:** *When Woman Became the Sea: A Costa Rican Creation Myth* by Susan Strauss, author and Cristina Acosta, illustrator (1998)

**4.15:** *The Coming of Night: A Yoruba Creation Myth from West Africa* by James Riordan, author and Jenny Stow, illustrator (2011)

**4.16:** *Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia* by Won-Ldy Paye & Margaret H. Lippert, authors, and Julie Paschkis, illustrator (2005)

**4.17:** *Piecing Earth and Sky Together: A Creation Story from the Mien Tribe of Laos* by Nancy Raines Day, author and Genna Panzarella, illustrator (2001)

**4.18:** *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* by Richardo Keens-Douglas, author and Stefan Czernecki, illustrator (1999)

**4.19:** *Ola Na Iwi: I Am Hawaii: A Hawaiian Creation Story for Children Inspired by the Kumulipo* by Kimo Armitage, author and many illustrators including Michael Q. Ceballos & Matthew Kawika Ortiz (2016)

**4.20:** *Big Momma Makes the World* by Phyllis Root, author and Helen Oxenbury, illustrator (2002)

**4.21:***Kojiki: The Birth of Japan* by Kazumi Wilds, author (2019)

# *Gaia*

# 4.22: *Playing with Gaia: discovering the spirit of Mother Earth* by Cindy Bowen, author and Twila Jefferson, illustrator (2009)

# 4.23: *Everything is Connected* by Jason Gruhl, author and Ignasi Font, illustrator (2019)

# 4.24: *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco, author and Joy Troyer, illustrator (2015)

# *Taking Care of the Earth*

# 4.25: *Our Planet* by Jimi Lee (2014)

# 4.26: *Harmony Children’s Edition: A Vision for Our Future* by Charles, Prince of Wales (2010)

**4.27:** *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss (1971)

**4.28:** Touch the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2017)**

**4.29:** Heal the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2018)**

**4.30:** Love the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2019)**

**4.31:** The Earth Book **by Todd Parr (2010)**

**4.32:** Seeds Move! **by Robin Page (2019)**

**4.33:** City Green **by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (1994)**

**4.34:** When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree **by Jamie L.B. Deenihan, author and Lorraine Rocha, illustrator (2019)**

**4.35:** Miss Fox’s Class Goes Green **by Eileen Spinelli, author and Anne Kennedy, illustrator (2011)**

**4.36:** My Garden **by Kevin Henkes (2010)**

**4.37:** *Puffling Patrol* **by Ted and Betsy Lewin (2012)**

**4.38:** *I Can Save the Earth!: One Little Monster Learns to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle* by Alison Inches, author and Viviana Garofoli, illustrator (2008)

**4.39:** *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* **by Miranda Paul, author and Elizabeth Zunon, illustrator (2015)**

**4.40:** *We are Extremely Very Good Recyclers***, characters created by Lauren Child, and Bridget Hurst, author (2009)** *Charlie & Lola Series*

**4.41:** Bloom **by Doreen Cronin, author and David Small, illustrator (2016)**

**4.42:** We Planted a Tree **by Diane Muldrow, author and Bob Staake, illustrator (2010)**

**4.43:** *Rhino in the House: The Story of Saving Samia* **by Daniel Kirk (2017)**

**4.44:** *The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever* **by H. Joseph Hopkins, author and Jill McElmurry, illustrator (2013)**

**4.45:** Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth **by Mary McKenna Siddals, author and Ashley Wolff, illustrator (2010)**

**4.46:** *Wangari’s Trees of Peace****: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter (2008)**

**4.47:** *The Lonely Giant***, by Sophie Ambrose (2016)**

# 4.48: *One Diverse Universe* by Phyllis Reid (2011)

**5.0: Music & Videos for Children (no resources identified)**

**6.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Children**

# *from Tapestry of Faith*

**6.1: Chalice Children: A Program about Our Unitarian Universalist Community for Preschoolers**

**6.1.1:** *Session 7: The Beauty of Nature*

**6.1.2:** *Session 36: Earth Day*

**6.2: Love Surrounds Us: A Program on the UU Principles and Beloved Community for Grades K-1**

**6.2.1:** *Session 14: Love Surrounds Us in Nature*

**6.2.2:** *Session 15: Caring for the Earth*

**6.3: Wonderful Welcome: A Program for Children Grades K-1**

**6.3.1:** *Session 10: The Gift of Protection*

**6.4: World of Wonder: A Program on the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism for Grades K-1**

**6.4.1:** *Session 1: The Web of Life*

**6.4.2:** *Session 2: Nature’s Partnerships*

**6.4.3:** *Session 3: Thanks Be for Trees!*

**6.4.4:** *Session 4: Balance in Our Ecosystem*

**6.4.5:** *Session 5: Habitats*

**6.4.6:** *Session 6: Lifecycles*

**6.4.7:** *Session 7: Decomposition*

**6.4.8:** *Session 8: Life-Giving Plants*

**6.4.9:** *Session 11: Kindness in Nature*

**6.4.10:** *Session 12: Beauty in Nature*

**6.4.11:** *Session 13: Green Energy*

**6.4.12:** *Session 14: Enough Stuff*

**6.4.13:** *Session 15: Working Together to Make a Difference*

**6.4.14:** *Session 16: Using Our Senses of Wonder*

**6.5: Faithful Journeys: A Program about Pilgrimages of Faith in Action for Grades 2-3**

**6.5.1:** *Session 15: Protect the Earth*

**6.6: Love Will Guide Us: A Program for Grades 2-3 that Applies the Wisdom of the Six Sources to the Big Questions**

**6.6.1:** *Session 1: Love Is Like a Seed*

**6.6.2:** *Love Will Guide Us, Grades 2-3*

**6.6.3:** *Session 3: We Love to Discover*

**6.6.4:** *Session 11: Love and Gratitude*

**6.7: Sing to the Power: A Social Justice Program for Children Grades 4-5**

**6.7.1:** *Session 1: The Power of Earth*

**6.7.2:** *Session 3: The Power of Growth*

**6.7.3:** *Session 11: The Power of Action*

**6.7.4:** *Session 13: The Power of Water*

**6.7.5:** *Session 15: The Power of Gathering*

**6.7.6:** *Session 16: The Power to Make Change*

**6.8: Miracles: A Multigenerational Program on Living in Awe and Wonder**

**6.8.1:** *Session 1: Naming Miracles*

**6.8.2:** *Session 3: The Miracle of Transformation*

**6.8.3:** *Session 7: Miracles We Can Make*

**6.9: Gather the Spirit: A Multigenerational Program about Stewardship**

**6.9.1:** *Workshop 1: Gather the Spirit*

**6.9.2:** *Workshop 2: Gather in Sympathy*

**6.9.3:** *Workshop 3: Separate Fires, Kindle One Flame*

**6.9.4:** *Workshop 4: Conscience Refined*

**6.9.5:** *Workshop 5: Chorus of Life Resounding as One*

**6.9.6:** *Workshop 7: Gather in Thanks*

**6.9.7:** *Workshop 8: Gather to Celebrate*

**6.10: Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures: A Multigenerational Program**

**6.10.1:** *Workshop 8: Creation*

**6.11: Circle of Trees: A Multigenerational Program about Nourishing Deep Connections with Nature**

**6.11.1:** *Workshop 2: Trees: Providers of Life*

**6.11.2:** *Workshop 3: Trees: Connected to All Life*

**6.11.3:** *Workshop 5: Trees: From Peril to Progress*

**6.11.4:** *Workshop 6: Council Among the Trees, Part 1*

**6.11.5:** *Workshop 7: Council Among the Trees, Part 2*

**6.11.6:** *Workshop 8: Come Be With Trees*

# *from Other Sources*

# 6.12: *Big Myth Project* by Fiona Passantino (25 creation myths)

# 6.13: *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Around the World* by Carolyn North, adapter) and Adrienne Robinson, illustrator) (2010)

**6.14:** *In the Beginning: Creation Stories from Around the World* by Virginia Hamilton, author and Barry Moser, illustrator (1991)

# 6.15: *Evolutionary Curricula for Children and Youth* by Connie Barlow

**Resources for Youth & Adults**

**7.0: Reflections, Readings, Stories & Poetry**

**7.1:** *The Dreaming* byClive Barker (86 words)

**7.2:** *Not “My” Bread* by Matthew Fox (258 word)

**7.3:** *A Habit of Beauty* by Matthew Fox (256 words)

**7.4:** *In Place of More, Simplicity* by Kent Nerburn (230 words)

**7.5:** *Every Seed Carries a Secret* by Angela Fischer (260 words)

**7.6:** *Down the Drain* by Robert Kinloch Massie, Jr. (164 words)

**7.7:** *The Mystery of the Other* by Maggie Ross (150 words)

**7.8:** *Let There Be Light* by Wayne Dosick (248 word)

**7.9:** *Seed Power* by Robert Lawlor (250 words)

**7.10:** *I Awaken Before Dawn* by Helen Moore (297 words)

**7.11:** *Creation Meditation* by Neil Douglas-Klotz (258 words)

**7.12:** *Between the Mountain and the Ant* by Oren Lyons, Oneida chief (64 words)

**7.13:** *Creation, Maintenance and Destruction* by Deepak Chopra (251 words)

**7:14:** *Creation’s Iris* by Brother David Steindl-Rast (257 words)

**7.15:** *In Darkness* by Paul Coutinho (252 words)

**7.16:***Creation’s Divine Immanence* by Anselm Grun and Leonardo Boff (250 words)

**7.17:** *The Earth Within Us* by Valerie Andrews (252 words)

**7.18:** *Earth’ Sacredness Revealed* by Barry Lopez (124 words)

**7.19:** *Dark Green Religion* by Bron Taylor (256 words)

**7.20:** *The Dignity of the Creation* by Leonardo Boff (257 words)

**7.21:** *Making Amends with Creation* by Farley Mowat (249 words)

**7.22:** *To Know and Be Known by Nature* by F. Lynne Bachleda (255 words)

**7.23:** *Falling in Love with the Earth* by Joyce Rupp (254 words)

**7.24:** *Reverence for Mother Earth* by Charles Cummings (255 words)

**7.25:** *Learn to Love the Dirt* by William Bryant Logan (255 words)

**7.26:** *We Are the Earth* by [Amanda McConnell](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Amanda&author_last=McConnell), [David Suzuki](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=David&author_last=Suzuki), and [Maria DeCambra](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Maria&author_last=DeCambra) (258 words)

**7.27:** *Extinction* by Richard Pearson (255 words)

**7.28:** *Ark-Builders* by Scott Russell Sanders (252 words)

**7.29:** *Trees May Save Us* by Jean Shinoda Bolen (265 words)

**7.30:** *Walking with Reverent Feet* by Chet Raymo(230 words)

**8.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Youth & Adults**

***Youth***

**A Tapestry of Faith**

**8.1: Exploring Our Values Through Poetry: A Program for High School Youth**

**8.1.1:** *Workshop 3: Keenly Observing Nature*

**8.2: Virtue Ethics: An Ethical Development Program for High School Youth**

**8.2.1:** *Workshop 6: Responsibility*

***Adults***

**8.3: Spirit of Life: An Adult Program on Unitarian Universalist Spirituality**

**8.3.1:** *Workshop 4: Blow In the Wind, Rise In The Sea: Nature And Spirit*

**9.0: Popular Music**

**9.1:** *Morning Has Broken* by Cat Stevens (3:16)

**9.2:** *Gaia* by James Taylor (5:31)

**9.3:** *Blue Boat Home* by Peter Mayer (4:02)

**9.4:** *Everything is Holy Now* by Peter Mayer (4:55)

**9.5:** *Human You* by Peter Mayer (4:17)

**9.6:** *The Play* by Peter Mayer (5:13)

**9.7:** *John’s Garden* by Peter Mayer (5:31)

**9.8:** *One More Circle* by Peter Mayer (4:25)

**9.9:** *Awake* by Peter Mayer (3:59)

**9.10:** *God is a River* by Peter Mayer (3:58)

**9.11:** *All the World is One* by Peter Mayer (3:46)

**9.12:** *Ordinary Day* by Peter Mayer (4:12)

**9.13:** *Church of the Earth* by Peter Mayer (5:00)

**9.14:** *The Garden* by Peter Mayer (3:46)

**9.15:** *Running with the Buffalo* by Peter Mayer (4:30)

**9.16:** *O Sun* by Peter Mayer (3:20)

**9.17:** *Ocean Mary* by Peter Mayer (4:08)

**9.18:** *Winter Woods* by Peter Mayer (5:00)

**9.19:** *Coming Home* by Peter Mayer (3:48)

**9.20:** *Earth Town Square* by Peter Mayer (4:15)

**9.21:** *Like a Mountain* by Peter Mayer (4:40)

**9.22:** *Fall* by Peter Mayer (3:01)

**9.23:** *Africa* by Peter Mayer (6:23)

**9.24:** *World of Dreams* by Peter Mayer (4:23)

**9.25:** *Camping by the Sun* by Peter Mayer (4:34)

**9.26:** *The String* by Peter Mayer (4:37)

**9.27:** *Hawk and Whale* by Peter Mayer (5:08)

**9.28:** *The Rainbow* by Peter Mayer (3:58)

**9.29:** *After the Gold Rush* (Live at Farm Aid 1998) by Neil Young (4:02)

**9.30:** *Mother Nature’s Son* (Remastered 2009) by The Beatles (2:48)

**9.31:** *Saltwater* by Julian Lennon (1991) (4:08)

**9.32:** *Song for a Dying Planet* by Joe Walsh (1:54)

**9.33:** *Mercy, Mercy Me* (The Ecology) by Marvin Gaye (3:17)

**9.34:** *Big Yellow Taxi* by Counting Crows with Vanessa Carlton (3:46)

**9.35:** *Coming Down* (with Peter Gabriel “Down to Earth”) by The Soweto Gospel Choir (4:43)

**9.36:** *Seventh Sunrise* by Michael Card (4:18)

**9.37:** *Creation* by Burning Spear (2:12)

**9.38:** *Never Turn Your Back On Mother Earth* by the Sparks (2:09)

**9.39:** *Last Great American Whale* by Lou Reed (3:46)

**9.40:** *Be the Rain* by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (10:32)

**9.41:** *S.O.S. (Mother Nature)* by Will.I.Am (5:55)

**9.42:** *Out in the Country* by Three Dog Night (3:19)

**9.43:** *Earth Song* by Sara Noxx & Project Pitchfork (6:56)

**9.44:** *Wake Up America* by Miley Cyrus (2:43)

**9.45:** *Homeward Through The Haze* by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (1974) (4:22)

**9.46:** *Hungry Planet* by The Byrds (5:01)

**10.0: Videos, Short Films, Movie Clips, Audio Recordings & Photography**

**10.1:** *Earth* by OneHome (5:17)

**10.2:** *Earth* by Alfred Estcourt (2:16)

**10.3:** *Amazing Planet Earth - beautiful earth* by Paris Anderson (6:00)

**10.4:** *Earth* by Rio 2020 (1:26)

**10.5:** *Creation* by Micah Dudash (3:19)

**10.6:** *The Human Impact on this Earth* by Wave of Change (5:34)

**10.7:** *Creation Shortfilm* by Mariano Gila (3:16)

**10.8:** *Illustrated Sequence: Creation* by Cody Sorgenfrey (0:20)

**10.9:** *Creation* by Robert Drozdz (1:27)

**10.10:** *Creation* by Camille Van Zadelhoff (1:37)

**10.11:** *Creation* by Jens Blank (1:14)

**10.12:** *Creation Speaks* by Danny Whatley (4:28)

# 10.13: *Earth* by Johannes Gerard (3:42)

# 10.14: *Katie Paterson: Earth-Moon-Earth* by Jupiter Artland (2:51)

**10.15:** *Earth* by Jochem Drost (1:01)

**10.16:** *Earth to Earth—Aurora Borealis* by Adam Buick (1:55)

**10.17:** *Earth* by Tyler Mansmith (3:48)

**10.18:** *Save the World* | Short Film Showcase by National Geographic (4:23)

***Ted Talks***

**10.19:** *Let’s Make the World Wide Again* by Kristine Tompkins (15:53)

**10.20:** *A Brief Tour of the Last Four Billion Years* (dinosaurs not included) by Lauren Sallan (6:24)

**10.21:** *Nature is Everywhere—We Just Need to Learn to See It* by Emma Marris (15:13)

**10.22:** *The Story of Life in Photographs* by Frans Lanting (16:05)

**10.23:** *A Wide-Angle View of Fragile Earth* by Yann Arthus-Bertrand (14:27)

**10.24:** *TED-Talk Playlist: Earth Appreciated* (12 Talks)

**Resources**

**1.0: Pins for Creation**













**Resources for Children**

**2.0: Children’s Homilies, Sermons, Time for All Ages & Resources**

**2.1:** *What the Turtle Taught Theodore* by Rev. Gary Kowalski (440 words)

In his autobiography, Theodore Parker relates that as a child, four or five years old, living on a farm in Roxbury, he was walking through the fields one day absent-mindedly swinging a stick through the tall grass. This was many years ago, in the days before the Civil War. It was summertime. He stopped to watch the water bubble along a creek. Then he noticed a turtle sunning itself on a rock.

He’d seen other boys use their sticks to strike a turtles and other animals. It was part of what children thought was fun, just as some children still like to bully and hit those who are weaker than themselves. Often children and grown-ups too are copycats — mimicking the behavior of others who seem bigger or stronger than themselves. Young Theodore wanted to be like the other, older boys he’d seen, so he raised his stick into the air, taking aim and preparing to knock the turtle into the water.

Then something stopped him. Something seemed wrong about the situation. He looked again at the turtle, quiet, peaceful, enjoying the summer day just as he liked to feel the warmth and light of the sun. Had the turtle ever done him any harm? Was the turtle so different than himself? Slowly he lowered his stick and walked home, thinking about what had happened.

When he arrived home, his mother was there to greet him, and he told her about the incident. She listened carefully to Theodore, and listened especially carefully when he related how some strange force inside had stopped him from hitting the little animal. “Theodore,” she said, “that force inside you was the voice of conscience. Always pay attention to it. Always follow what your conscience tells you. It’s your moral compass that points you in the right direction. And if you honor your conscience, you’ll never go wrong in this world.”

Theodore Parker grew up to become a Unitarian minister, in fact one of the greatest leaders our faith has ever known. He became a champion of the defenseless who needed defending. He was a hero in the fight to end slavery in our country. He prayed to “Father and Mother God” and fought for women’s equality and their right to vote. He and wife never had children of their own — but he felt a sense of kinship with the whole family of creation, people of all sexes and races who had been made in the image of the holy. And it all started one summer day when he was just a child — a child who saw a turtle and decided to do what was right.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/time-all-ages/what-turtle-taught-theodore>

**3.0: Wisdom Stories**

**3.1:** *Russell* by Rev. Jose Ballester (425 words)

Russell was an amateur geologist, paleontologist, and professional teacher. He took his young charges on an overnight field trip. While sitting around the campfire, he brought out a bag, took out five rocks, and held up a round, grapefruit-size rock. “This rock,” he began explaining, “looks ordinary on the outside. But inside there is hidden beauty.”

He opened the two halves of the rock to reveal all the purple crystals inside. He then picked up another rock of equal size and opened it to reveal a fossil inside. “This is the fossil of a trilobite,” Russell explained. “It was a sea creature that lived millions of years ago. All that remains is this impression of him. Minerals seeped into the mud that held his body, and this is all that remains.”

Next, he picked up something that looked like a small, wooden object and said, “This branch is another fossil that looks like wood, but it really is a rock. And as we know, wood burns, but not rocks.”

Russell threw the rock that looked like a branch into the fire; it did nothing. He then took out a flat, palm-sized rock and said, “Now watch closely.” He threw the flat rock into the fire, and it soon began burning. “That rock is called ‘oil shale’ and has been used for fuel for hundreds of years.”

He then began our lesson in earnest. “People can be as complex as these rocks. Too often all you see is a dull, rough exterior and never suspect there is beauty inside in the form of a crystal or a fossil. Sometimes people look like something else and behave in unexpected ways. And here is the true lesson from the rocks.”

He picked up a round, black stone from a water-filled container.

“I found this stone earlier today in the stream. As you can see, the water has rounded the rock, and the minerals have turned it black.” He then hit the stone with a hammer and it broke in two. “You can also see that the outside is still wet, and the water has made it round and dark, but the inside is still dry and gray. A human heart—like a stone—can be shaped by outside forces, but its inside remains unchanged. Over time, this stone will be further reduced, perhaps becoming a grain of sand that will find its way into an oyster and become a pearl. You never know what a human heart will become over time, so never lose hope in its potential.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/btwwdaya/workshop6/russell>

**3.2:** *Trout Are Made of Trees* by April Pulley Sayre (182 words)

Trout Are Made of Trees by, text copyright 2008. Used with permission by Charlesbridge Publishing, Inc.

Read the story dramatically and have fun with the sound effects!

Trout are made of trees. In fall, trees let go of leaves, which swirl and twirl and slip into streams. They ride in a rush above rocks and over rapids. They snag and settle soggily down. Bacteria feed on the leaves. Algae grow, softening surfaces. Next the shredders move in: Crane flies, caddisflies, shrimp, and stoneflies shred leaves.

**Rip and snip!** They eat the algae-covered leaves, which become part of them. Meanwhile predators are swimming and stalking . . . **Crunch**—there go the caddisflies! **Munch**—there go the stoneflies! Now the leaves have become part of the predators. Trout join in. **Swim and snap!** Fins flick. **Rush. Zap!** They eat dragonflies, caddisflies, stoneflies, and minnows. The leaves have now become part of the trout. Tree shade keeps the stream cool for spawning. Female trout gather over gravel and lay eggs. The males fertilize the eggs. Here come the hatchlings! They grow up in a stream **—Crack! Kersplash!—**shaped by fallen branches. Trout are made of trees. So are the bears and the people who catch the trout and eat them.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop3/288667.shtml>

**3.3:** *The Change the World Kids* (857 words)

Thanks to the Change the World Kids, Meg Miller and Phyllis Arata-Meyers for information and permission to tell their story.

Place a large, shallow dish filled with water in front of you, where children can see it. Place a globe or world map within your reach.

Phebe and Nika were two girls, both eight years old. Sometimes they heard about bad things going on around them in the world – things like terrible wars where people would die, or earthquakes that would shake the ground and destroy people’s homes. They wanted to help. But they weren’t sure what kids could do.

They decided to talk to the kids in their congregation, the North Universalist Chapel Society in Woodstock, Vermont. This was the beginning of the Change the World Kids – a group of children who work together to protect many different parts of the interconnected web of all life. When they learn about problems in the world, the Change the World Kids think of ways they can act to make a difference. They learned there is plenty kids can do to help.

The Change the World Kids are an action club. Their motto is: “No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.”

(Repeat the motto, slowly, so children can listen carefully to it:) No one can do everything, but everyone can do something.

Nika, Phebe, and all the other Change the World Kids learned about the ripple effect. They learned when one person takes action, even in one small way, that action can send ripples into the world around us, just as water ripples in a lake.

(Indicate the dish filled with water.) Watch the surface of the water. When I poke my finger in it, you can see the ripples all around.

Demonstrate this. Pause and let the water settle. Repeat until all children have seen the ripples.

In Vermont, where the Change the World Kids live, many had birdfeeders in their backyards. The birdfeeders attracted beautiful songbirds. When Vermont got very cold, birds migrated south, to warmer places for winter. One springtime, a couple of Change the World Kids noticed fewer birds came back to their birdfeeders after the winter. They wanted to know: What had happened to the birds?

A scientist told the Change the World Kids about endangered species – animals that might become extinct if nobody helped save the natural woods and forests and oceans the animals needed to live. The children learned that the birds they saw in Vermont in the spring and summer were losing their winter homes in Costa Rica, because people were cutting down trees. People in Costa Rica wanted the wood to build new homes. Or, sometimes they wanted to cut the forest to make more pastureland to feed beef cattle or to grow crops. But the trees were already being used as homes – by the birds. The children learned that tropical birds, like the three-wattled bell bird, will not even fly over land that has no trees, and when northern birds migrate for food in the winter and find none, they die.

What could the kids do? The problem was happening thousands of miles away, in Costa Rica. Point out Costa Rica on the globe or world map. Point out Vermont.

How could the kids help? Vermont was so far away from Costa Rica, and the kids were just kids!

I will give you a hint. Watch the water again. Indicate the dish filled with water. Poke the water surface. Repeat until all children have seen the ripples.

The Change the World Kids remembered the ripple effect. Maybe they couldn’t do everything to save the bell birds, but they could do something! They raised money to help start a tree nursery, Bosque para Siempre – that means “forest forever” in Spanish. They used some of the money they raised to buy land for a new habitat for the migratory birds. Some of the kids took trips to Costa Rica to help plant trees. They have replenished the forest with more than forty thousand trees that provide fruit and shade for many species of birds.

One time in Costa Rica, the Change the World Kids helped put tags on birds. Tags help scientists keep track of the birds and learn more about them. The Change the World Kids got to hold a red-breasted grosbeak and a wood thrush – both birds that spend part of the year in Vermont. In time, as the effects of their actions in Costa Rica are felt all around the world, like the ripple effect, the Change the World Kids know they will begin to hear and see more birds in Vermont again!

Nika and Phebe grew older. New children joined the Change the World Kids. Now the action club has teenagers and middle-schoolers from many different religions. They know that every action, no matter how small, can have ripples that spread around them. To help protect the Earth, the Change the World Kids designed and sold reusable shopping bags. They made clotheslines so people could use the power of the sun, instead of electricity, to dry their clothes. The Change the World Kids do projects as simple as shoveling snow for an elderly person in their community and as complicated as raising money for children’s schools and health care in Rwanda, where communities have suffered from war.

Point out Rwanda on the globe or world map. With every action, big or small, the Change the World Kids prove what Phebe and Nika learned: No, nobody can do everything, but yes, each person can do something to protect the Earth and all life on it. Each action makes a ripple, and the ripples change the world.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session15/change-the-world-kids>

**3.4:** *Sun Mother Walks the Earth* (574 words)

Based on a story of indigenous people of Australia/New Zealand.

There was a time when everything was still. All the spirits of the Earth were asleep—or almost all. The great Sun Mother was awake, and as she opened her eyes a warm ray of light spread out toward the sleeping Earth.

“Ah!” the Sun Mother said, “I have work to do! I must go to the Earth, awaken the sleeping spirits, and give them forms.”

The Sun Mother glided down to Earth, which was bare. She began to walk in all directions and everywhere she walked plants grew. After returning to the field where she had begun her work, the Sun Mother rested, well pleased with herself. When she was rested, the Sun Mother went forth again.

This time she ventured into the dark caves on the mountainsides. The bright light that radiated from her awoke the spirits, and after she left the caves, insects of all kinds flew out into the sunlight. The Sun Mother sat down and watched the glorious sight of her insects mingling with her flowers. Once again, however, she did not rest for long.

The Sun Mother ventured into a very deep cave, spreading her light around her. Her heat melted the ice, and the rivers and streams of the world were created. Then she created fish and small snakes, lizards, and frogs. Next she awoke the spirits of the birds and animals and they burst into the sunshine in a glorious array of colors. Seeing this, the Sun Mother was pleased with her work.

She called all her creatures to her and instructed them to enjoy the wealth of the Earth and to live peacefully with one another. Then she rose into the sky and became the Sun.

The living creatures watched in awe as the Sun Mother crept across the sky toward the West. However, when she finally sunk beneath the horizon, they were panic-stricken, thinking she had deserted them. All night they stood frozen in their places, thinking that the end of time had come. After what seemed to them a lifetime, the Sun Mother peeked above the horizon in the East. The Earth’s children were so relieved they danced for joy. Soon they learned to expect her coming and going and were no longer afraid.

At first, the children lived together peacefully, but eventually envy crept into their hearts. They began to argue. The Sun Mother was forced to come down from her home in the sky to mediate their bickering. She gave each creature the power to change its form to whatever it chose. However, she was not pleased with the end result. The rats she had made had changed into bats; there were giant lizards and fish with blue tongues and feet. However, the oddest of the new animals had a bill like a duck, teeth for chewing, a tail like a beaver’s, and the ability to lay eggs! It was called the platypus.

The Sun Mother looked down upon the Earth and decided that she must create new creatures, wiser than these. She gave birth to two children, a god and a goddess. The god was the Morning Star and the goddess was the Moon. Two children were born to them, and these, her grandchildren, she sent to live on Earth. They became our ancestors. The Sun Mother was satisfied. They were superior to the animals because they had part of her mind, and would never want to change their shape.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/bridges/workshop3/183345.shtml>

**3.5:** *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco

From The Everything Seed by Carole Martignacco, illustrated by Joy Troyer, (Berkeley, California: Tricycle Press, 2006). Used with permission. Carole Martignacco is a poet, singer, grandmother, and former RE director. A Unitarian Universalist minister, she currently serves as minister to the UUestrie, a congregation in Quebec’s Eastern Townships, and as president of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers of Canada.

We highly recommend buying the picture book “The Everything Seed,” by Carole Martignacco with gorgeous batik illustrations by Joy Troyer, available from the *UUA bookstore*.

Have you ever watched a seed grow? Have you ever noticed how it begins so small, so still, so quiet, like a gift wanting to be opened... and how slowly it wakes up, begins to unfold, growing into something larger... and larger ... and LARGER? Then you know that whatever comes from a seed usually ends up looking very little like the seed it came from... which is also true of the very first seed.

Once, long, long ago, way back before the beginning... so long ago there was no such thing as time, because there was no one there to count it... Everywhere was a huge deep mysterious place, like something waiting to happen. There were no stars, no Sun or Moon. There was no place like Earth... not a drop of water, or a single tree, or rock or flower... and no living beings anywhere.

But in that deep waiting space was hidden the tiniest point of something no bigger than a seed. (Leader: Hold up a seed.) It was not a flower seed. It was not an elm tree seed. It was not a seed of corn, although all those things were included in the seed. You might call it an Everything Seed because that is what it became.

No one knows where that first seed came from, or how it was planted, or how it knew (in the way that only seeds seem to know) how long to wait for just the right moment to sprout and grow. But all at once, this tiny seed, cradled and nourished in the rich soil of space, woke up, broke open, and began to unfold.

Unfolding ... Unfolding ... and blossoming forth... into an enormous blazing ball of bright light... like a great Grandmother Sun. And the Universe was born. Out fluttered the galaxies, like a storm of snowflakes swirling... and gathering into the brightest, most blindingly beautiful clouds of stars.

And out of those starclouds whirled our own star, the one we call the Sun... and our Earth and our Moon... and all the round spinning planets we have learned how to name.

And this is the secret of that tiny seed: You and I were there in the very beginning... just as the idea for each leaf on a big oak tree lies hidden inside an acorn (Leader: If you have an acorn, hold it up.)

We were there with all the stars and planets, all the rocks and oceans, plants and animals, and people. Everything that is now, ever was, or ever will be was inside that first tiny seed. So, whenever you hold a seed in your hand and wonder what it could become imagine how you, and all that is here, once came from the tiniest speck of an Everything Seed before it sprouted and grew long, long ago in the way-back beginning of time.

Now, if this were an ordinary story, it would end right here. But this story of the Universe keeps unfolding. What once began in a blazing blossom of light continues every day. New stars sprout open in the deep soil of space. New plants and animals appear on the Earth. Seeds of many kinds... are scattered everywhere... to help us remember. And new people are born every day with the spark of that first light still alive and burning deep inside... Waiting... like the Everything Seed, to shine in ways that are yet to be known.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session1/everything-seed>

**3.6:** *Maui and Pele Create Hawai’I* (473 words)

A retelling of a Hawaiian legend.

The god Maui was the smallest but smartest of his brothers, who often made fun of him because he couldn’t fish very well.

Sometimes Maui would go out on a boat with his brothers, distract them when they had a fish on the line, and steal it from them, claiming it as his own. But soon his brothers caught on, and wouldn’t let Maui fish with them any longer.

Maui’s mother, taking pity on him, told Maui to go and fetch a magical hook, fastened to the heavens. When the hook catches land, it will raise the land from the bottom of the sea floor.

When he got the hook, Maui begged his brothers to take him out just once more. He wanted to prove he was the best fisherman of all.

Maui cast his line into the sea, and soon enough, he hooked it on land. The sea began to move, and great waves rose all around them. Maui commanded his panicked brothers to paddle harder and harder, and not to look back. Maui pulled and pulled, and soon mountaintops began to rise from the ocean. But one of Maui’s brothers was too curious, and he looked back in awe at what Maui had done.

The spell was broken, and the magical line broke, leaving only the mountaintops visible above the ocean.

And that is how the Hawaiian Islands were born. They were only mountains then, until Pele brought her fire to Hawai’i.

Pele was born from the supreme beings, Papa, or Earth Mother, and Wakea, (Wah-Kay-uh) Sky Father. Pele was among the first voyagers to sail to Hawai’i from her homeland Tahiti in a canoe guided by her shark-god brother. Pele saw a high mountain with a cloudy haze hiding its peak and knew she had found her new home. She named the island Hawai’i.

Pele, carrying her magic stick Pa’oa (pay-oh-uh), went up to the mountain where a part of the earth collapsed into the ground. She placed the stick into the ground, and fire began to erupt from the mountain. Pele called this place Kilauea (kill-u-ay-uh). Inside the Kilauea crater was a large pit. She named it Halema’uma’u (halemma-uma-oo). Halema’uma’u would be her new home.

A cliff on nearby Kilauea Mountain is sacred to her eldest brother, Ka-moho-ali’I (ka-moho-alee-he), king of the sharks and the keeper of the gourd that held the water of life. Out of respect for this brother, to this day, Pele never allows clouds of volcanic steam to touch his cliff.

Pele still lives on Hawai’i where she rules as the fire goddess of the volcanoes. The smell of sulfur reminds the natives that she is still there in her home, Halema’uma’u, her fiery lava building a new island to the south, still submerged, named Loahi (lo-uh-hi). Those present whisper in awe:

Ae aia [ay eye-ah] la o Pele, there is Pele.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-1/maui-and-pele>

**3.7:** *The Rebirth of the Sun* (697 words)

From CIRCLE ROUND by Starhawk and Diane Baker and Anne Hill, copyright (C) 2000 by Miriam Simas, Anne Hill and Diane Baker. Used by permission of Batman Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

Circle round, and I’ll tell you a story about when the sun was born again ...

It was the middle of winter, and the sun had grown very old.

All year long the sun had worked very hard, rising and setting day after day. All year long the sun had fed everybody on earth, shining and shining, giving energy to the trees and the flowers and the grasses so they could grow and feed the animals and birds and insects and people.

All year the sun’s gravity held tight to the spinning ball of the earth and the twirling ball of the moon and the eight other whirling planets as they traveled around and around and around, until the poor sun was dizzy watching it all.

Now the poor tired sun could barely make it up in the morning, and after a very short time, needed to sleep again. So the days grew shorter, and the nights grew longer, until the day was so short it was hardly worth getting up for.

Night felt sorry for the sun.

“Come to my arms and rest, child,” she said. “After all, I am your mother. You were born out of my darkness, billions of years ago, and you will return to me when all things end. Let me cradle you now, as I shelter every galaxy and star in the universe.”

So, Night wrapped her great arms around the sun, and the night was very long indeed.

“Why does the dark go on so long?” asked children all over the earth. “Won’t the sun ever come back again?”

“The sun is very tired,” the old ones said. “But maybe, if you children say thank you for all the things the sun does for us, the light may return in the morning.”

The children sang songs to the sun. They thought about all the things the sun gave them.

(Leader: Ask participants what they think the children might have thanked the sun for. Allow some responses. Then, resume the story.)

“Thank you for growing the lettuces and the corn and the rice and the wheat,” they said. “Thank you for growing the trees of the forests and the seaweed in the oceans and the krill that feeds the whales. Thank you for stirring the air and making winds that bring the rain.”

Every time a child said thank you, the sun began to feel a little warmer, a little brighter. Wrapped safely in the arms of Night, the sun grew younger and younger.

At last the children had to go to bed. “We will stay up and wait for the sun to rise again” the old ones said.

“Can’t we stay up, too?” the children asked.

“You can try, but you will get too sleepy,” the old ones said. “But you can each light a candle, because all fire is a spark of the sun’s fire. Put your candle in a very safe place, and let it keep vigil for you as you sleep and dream of sunrise.”

So, the children lit their candles and put them in very safe places, and each flame was a little spark of the sun’s fire. And the sun peeped out from between the arms of Night, and saw all the little fires, and began to feel warmer and brighter and younger still.

Early in the morning, the old ones woke the children. Together they climbed a high hill and faced to the east, the direction of sunrise. They sang songs to the sun and ran around trying to keep warm. They waited and waited to see what dawn would bring.

The sky began to turn from black to indigo to blue. Slowly the sky grew light. A golden glow crept over the horizon. Night opened her great arms, and in a burst of brightness, the sun appeared, new and strong and shining.

For in the long night the sun had rested well and grown young from the songs and the thanks of the children, young as a brand-new baby, born out of Night once more.

Everybody cheered, and the children jumped up and down.

“The sun has returned! The sun is reborn!” the people cried. And they danced and sang to celebrate the birth of a new day, and then went home to breakfast.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session11/168878.shtml>

**3.8:***The Big Bang Theory* (246 words)

In 1927 a Roman Catholic priest and scientist Georges Lemaitre proposed what later became known as the Big Bang theory of the origin of the Universe, based on work by Edwin Hubble who theorized and then proved that the Universe was getting bigger and bigger. Many scientists have discovered other evidence that confirms that the theory might be correct. They think that the Big Bang happened 13 to 15 billion years ago.

Big Bang theorists are called cosmologists, because they study the cosmos. They tell us that before the big bang, the entire Universe fit into a space that would make a grain of sand absolutely colossal. Everything that exists, from a blade of grass to Sirius, the Dog Star, all fit into a very, very tiny space, all compacted together.

Suddenly there was an explosion, and the Universe began to spread out. Expanding at the speed of light, which is 186,000 miles per second, the Universe continues to expand today, and no one is sure when it might end, but it’s estimated to be billions of years in the future.

The Big Bang theory does not explain how the Universe began, or where all of the “stuff” in it comes from, or how it was created. Scientists are certain that the Universe has a beginning, but are not certain what that was. Science does not and cannot explain or describe “the beginning,” only the general evolution of our Universe from a possible point in time.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-1/big-bang>

**3.9:** *Dinosaur Bones in New Jersey* by Gail Forsyth-Vail (632 words)

About two hundred years ago, lots of people in North America and in Europe were discovering all kinds of wondrous things in the ground. They found coal to burn for fuel, iron for making machinery, nickel for creating tools and candlesticks and other useful items. They found marl, a grey, clay-like substance full of calcium carbonate, garden lime, which made wonderful fertilizer. Those who owned the pits where such items were located counted themselves lucky and hired workers to dig up those resources and bring them to market to sell.

Diggers, especially those working in marl pits, found interesting things stuck in the thick, grey substance—bits of seashell, pieces of bone, and gigantic skulls that bore a resemblance to the small lizards that now ran in the fields. When they brought those curiosities home to show their children and neighbors, people were fascinated. It was clear that the marl pits had once been at the bottom of the ocean. They concluded that the skulls and bones must be left over from an ancient flood described in the Bible. The Bible story told of how all creatures, except for those in Noah’s ark, had drowned. Surely such strange bones could only have come from that ancient flood!

But there were those who realized that something didn’t quite fit with the flood story. They collected specimens—and wondered.

Let’s move forward in time to 1839 in Haddonfield, New Jersey, William Hopkins hired workers to dig up marl in a stream bed in his backyard. As they dug, they cast aside shells and bits of bone. What was really important was removing the rich grey clay and getting to market to be sold. And then they encountered something extraordinary in the marl pit! The found a skeleton, complete except for the skull, of a giant lizard-like creature, a creature as tall as a house! The workers told Hopkins about their discovery. “Leave it be and dig around it,” was his reply.

Three years later, a scientist in England looked at the pieces of bone he had collected from marl pits in his area and came forth with an astonishing theory. He concluded that the bits of bone proved that there were once great lizards— “dinosaurs” that roamed the earth. “Impossible!” “What folly!” “You have too big an imagination!” People all over the world criticized the new idea. According to the Bible, God created all species in the same week, about six thousand years ago. Giant lizards were nowhere mentioned in the Bible, so they must not have existed.

The debate raged between those who thought that dinosaurs might have once roamed the earth and those who thought such an idea nonsense. Meanwhile, the skeleton remained in the marl pit in Haddonfield, New Jersey.

For twenty years, William Hopkins had a giant lizard skeleton the size of a house in a marl pit in his back yard, and he never gave it a second thought. Until one day, when he invited his friend William Foulke over for dinner. Foulke was a collector of fossils, small bits of bone and shell, and Hopkins wanted very much to impress him. He told the story of the skeleton in the backyard over dinner that night in 1858. Foulke wasted no time. He was back the next day to view the find.

There it was in the marl pit- proof of the existence of dinosaurs. It was the first nearly complete skeleton to be found anywhere on earth. Its discovery made news worldwide!

Foulke arranged for workers to remove the skeleton from the pit and to exhibit the creature—named hadrosaurus foulkii—at the Philadelphia Museum of Natural History.

The existence of dinosaurs had been proven—and the race to find out more about these mysterious creatures had begun!

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session3/dinosaur>

**3.10:** *Luís and Mika* (1,072 words)

Luís lived in the Arctic Circle with his parents who were researching the effects of global warming. Luís wondered about that as he went out for a walk. He didn’t think there was much global warming going on today. It didn’t feel warm to Luís, who was bundled up in a snowsuit, mittens, hat, and boots.

Luís came across a very large polar bear. She looked very sad, and Luís felt sorry for her, and so he went over to ask why.

The polar bear said she was sad because her habitat was shrinking.

“What’s a habitat?” Luís asked.

“Why, your habitat is where you live. The Arctic is my habitat,” responded the polar bear, Mika. “It is everything you see around you, the ice, and the sea, and the glaciers. It has food, shelter, everything I need to live a healthy life and raise a polar bear family.”

“Why is it shrinking?” Luís asked.

“Well,” Mika replied, “my habitat needs to be cold. I like it that way, and so do the fish I eat. But the climate around here is getting warmer.”

“I actually think it is plenty cold here!” said Luís. “But I know about global warming. My parents study that. It’s because of people cutting down rain forests and drilling deep into the earth to get coal and oil.”

Mika nodded sadly. “Take it from me, our winters are not what they used to be,” she said. “Winters are shorter now. Ice melts faster than it ever has before. That means that polar bears like me are running out of places cold enough to live, hunt, and raise our cubs. If we don’t have anywhere to live, we may vanish from the earth forever. And mine is not the only habitat that’s in trouble. Oceans are warming up. Wild forest lands are getting smaller. Many species are threatened because their world is changing so rapidly.”

“That’s awful,” replied Luís. “What is causing global warming?”

“The earth is warming up because of the way humans have used it. Like you said. Cutting down trees. Drilling into the earth. And, no offense, but, everyday things you do at home can contribute to global warming, and in turn hurt me, and my environment, even the whole planet.”

“Like what?” asked Luís. “I’m just a kid!”

“If you ride in a gas-powered car, or leave lights on in your house when you do not need them, everyday things like that,” said Mika. “Like having the heat up too high, or the air conditioning too low, taking long showers, and leaving computers and phone chargers plugged in on stand-by instead of shutting them off.”

“Those things hurt you?”

“Yes, they do. The energy to run all those devices, or to heat your water, or run your car isn’t free. It comes from oil or coal that is taken from the earth and burned in great, big factories. When the factories make fuel, they also make a lot of waste—pollution and chemicals that go into our air and water. Forests are cut down to make room for cattle that people want to eat or more space for people to live, work, and play.”

“I had no idea!” said Luís.

“Humans are just starting to understand the impact they have had on all the creatures’ habitats. But a while back, before most people were thinking about how they use our earth, I met a very concerned lady named Rachel Carson.

She came up here to the Arctic, and we had a very long talk. I told her there were strange smells in the air, and that the animals seemed to be sick.

“Rachel did a lot of research, and wrote a book called Silent Spring about chemicals used to get rid of bugs and help crops grow. She showed that these chemicals did not kill just bugs, but harmed many animals. The chemicals even killed songbirds. The book was so important that President Kennedy read it, investigated those chemicals, and had them banned. Rachel was really concerned about the environment. She spoke to the U.S. Congress, worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and taught at a college. Even though she is not alive any more, many friends of the earth still celebrate Rachel Carson’s birthday, May 27—and many Unitarian Universalist congregations celebrate it, because she was a UU.”

“I’m a UU!” said Luís excitedly.

“You are?” said Mika. “That’s wonderful! Many Unitarian Universalists are changing their human habits in ways that help the earth.”

“Really?” asked Luís. “I want to help, too. What can I do?”

“There are a lot of things you can do to help, Luís,” said Mika.

[Pause. Invite the group to try and guess what ideas Mika gave Luís. Then continue…]

Here is what the polar bear told Luís. “If you remember to turn off lights and unplug phone chargers when you are not using them, you will use less electricity. That helps. Wear a sweater inside when it’s cold, and you won’t need to turn the heat so high. Take short showers! It takes a lot of energy to heat water for a shower. Plus, you’ll save water that other species need, too—like those fish I like to eat!”

Luís wondered how a polar bear knew so much about humans’ habits! She told him to recycle everything he could, from plastic and paper, to clothes that had gotten too small, to electronics he didn’t play with anymore. “Take them to someone who can use them,” Mika said, “or make new things from your old stuff.”

Mika told Luís that the way polar bears use the earth fits right in with the other species that share their habitat. “For example, I always swim, or walk, or float on an iceberg to get where I’m going,” she said. “But humans use their cars a lot, and airplanes, and buses,” she said. “If you can walk, bike, or skate where you are going, that can help. Buy food that is grown or made near where you live and doesn’t have to ride to your town in a truck or a train that uses a lot of fuel. Remember, we are all connected in the interdependent web of life.”

“Gosh, Mika, I sure am glad I ran into you. I learned a lot about global warming and climate change.”

Luís went back to find his parents to tell them all he had learned, and to see if they could celebrate Rachel Carson day, too.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-7/luis-mika>

**3.11:** *Brave Enough* by Noreen Kimball (430 words)

There was once a girl who loved to write stories and poems. She often wrote about the land and birds around her home. Her name was Rachel Louise Carson and she was born in 1907. When Rachel grew up, she became a writer and a scientist. Rachel wrote wonderful stories and she always explained the beauty of nature so well you could almost see what she was describing. As a scientist, Rachel was also very careful to describe things exactly as she saw them. She made sure everything she wrote was true.

Since Rachel was always outside studying nature or writing about it, she noticed that a lot of birds and fish were dying. She figured out that the animals were dying from poisons being sprayed from airplanes to help farmers get rid of insects that damaged plants. The poison not only killed the insects, but it also got into the soil and water and killed other animals. Eagles and many other birds and species of animals began to disappear.

Rachel wrote articles and spoke to the U.S. Congress so everyone would know how we were destroying the environment. She even wrote a book about the problems caused by the poison. In her book she described a spring where the skies were quiet and still because so many birds had died. She called that book Silent Spring.

People who read Rachel’s book started to demand that the government stop spraying the chemicals. The President and Congress asked scientists to look at the chemicals to make sure Rachel was right about what she had said. At first, the chemical companies said that Rachel was wrong, but eventually scientists figured out that the chemicals were getting into the earth and water and were killing many animals, just like Rachel’s book said. Because Rachel kept writing and speaking until someone would listen, the government finally stopped using the dangerous chemicals and began to test new ones much more carefully.

People still use poisons and chemicals in the wrong way today, but Rachel Carson helped start a whole new kind of environmentalism—a movement to control pollution of our earth. Even though Rachel was a small, quiet woman, she believed people have the power to save the environment. If Rachel had not been brave enough to stand up for the environment and fight for it until someone listened, we might not have as many species of birds and fish that we do today. Thanks to this brave woman who always told the truth, we still have Bald Eagles flying in our beautiful blue skies.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session15/brave-enough>

**3.12:** *Things We Still Can’t Explain* (968 words)

Sources used for this story include: “[Raising Heaven: Where Rocks Go Wandering](http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/11/death-valley/cahill-text),” by Tim Cahill (National Geographic).

The world still holds many wonders that science—so far— cannot explain. As you learn about the three mysteries described, see if you can hypothesize any scientific explanations for them.

## 1. Ball Lightning

Too many public sightings of ball lightning have been reported to write it off as fictitious. It is literally a blazing ball of lightning that usually appears during a thunderstorm. What makes it incredibly intriguing is that these burning spheres are actually mobile, with seemingly unexplainable powers. People have seen ball lightning pass through blocks of metal, wood, and even buildings. They are accompanied by strong sulfurous odor, and have a lifespan ranging from one second to a minute.

Ball lightning can cause major damage, such as burning objects in its path. So far, the most popular scientific explanation says that lightning balls are made of vaporized silicon. In 2012, scientists in China captured video and spectrographic images of ball lightning for the first time. The images have allowed scientists to determine what these balls of fire are made of, so, we may be close to an explanation.

## 2. Earthquake Lights

Sometimes before, during, or after a large earthquake, mysterious, flashing lights are seen in the sky. People have described them as blue, white, multicolored, or sometimes every color in the spectrum. These earthquake lights usually last only a few seconds, though some have been observed for as long as a minute.

Earthquake lights have been observed throughout history, with the earliest report dating back to 373 BCE. The 20th century provides the majority of reports. After the 1930 earthquake at Japan’s Idu Peninsula, more than 1,500 people told researchers they had seen mysterious lights. After the 1976 Tangshan earthquake in China, people reported a “colorful, flashing light display [that] was seen in the sky 200 miles away.”

Scientists began to take earthquake lights seriously in the 1960s, when they were first photographed. More recently, people have captured earthquake lights on video. Many wonder whether earthquake lights can be taken as a warning that an earthquake is about to happen.

In 2010, Chilean journalist Cecilia Lagos witnessed earthquake lights. Later, she said:

“I saw through my window, while I was still in bed, I saw the sky changing colors, it was absolutely surreal. I really thought it was the end of the world...I don’t know I hope you understand me because I’m not exaggerating really because I saw it through my window like that.

“That was the most terrifying thing seeing the sky changing colors with the terribly, amazingly strong movement of the earth, I thought, ok...this is mother earth.”

An old, Japanese haiku poem (author unknown) hints at the connection of these lights to movement under the earth’s surface:

The earth speaks softly

To the mountain

Which trembles

And lights the sky.

Some think that certain types of rock grinding against one another may generate electrical charges that make the sky glow. But, science does not yet know with certainty the cause of earthquake lights.

## 3. Sliding Rocks

Another geological mystery is sliding rocks, also called sailing stones or moving rocks. These are large, heavy rocks that appear to move, apparently on their own, along the smooth ground of a valley. No one has seen the rocks move. We know they have moved because of the long tracks they leave in the ground.

In Death Valley, Arizona, a large, flat area known as Racetrack Playa has many of these moving rocks. A writer in National Geographic magazine said:

I am thinking specially of an area in the northwest section of Death Valley called the Racetrack, where, inexplicably, …rocks as big as microwave ovens go zipping across the desiccated mud for distances of more than half a mile (880 m). The evidence is all there: deep tracks in the surface, with a rock at the end. One concludes, reluctantly, that the rocks somehow traveled a couple of hundred yards, leaving a telltale trail behind. There are over 150 of these roving rocks. But no one has ever seen them move.

No one has seen the rocks move, nor is there evidence that an animal or human moves them—so, how and why do the rocks move?

At Racetrack Playa, many curious visitors have observed the stones and the tracks they leave. The tracks can be hundreds of feet long and are typically less than an inch deep. The stones appear to move every two or three years and most tracks develop over three or four years. Rocks with rough bottoms leave straight tracks, while those with smooth bottoms seem to wander. Rocks sometimes turn over, exposing another edge to the ground and making a different-looking track.

Sometimes two rocks seem to have started together, traveling side by side, until one abruptly took another direction, to the left, to the right, or even backward. Because no one has witnessed the rocks moving, the speed the rocks travel at are not known.

One theory suggests that the rocks are so porous that there is air inside them. On a sub-zero night, the air inside a rock will compress. The next day, the intense desert heat causes the air inside to once again expand, which pushes the rocks along their paths.

Gravity is not the cause. Sliding rock trails go in a variety of different directions, often uphill. Many people believe that strong winds move the rocks when the weather is wet. The dried mud at Racetrack Playa, becomes slippery when wet and can sometimes freeze overnight into sheets of ice. But some of the rocks weigh as much as a human, which some researchers feel is too heavy for the area’s wind to move, even across a very slippery playa. People have tried to move the rocks when the ground is slippery, using ropes, and have failed.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-8/cant-explain>

**3.13:** *The Grumpy Gecko* (994 words)

Adapted from “The Grumpy Gecko” in The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales by Dawn Casey and Anne Wilson (Cambridge: Barefoot Books, 2009). Used by permission.

In a shady glade, the chief of the jungle slept. Until, GECK-O! GECK-O! GECK-O!

Tiger woke up with a snort. He opened one yellow eye. “Gecko,” he growled. “What do you want? It’s the middle of the night.”

“I’ve come to complain...”

What could Gecko the lizard have to complain about? He spent most of his time lazing around, just sleeping and eating. Even when he was hungry, all he had to do was flick out his sticky tongue and lick up a mosquito.

“What’s troubling you?” Tiger asked.

“It’s the fireflies!” said Gecko. “All night long they fly around, flashing their lights in my eyes, keeping me awake... flashing and flickering... I haven’t slept for days. It’s making me very grumpy. You’re the chief of the jungle. Make them stop.”

Tiger stifled a gigantic yawn. “I’ll talk to the fireflies,” he promised Gecko.

Tiger sighed and set off to find the fireflies.

Wading through wet paddy fields, the night vibrated with the chirps and croaks of frogs and the trills of a million insects.

Above the paddies, the fireflies flickered and flashed.

“Fireflies,” Tiger called, “Gecko says you have been disturbing his sleep, flashing and flickering all night long. Is this true?”

“Well, we do flash our lights all night,” replied the fireflies, “but we don’t want to disturb anyone! We’re just passing on Woodpecker’s message. We heard him drumming out a warning.”

“I see,” said Tiger. “Then I’ll talk to Woodpecker.”

At the edge of the paddies, Tiger found Woodpecker drumming against a coconut palm. Rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat, rat-a-tat.

“Woodpecker!” Tiger winced. “The fireflies say you have been rapping and tapping, tapping and rapping, drumming out a warning. Is this true?”

“Of course,” said Woodpecker, puffing up his feathers. “I provide a great service. Clearly, my efforts are not appreciated.” He looked down his long beak at Tiger. “Beetle rolls manure right across the path. I warn the jungle animals so that no one steps in it. Without my drumming, who knows what a mess you’d all be in?”

“Oh,” said Tiger. “Well, that’s very helpful. Thank you.”

Tiger licked his nose thoughtfully. “I’ll go speak to Beetle.”

It was easy to spot Beetle on the jungle path. In the moonlight, his back gleamed like polished metal.

“What’s all this?” Tiger asked. “Woodpecker says you’re rolling filthy mess all over the place?”

“Yes, yes, can’t stop,” Beetle replied, rolling a ball of dung right up to Tiger’s paw. “Water Buffalo drops piles of it all over the path. If I don’t move some away, there’ll be muck everywhere! ‘Scuse me... “

Tiger lifted his paw and Beetle bustled past.

“OK,” said Tiger, suppressing a sigh. “Thank you, Beetle. I’ll go and see Buffalo.”

Tiger found Buffalo asleep in a pool of mud.

“Buffalo,” Tiger roared.

“Beetle says you have been leaving your manure all over the path. Is this true?”

“Oh yes, Sir,” said Buffalo, lowering his head. “I leave manure all over the path, Sir. But you see, Sir, it’s helpful, Sir. Rain washes holes in the path every afternoon. I leave manure only to fill up the holes, so that no one trips or falls. If I didn’t, Sir, someone could get hurt.”

“I see,” said Tiger. “Well, that’s very thoughtful of you, Buffalo.”

Tiger’s tail twitched. He was beginning to lose patience. He sighed. “I’ll go ahead and hear what Rain has to say.”

Tiger set off for Mount Agung, the highest peak on the island, and the home of Rain.

Tiger climbed and he climbed and he climbed.

He climbed through jungle, woodland and scrub and then he climbed some more.

At last, his claws clattered onto the smooth grass of the mountain peak. He stopped to catch his breath. He looked down the mountain.

The sun was rising. Tiger stared.

Jungle spread out for miles around, flamboyant with flowers. Wild orchids and climbing lilies, trumpets of violet-blue and starbursts of brilliant flame-red.

Tiger sniffed. He smelt jasmine, ylang-ylang, frangipani.

He swiveled his ears. He heard newborn streams trickling and tinkling.

And below the jungle, on the green-gold steps of the paddy fields, he could just make out the faint flicker and flash of the fireflies.

“No need to ask why Rain rains,” Tiger smiled.

He cooled his paws in a stream and watched for a while. He watched the water journey from mountain to sea, sustaining every living thing on its way, even the tiniest mosquito.

Tiger plunged his muzzle into the clear fresh water and drank.

Then he began the long journey down the mountain and through the forests and jungles and paddies to find Gecko.

It was dusk by the time Tiger found the lizard again.

“Well?’ Gecko demanded. “Did you talk to the fireflies? They’re still flashing and flickering, on and on. Did you tell them to stop?”

“Gecko,” said Tiger. He sat down on his haunches and spoke very slowly. “Listen carefully. The fireflies flash to pass on Woodpecker’s warning. Woodpecker warns everyone not to step in beetle’s dung. Beetle clears up the excess dung left by Buffalo. Buffalo leaves manure on the path to fill up the holes made by rain. Rain makes holes in the path as he creates streams and lakes and puddles—puddles where mosquitoes live.”

“Oh,” said Gecko.

“Gecko, what do you eat?”

“Mosquitoes,” said Gecko.

“So... “said Tiger.

“So... “repeated Gecko slowly.

“Yes... “

“If Rain stopped raining... “

“Yes... “

“Buffalo could stop filling holes... “

“Uh-huh... “

“And beetle could stop rolling dung... “

“Yes... “

“And Woodpecker could stop drumming... “

“Mmm... “

“And the fireflies could stop flashing... “

“Yes, Gecko... “

“But... I would have nothing to eat.”

“Exactly,” said Tiger. “Gecko, everything in this world is connected. Go and live in peace with the fireflies.”

So, Gecko stuck himself upside down, underneath the branch of a tree. He closed his eyes. He went to sleep.

The fireflies flickered and flashed.

Tiger snored.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session1/grumpy-gecko>

**3.14:** *Green Like the Wind* by Julie Simon (653 words)

In a bay of the North Sea, in the middle of Denmark, on an island called Samso, the wind blows and blows. On this windy island, lived a man named Soren Hermansen. He farmed some land and played guitar in a band, but mostly he thought about the planet. On the island also lived fishermen and dentists, shop keepers and ferry boat drivers, teachers and electricians, and of course children. The children loved to fly kites on the windy beach of the island.

The people of Samso were ordinary in many ways—especially when it came to thinking about and using energy. They drove cars that ran on gasoline. To power their lights, they used electricity carried by a big underground cable from the mainland. And during the long, cold nights of winter, they kept their homes toasty warm with oil brought to Samso by giant tankers. All of Samso’s energy had to be made somewhere off the island.

Then one day, thinking about energy on Samso became extraordinary! The island was picked to be the energy demonstration project by the government of Denmark. From that day forward, Samso would work to use green energy and create all its energy right on the island—local energy—as much as possible.

Now Soren Hermansen, the man who thought a lot about the planet, knew making green energy locally would be less polluting for the island, Denmark, and the planet. He became Samso’s champion for green energy. So, he brought lots of people together to figure out greener ways to save energy and to make energy on their very own Island of Samso.

At first, many of the grownups on the island were not convinced it could be done. They thought green, locally-created energy would cost too much money. They thought it would take too much time out of their already busy days. They thought it would just be too hard and too much trouble. What could they do on such a small island?

But Soren Hermansen did not give up. He knew his country had a long history of co-operative community projects. So, he continued to get people together. He asked the children for ideas. He asked the grownups for ideas. He asked for big ideas and little ideas. What about riding bicycles instead of driving cars someone suggested? What about collecting energy from the sun? How about using all the wind that we have on the island?

After several years of thinking and talking, a few residents decided it was time to start doing. One person put up a small used wind turbine in the backyard to make electricity to use at home. Another invested money to build a huge wind turbine. Then he sold the wind-powered electricity to the power company who connected it to the homes on Samso. Finally, Samso had two green energy projects! The island residents still used plenty of polluting power from other places, but it was a good start.

Then one winter night, an icy storm shut off electricity on Samso. All the lights went out and everywhere was dark. Except the house with its own backyard wind turbine. It continued its “whoosh whoosh” throughout the storm. After that, a lot more people on Samso got serious about green energy sources from right on the island.

Some people installed solar panels on their farms. Someone built a biomass furnace to burn straw from the fields rather than oil. And someone invented a way to make tractor fuel from plants that grow on the island, instead of using gasoline. More and more people jumped in and figured out what they could do to contribute to green energy right on Samso. Many pooled their money to build more big wind turbines. Today, 20 wind turbines on the island and in the sea around it help power Samso and even send extra green energy back to the mainland of Denmark.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session13/green-like-wind>

**3.15:** *Enough Stuff* by Julie Simon (738 words)

Jamie sat on his bed, while his Dad talked on the phone. In just three weeks, Jamie was going to turn seven. He couldn’t wait. He was having a pirate party. He already had his costume: his ripped white T-shirt, some torn black pants that his Mom had cut jaggedly at the knee, a black eye patch, and the colorful stuffed parrot that he sometimes slept with.

Jamie loved birthdays. He loved being the center of attention, eating pizza, having his grandparents come over—his Grandma Delia made the best chocolate cake in the world. But most of all, he couldn’t wait for his friends to come over so they could run around in the backyard and play in the pirate ships he and his Dad were making. Yesterday, their neighbor Cameron had told them about a refrigerator box sitting by the side of the road a few blocks away from their house. But Jamie wanted to make at least two ships and maybe have a cannonball fight. Jamie’s Dad hung up the phone.

“Well, there is still one empty refrigerator box that they haven’t broken down at Montgomery’s Appliance store over on Fennbridge Road. That’s just a mile away. I told the owner we would pick it up by noon.”

“Yippee! Can we go get it now? Then we can make two ships to use for a cannonball battle at the party.”

“Whoa, kiddo. How about after some breakfast? Then we’ll have energy to work on making the ships once we get the box home. Now what were you going to use for cannonballs?”

“Well, I thought newspaper rolled into balls would work. They won’t hurt us and we have a lot of newspaper in the living room.”

Jamie’s dad laughed. “We do have plenty of newspaper. I guess it’s time I put some of those piles out with the recycling. But I’ll set aside some for making cannonballs and then we can recycle it after the birthday party.”

Just then, Jamie’s mom walked into the room. “Speaking of birthdays...What do you want for your birthday?” she asked. Jamie looked around his bedroom. He spotted plastic Legos, wood and cardboard blocks, toy trucks and cars, two stuffed bears, a stuffed monkey, fish, and the parrot; a magnetic building set, his wooden train set, a magic kit, and about 10 books piled next to his bed. And that was just the stuff sitting out on the floor.

Then he said, “I don’t know, Mommy. I do have lots of toys and books already. Can I think about it?”

“Of course,” said his mom. “But if you want something special, let us know soon. Now how about helping me work on the party invitations while Daddy makes us some eggs? I’m getting hungry.”

Jamie grabbed his polar bear from his bed and went into the study to help his mom write the invitations.

“You know, Jamie,” said his mom. “We could make it a ‘no presents’ birthday this year if you want. Instead of bringing presents for you, you could ask your friends to donate items for an animal shelter or another charity you like.”

Jamie looked at his mom. He had actually been to a “no presents” birthday. His cousin Kai who had turned 10 last August had a tropical pool party. And there were no presents. Instead, everyone had brought donations—whatever they wanted—to help save the rainforest.

But the party was a blast. They swam at the neighborhood pool, and had crazy hat relay races in the pool and dove for coins in the deep end. Jamie was on his neighborhood swim team so he could swim and dive with Kai and all his older friends. They ate mangos, pineapple, and coconuts, which Jamie loved. Kai told Jamie it was the best birthday ever, and he felt great sending a check for $200 to the Save the Rainforest Fund.

“Mommy,” said Jamie. “I think a ‘no presents’ birthday would be good. Maybe we could have everyone donate money if they want to. Do you think we could find someone who is helping polar bears and give the money to them?”

“I bet we could,” said his Mom. “We’ll spend a little time researching that. How about we start with a wildlife group like World Wildlife Fund?”

“Yes,” said Jamie. He hugged his polar bear. “I’d like to help the polar bears. I have enough stuff.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session14/enough-stuff>

**3.16:** *Noah’s Wife, The Story of Naamah* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso (1,096 words)

Noah’s Wife: The Story of Naamah (C) Text 1996 Sandy Eisenberg Sasso. Permission granted by Jewish Lights Publishing, Woodstock, VT, www.jewishlights.com.

“Naamah” is pronounced “NAY-ma.”

In the time when the world was still young, plants and animals and people filled all creation. But the people were not always kind to one another.

In earth’s garden, there lived a man named Noah and a woman named Naamah. God said to Noah and Naamah, “There is too much hate on earth and in people’s hearts. But your hearts are good, and you can help me begin again.”

God said to Noah, “Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Do this quickly, for I am about to bring a great flood to destroy all that is under the sky. Bring two of every animal that lives on this earth, birds and cattle and creeping things of every kind. Gather enough food for you and for them and store it in the ark.”

Then God called out to Naamah, “Walk across the land and gather the seeds of all the flowers and all the trees. Take two of every kind of living plant and bring each one onto the ark. They shall not be for food, but they shall be your garden, to tend and to keep. Work quickly. The rains begin tomorrow.” Naamah tied an apron of many pockets around her waist and walked through all of the earth’s fields and gardens. She journeyed into the forest and carefully gathered the spores from the moss that made a carpet at her feet. She placed them in the cool deep pockets of her apron, away from the light of the sun.

She came upon the giant redwoods. They carried their cones too high for her hands to reach. “God,” called Naamah, “blow me a wind so that the redwoods will let go of their seeds and I may gather them.” Just then a fierce howling sound blew through the forest and soon at Naamah’s feet were the cones of the redwoods.

Naamah picked acorns from the oak trees, and nuts from the pecan and pistachio. The winged seeds of the maples snapped under the gentle pull of her hands. She carefully lifted the seedlings of the cedar and cypress, the persimmon and plum. She found every tree, from acacia to ziziphus.

Naamah walked into the fields right past the dandelions, pretending not to notice their feathery yellow heads sprouting over the grass. “Naamah,” called God, “gather the seeds of every living plant!” And Naamah knew that God meant the dandelions too. Reluctantly, she placed their seeds in her pockets with all the others. Because Naamah had ignored them, God made certain that dandelions would cover the earth.

Naamah gathered the seeds of the sunflowers and buttercups, the orchids and jasmine. The fields blossomed with dahlias and daffodils, lilies and lavender. She picked two of every kind and planted them in red clay pots to carry onto the ark. She collected all the flowers, from the amaryllis to the zinnia.

Tomatoes burst with seed and avocado pits rested in their green fruit. The fields were ripe with potatoes and pomegranates, oranges and okra, lima beans and lemons. Naamah carried large straw baskets to hold all the varieties of fruits and vegetables, everything from apples to zucchini.

When Naamah had collected the seeds and seedlings of every living plant upon the earth, she arranged every plant and seed, each in its special place on the ark. Then she made a sign that said: NAAMAH’S GARDEN—these plants are not for food.

Then the sun disappeared, lightning flashed and thunder boomed. Dark clouds filled the sky and rain poured from the heavens until the waters covered all the lime green aspens and the emerald green pines.

Noah and Naamah looked out over the waters and were sad for all that had been destroyed. For forty days and forty nights the skies never brightened, and the rains never ceased.

On the ark, Noah and Naamah cared for the lions and the leopards, the porcupines and parrots, the opossums and orangutans. Some of the animals liked to eat in the day, and others wanted to eat at night. Just as the squirrels closed their eyes for the evening, the owls hooted for food.

There were as many sounds as there were animals on the ark. The coyotes howled, the snakes hissed and the peacocks shrieked; the noise never stopped. Water was everywhere, but there was none for a bath. The smell of the animals filled the ark.

At these times Noah and Naamah would breathe the sweet aroma of the flowers and sit in the quiet of the plants that they called Naamah’s garden. They prayed for the rains to stop.

After forty days and forty nights, a rushing wind rolled over the waters and the rains ceased. The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. When Naamah and Noah looked out the window atop the ark, they saw the black sky soften into shades of blue.

Finally, the ground was dry and firm. Two by two, Noah led the animals from the ark. Some pranced, some flew, some slithered, and in this way they spread out over the earth.

Naamah carefully placed all the seeds and seedlings in the deep pockets of her apron. As soon as she set foot on the new land, Naamah knelt down, put her hands into the soft moist earth, and made small cradles in which to plant. She placed downy tufts of milkweed seeds in her palms and held them up to the sky to let the wind carry them in all directions.

Naamah took off her sandals and let her feet sink into the soft soil. She sighed with delight at the touch of the land. Morning gave way to afternoon, and Naamah worked without rest. As she patted the earth around a small raspberry bush, a dark red berry fell generously into her hand. The taste of ripened raspberry refreshed her.

God saw all that Naamah had planted and God said, “Because of your great love for the earth, I will make you guardian of all living plants.” For a single moment, God gave Naamah’s eyes the vision to see into the future and from one end of the earth to the other. She saw how the seeds were carried great distances, and how they landed softly on the soft ground. As God had promised, dandelions were everywhere.

Naamah delighted in how the trees grew tall and spread umbrellas of shade over the earth. Flowers sprinkled yellow, peach and lilac over the fields. To this day whenever someone digs in the earth and plants a seed, Naamah’s garden continues to grow.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session8/naamah>

**3.17:** *Snail Girl, a Navajo Story* (1,527 words)

Long ago, it is said, there was a mighty flood, and the People left their world, the Fourth World, the Underworld, and came up into the Fifth World, the world we live in today. They found themselves on the shore of a great ocean.

The People broke into groups by clan and went out to find new homes. But at the end of four days, they came back to the place by the ocean.

“There’s no fresh water to drink in this world,” they said. They stood by the biggest body of water they had ever seen, but it was salty and they couldn’t drink it without getting sick. “What are we going to do?” they asked.

First Woman stood in front of the People and spoke. “Someone will have to go back down to the old world below, back through the hole from which we emerged, to find some fresh water. If I could have just a little water, I could sing my water song and make many streams and rivers grow.”

First Woman was the first human being ever made. She was tall with strong arms and hands and a gentle, kind face. Her eyes shone with wisdom and strength. She looked at the People, and her eyes fell on the group that was the Water Clan.

“One of you should go,” she said. “You should have brought the water with you when we left the old world.”

Then First Woman made a beautiful water bottle out of sea shells. She put a stopper made of red coral in the opening and she wove some rainbow into a loop to carry it. When she finished, she held it up in front of her and faced the Water Clan.

“So, who will go?” she asked.

Out of the group came two Animal People, Otter and Beaver. Long, long ago, before the world was finished, they say there were Animal People. Otter and Beaver walked upright on two legs, but they had wide tails like paddles, just like the tails they wear today, and they were great warriors.

Otter said, “We’re from the Water Clan. We’re the best swimmers, and we should be the ones to go.”

First Woman smiled at them proudly. She hung the water bottle around Otter’s neck. Together, Otter and Beaver jumped into the water. They went down, down, down until they reached the bottom and walked along the ocean floor.

Soon they came to a valley of water lilies. There were lilies of every color. It was so beautiful that Otter and Beaver decided to stop.

Beaver said, “We should take some of these flowers and plant them in our new world!”

“Good idea,” Otter agreed.

So, Otter put down the bottle, and soon they were both covered from head to toe in water lilies, roots, and vines. When they had gathered all they could, they journeyed back to the world above.

When they came out of the water, the People waiting on the beach were amazed. Otter and Beaver looked like two trees coming out of the ocean.

“It’s us!” Otter yelled.

The people cried, “Otter and Beaver have come back!” Everyone was excited.

“Look what we found!” Beaver said. “We’re going to plant these here in our new home!”

First Woman anxiously waited for the water bottle.

Otter pulled and tugged at the roots and vines. “I’ve got it,” he said. “It’s here somewhere.” But he looked and looked and couldn’t find it.

“You have it, cousin Beaver,” Otter said. Together they pulled and tugged on the vines and flowers, but they didn’t find the bottle.

“Oh, no!” Otter cried. “I think we forgot it... down there....” Otter’s voice got smaller as he realized what they had done.

First Woman’s eyes narrowed. “This won’t do at all. You two go away from here. I don’t want to see you for a while.”

So, Beaver and Otter waddled away, dragging their tails between their legs, to plant their vines and flowers. Today we know that Otter and Beaver still surround themselves with water lilies and roots and vines.

Next, First Woman sent Frog and Turtle to get water. They brought the water bottle back when they returned, but it was filled with salt water. So, First Woman sent them away, too.

First Woman was growing weary of the Water Clan’s mistakes. She was not used to being this upset. “We still don’t have any fresh water,” she said.

Someone tugged on her dress. First Woman looked down and saw a thin little girl with long, raven-black hair.

“I am Snail,” the child said in a small, squeaky voice. “I’m from the Water Clan, and I’d like to help my people. I want to go get the water.”

First Woman looked at the People and the People looked at each other. Everyone knew that Snail was the slowest swimmer of the Water Clan. Nobody thought she would make it, but nobody else wanted to go. First Woman nodded. “You are very brave, Snail,” she said. And she tied the bottle to Snail Girl’s back. Snail slowly slipped into the great waters. She went down, down, down to the land at the bottom, her long black hair flowing behind her.

Snail Girl went past the valley of water lilies, past the place where Turtle and Frog had gone. Finally, Snail came to a hole in the sand with bubbles coming out of it. She went into the darkness of this hole, deeper and deeper, back to the Fourth World.

There she found some pure water. She tasted it, and it was delicious and fresh. There was just enough to fill up the water bottle. She carefully placed the coral stopper tightly in the bottle. She went back up through the hole and made her journey home.

The full moon was shining when Snail Girl came out of the water. She had been gone for such a long time that no one waited for her at the seashore.

Slowly, Snail Girl walked up the hill where she made her home. She was so tired that she didn’t feel the rainbow loop coming loose and the water bottle falling off her back. She was so worn out that she didn’t hear the bottle dragging in the dirt and rocks. She was so sleepy that she didn’t notice the water trickling out.

Snail Girl went to her home and took the bottle off her back. She looked at it and couldn’t believe her eyes. There was a hole in the bottom of the bottle.

“Oh no! It’s empty!” she cried.

She was so exhausted that she couldn’t even cry. She fell to the ground fast asleep.

First Woman woke up from a dream. “I dreamed Snail has returned!” she whispered. First Woman believed in the power of dreams.

She ran down to the ocean’s edge. She followed Snail Girl’s trail up the hill. Halfway up she saw something shining at her feet in the moonlight. She stopped and reached down to touch it. It was wet. She tasted it. “Fresh water!” she said, and she breathed a sigh of relief. “Snail did it!”

Long ago, they say, everyone had a magic song. First Woman began to sing her magic song, and the small drops of pure water began to grow. They turned into a trickle at first, then a stream, then a river. The river got longer and wider and deeper and faster, and soon the biggest river anybody had ever seen rushed into the ocean.

First Woman looked at the river and smiled, and then she remembered Snail.

First Woman ran to Snail Girl’s home and woke her up. Snail opened her weary eyes and saw it was First Woman, and she said, “All the water is gone. Look at the bottle. There’s a hole in it.” She began to cry.

But First Woman’s eyes lit up. “Come with me, Snail,” she said, and they went outside. A beautiful river ran down the hill to the ocean.

“You did it, Snail,” First Woman said. “You carried the water all the way back from the old world, and even though a hole wore through the bottle as you walked up the hill, I got here in time to take a seed of water and make it grow.” Snail smiled.

Snail Girl and First Woman stood together near the top of the hill and watched the sun rise over the river. As the People awoke and came out of their homes, they were amazed at what they saw. They whooped and hollered with joy and happiness.

The people held a giving thanks ceremony. Everyone sat in a circle and Snail was the Honored One.

First Woman spoke. “Snail, you are very brave, and we thank you. From this day on, you will carry the water bottle on your back as a symbol of your great journey. You will leave a trail of moisture behind you every place you travel. This will be a message to everyone that our pure water is precious and we must take care of it.”

And so, it was from that day on.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop1/149426.shtml>

**3.18:** *The Clearwater* by Janeen K. Grohsmeyer.(1,443 words)

In the month of July in 1969, a gigantic rocket was launched into space. It sailed through the darkness away from the Earth, and it carried three people to the moon, a quarter of a million miles away. Two people got out of the spaceship and walked on the moon.

It was amazing. Through the ages, people have looked up at the moon and wondered what it would be like to go there. And finally, we had. People had walked on the moon. It wasn’t easy. We had to come up with new ideas, figure out new ways of doing, invent new techniques and build new machines. Thousands of people had to work together to make the trip to the moon happen. And we did. We made it happen.

There was another group of people working together to build a ship, and that was another amazing thing that happened in the month of July in 1969. It wasn’t as famous, so perhaps you haven’t heard of it.

After all, this ship wasn’t a space ship, full of new inventions. It was a sailing ship, built like the sailing ships of old, the kind called a sloop. It had wooden beams, strong ropes, and a towering mast more than 100 feet high.

It didn’t go to the moon, a quarter of a million miles away. It sailed the Hudson River, 142 miles from the state capital at Albany down to the great port of New York City, and then back again.

It didn’t have thundering rockets or powerful thrusters; it had great white sails—like the wings of gull—that caught the breeze and carried it forward on a whisper of the wind.

The name of this ship was the Clearwater, and she still sails the Hudson River today.

Thousands of people worked together to help build the Clearwater, but she started from the idea of just one man. His name was Pete, and he and his family had lived next to the Hudson River for years and years. When they first moved there, after World War II, trees grew all along the banks. Otters slid down the muddy slopes into the water. Fish swam in the river. Birds nested in those trees. The Hudson was a living river.

But as the years went by, people cut down some of the trees and put up oil tanks. They dumped old cars and made a junk heap right across the river from Pete’s house. People built factories up and down the river and dumped chemicals into it. People built homes near the river and dumped their dirty water and their garbage in it. Every year, people kept cutting down more trees and dumping in more filth.

After a while, the water got so dirty that the fish couldn’t live there anymore. With the fish gone, the otters didn’t have anything to eat. With the trees gone, the birds didn’t have any place to nest. The Hudson River wasn’t a living place anymore. It was barely even alive.

Pete knew this was wrong. He knew the fish and the otters and the birds needed a place to live. He knew the trees shouldn’t all be cut down. He knew the river should live. He knew the water should run clear again.

So, he decided to make that happen. He decided to build a ship, like the great sailing ships that had traveled the river 100 years ago, back when it was clean and clear. The ship would show people what had been, and what could be again.

That ship would be the Clearwater.

Pete knew he couldn’t build a ship all by himself. It takes a lot of work to build a ship, and it takes more than a dozen people just to sail it. He would need help.

He knew he couldn’t clean up the river all by himself, either. The Hudson is a long river; a lot of people live near it. All of them would have to help.

So, Pete went to get help. He asked people. He wrote letters to people. He talked to people. But mostly what Pete did was sing to people.

You see, his full name was Pete Seeger, and he’d been a singer and a songwriter all his life. He sang at concerts, at campouts, at meetings, and at temples and chapels and churches—including at least one Unitarian Universalist one. His mother had been a Unitarian, and Pete joined a Unitarian Universalist congregation in New York City and sang there.

He sang in many places, and his songs were for everyone. Maybe you know some of them?

He wrote: If I had a hammer, I’d hammer in the morning...

And he wrote: Where have all the flowers gone, long time passing...

And a lot more. Maybe you’ve even sung a few of his songs.

Pete knew that music could bring people together. He knew that the words in the songs could help people see a better world. So, Pete wrote songs about the river, about the water and the trees, and about what we would have to do to make the water clear again. He traveled all over, singing these songs.

People came from all over to hear him sing, and in his music, they saw a better world. So, they gave money to help build the ship Clearwater; $60,000 was collected from those concerts. Plus, thousands of people sent in membership money for the Hudson River Sloop Restoration group. In July of 1969 (four years after Pete got the idea, and the same month that people walked on the moon), the ship Clearwater was launched into the Hudson River. She slipped into the water, and her sails caught the breeze, flying like a gull on a whisper of wind.

Less than a year later, in April of 1970, the Clearwater sailed down the Hudson River and out into the Atlantic Ocean, down past New Jersey and Delaware and Virginia, and into the Chesapeake Bay and up the Potomac River, right to the capital of the United States: Washington, DC. Clearwater went to Washington for the very first Earth Day, 40 years ago, to help teach people about how to help keep our land clean and our water clear.

Because Clearwater is more than a special ship. She’s a special school. More than10,000 people go on board every year—all kinds of people—old people, young people, big kids, little kids—and they learn about fish and crabs and water and bubbles and grass and all the things a living river needs. Some of the teenagers get to help sail the Clearwater to different places. They hoist the sails and tie the ropes and scrub the decks, just like real sailors do. They even spend the night on the ship.

And they often sing songs, just like sailors do, just like Pete Seeger. People are still singing his songs, and the Clearwater is still sailing, up and down the Hudson River, 142 miles from the state capital at Albany down to the great port of New York City, and then back again.

She’s done a good job. People have done a good job. The Hudson River’s cleaner now than it was, all those years ago when Pete first got the idea to build Clearwater. The sky is cleaner, and the land is cleaner, too. Other rivers are cleaner too. But they’re not as clean as they used to be, hundreds of years ago. They’re not as clean as they could be. They’re not as clean as they ought to be.

That’s our job—to make that happen—to make the land clean and the air fresh and the water clear. It may not be easy. We’ll have to come up with new ideas, figure out new ways of doing things, invent new techniques, and build new machines. And we’ll probably write some new songs. Millions of people will have to work together to make it happen.

And we can do it. After all, we’ve worked together before to make things happen. We went to the moon! And that was an amazing thing, no doubt about it.

But you know... no one stayed on the moon. They all came home. No one lives on the moon. It has only dry dust and dead rocks. The moon has no air. The moon has no water. The moon has no earth.

We need Earth.

We need Earth to be a living place—our living place—with clean land and fresh air and clear water. Because fish and otters and birds aren’t the only ones who live here. We do, too.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop8/149703.shtml>

**3.19:** *Creation* (835 words)

Genesis 1: 1-31; 2:1-4 (New Revised Standard Version)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, “Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters form the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So, God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our own image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/hebrewscriptures/workshop8/creation>

**3.20:** *You’re Saved by Something Green* by Charlene Brotman (400 words)

From The Kids’ Book of Awesome Stuff (Brotman-Marshfield Curriculum, June 2004). Used with permission.

Take a deep breath. The air you just breathed in is different from the air you just breathed out. The air you breathed out is a gas that can suffocate you if too much of it gets in the air. That gas is carbon dioxide.

The oxygen you breathed in makes energy for you from the food you eat. But when your cells use the oxygen, they end up with something your body doesn’t want: carbon dioxide. So, your blood goes around to all your cells like a trash hauler, collecting the carbon dioxide and taking it to your lungs. You breathe it out.

All night, all day, every creature on earth breathes out carbon dioxide. Over and over. That’s a lot of suffocating gas! A little carbon dioxide in the air is normal and safe. But if the air around you filled up completely with carbon dioxide (or even just halfway), you would suffocate.

So . . . with all the breathing out that goes on in the world, what keeps you from smothering under a thick cloud of carbon dioxide? What saves you?

You are saved by something green.

All over the planet, green plants on the land and in the ocean pull carbon dioxide gas out of the air by breathing it in themselves! The very same gas that can kill you is exactly what a green plant must have to live.

Plants don’t breathe with lungs like yours, of course. Instead, they breathe in the carbon dioxide through millions of invisible holes on the underside of their leaves and on their stems. The tiny openings can close and open.

Every time a leaf breathes in carbon dioxide, it also breathes out an equal amount of pure oxygen. The leaf is getting rid of oxygen it doesn’t want.

The same oxygen that leaves breathe out is exactly what you need to breathe in. You can’t live without it. You breathe in what leaves breathe out. So do slugs. So, do crows, crocodiles, and crickets . . .

Oxygen from plants travels on wind currents from far-away continents and oceans. It reaches you even when the trees around you have lost their leaves, or if you live in a place with no leaves at all. Right this minute, you may be breathing oxygen from a rain forest in Costa Rica, or a field of red poppies in Turkey.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop2/something-green>

**3.21:***We Got Here Together* by Kim Stafford (247 words)

“We Got Here Together,” by Kim Stafford, is reprinted by permission of the author from We Got Here Together, by Kim Stafford, illustrated by Debra Frasier, published by Harcourt Brace in 1994. Copyright 1994 by Kim Stafford.

Invite children to act out the story when you read “Now you get settled into bed.” Encourage them to imagine the bubble coming from the fish and turning into the sky and the rain turning into the ocean.

Now you get settled in bed, I’ll tell you a story.

You get cozy, and I’ll start.

Once, in the deepest ocean, there was a little fish.

That fish opened its mouth and let a bubble go.

At the same moment a cloud high over the ocean let a raindrop go.

Way down in the deep that bubble started its journey to the surface, and high in the sky that raindrop started down.

Would you be afraid? I might be afraid. But nothing can hurt a raindrop, nothing can hurt a bubble. They belong where they’re going.

For a long time that bubble drifted up through the water without a thought, bumping a seal belly, bouncing off a seaweed leaf, rolling through the blue, floating toward that big ceiling of light.

And the raindrop was spinning dizzy down, sliding along the shoulder of the wind, tumbling toward that silver field of water.

They took so long, falling down and soaring up, they grew. The bubble swelled and filled with light. The raindrop gathered ready and round.

Somehow, they were aimed for the exact same moment in time, and they got there together.

Then they were—what were they?

The bubble opened and was the whole sky.

The raindrop opened and was the whole ocean.

There they were—sky and ocean turning right where they belonged.

And you and I?

(Sound the rain stick to indicate the story is over.)

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session2/168205.shtml>

**3.22:** *The Teachings of the Rain God* (525 words)

Adapted from a version on the 2003 [*International Year of FreshWater website*](http://www.un.org/events/water/).

One day a long time ago, the elephant acted like a bully. He challenged the Rain God.

“You covered the Earth in green,” the elephant said, “and I’ll bet you feel pretty good about yourself. But guess what! If I tear up the grass and the trees and the bushes, the green will all be gone. What then?”

“What then?” answered the Rain God. “I’ll stop sending rain. No more green will grow, and you won’t have anything to drink or eat. That’s what!”

But a few words weren’t going to stop the elephant. He ripped up all the trees, the bushes, and the grass with his trunk. All the green disappeared from Earth.

That made the Rain God mad. He stopped the rain. Deserts began appearing everywhere.

Soon the elephant was dying of hunger and thirst. He tried digging where the rivers used to be, but he didn’t find a drop of water. So, the elephant changed his tune. He praised the Rain God and apologized.

“I’m sorry,” the elephant said. “I was too proud, and I misbehaved. But now I’ve learned my lesson. I repent, so please make it rain!”

But the Rain God said nothing. Every day the world dried up more.

The elephant knew the rooster was loud, so he asked the rooster to praise the Rain God.

After looking all over the place, the rooster found the Rain God hidden behind a cloud. The rooster praised the Rain God with such fine words that the Rain God relented. A little rain fell and made a small pool very close to the elephant’s home.

The same day, the elephant decided to go into the woods and look for food. He ordered the tortoise to protect the pool.

“Don’t let anybody drink here,” the elephant said. “Tell them the water is mine and nobody else’s.”

The tortoise tried to obey, and turned some small animals away. But then the lion came, and the lion wasn’t impressed. He growled at the tortoise and drank all he wanted.

When the elephant returned, he grew very angry at the tortoise.

“Sir,” said the tortoise, “what could I do? The lion was big and had sharp claws. And all the other animals were mad at me, so I got out of the way.”

“I’ll show you mad,” the elephant said. He raised one foot and stamped on the tortoise to crush her.

The tortoise was very strong, and the elephant did not kill her. But he flattened her out, and the tortoise has remained flat ever since.

Suddenly the Rain God spoke. His loud voice filled the sky, and he warned the animals not to follow the elephant’s example.

“If you want more rain, don’t be like the elephant,” the Rain God said. “Don’t challenge powerful gods or anything more powerful than you. Don’t wreck the things you need. Don’t make weaker animals protect your property, and don’t punish animals that are trying to help you. Most of all, don’t be too proud and don’t try to have everything for yourself. If you are lucky and have a lot, share it with others who need it.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop2/teachings-rain-god>

**3.23:** *One Flower in a Field* (1,252 words)

Adapted from “One Flower in a Field” by Joshua Searle-White, in Magic Wanda’s Travel Emporium: Tales of Love, Hate and Things in Between (Boston: Skinner House, 2007).

Once upon a time there was a field. It had dry grass, brambles and thistles, and high places and low places, and rocks scattered around, and a stream that passed alongside. And scattered around, here, there and everywhere, were flowers. Buttercups and tulips, coneflowers and lupines, all kinds of bright, beautiful flowers growing up out of the dry grass.

Now, you may ask, how could these flowers grow when the field was so dry? The answer is that next to each flower was a hole in the ground. And in each hole lived an animal whose job it was to tend that flower.

Most were rabbits, but there were hedgehogs and field mice and even a badger or two. Every morning, each animal would come out of its hole, hop or scurry down to the stream, and use a leaf to scoop up some water. Then they would each carry their leaf back and water their flower.

In a little gully in this field, next to a tall sunflower, lived a rabbit. Every day she would go down to the stream and get some water for her sunflower. She loved that flower. It was tall and bright, strong and healthy, and she took very good care of it.

One afternoon, the rabbit decided to hop up to the top of a little hill alongside her gully. When she got to the top, she saw something she had never seen before. Down a ways, she saw a flower. It might have been a daisy, but it was hard to tell. This flower looked in bad shape.

Now, why had she never seen that flower before? It’s not that big a mystery. She had just never climbed that particular little hill to look in that direction. Of course, she knew the field was full of flowers. She may have heard some were not doing quite as well as her sunflower. But she’d never actually seen one that looked as bad as this.

She hopped down the hill to take a closer look, and then, she began to understand. This flower needed water. Its stem was bent. Its petals were wilting in the heat. The ground around it was parched and dry. The rabbit felt bad that a flower could be so neglected. And then she did... nothing.

Even though the flower looked terrible, it was just one flower in a field, after all. The field had plenty of other flowers that were doing fine. The rabbit had enough work to do, watering her own flower. So, she went home and got on with her business, getting up every morning, going to the stream, watering her sunflower and hopping around all afternoon.

But the other flower didn’t go away. At least once a day, the rabbit couldn’t help but hop up to the top of the hill and take a quick look. Every day, the other flower looked a little worse.

It started to get to her. The rabbit thought about that flower at night while she was trying to sleep. She thought about it in the morning when she hopped to the stream for water. She couldn’t even enjoy her own flower so much, knowing the other flower was wilting more and more every day.

Now, you may wonder: Why didn’t that rabbit didn’t just go over and water the flower? After all, it was not far away, just on the other side of the hill. The stream had plenty of water. And the rabbit had plenty of time.

Well, that’s a good question. The rabbit thought about it all the time. She’d think about making an extra trip to the stream, to get some water for that flower. But then she’d think, “Well, you don’t just march into someone’s front yard and water their flower without asking, do you? What if that flower is someone else’s to water? They might yell at me or something.” Or she’d think, “What if the flower likes being dried-up and droopy? That’s possible, isn’t it?” Or she’d think, “Aren’t there animals who are supposed to go around and help out flowers whose animals don’t water them? I should leave it to them... Right?”

With all these questions swirling in her head, the rabbit went about her business, taking care of her sunflower every day and trying not to think about the other flower. But it kept bothering her, especially at night. It was kind of irritating, actually. Sometimes she wished the flower would just get better by itself, or die. But every time she sneaked a peek, there it was, looking more dry, more wilted and more droopy.

Finally, the rabbit could stand it no longer. One morning, hopping from the stream with a leaf full of water for her sunflower, she suddenly thought, “It’s just not right. Flowers are not supposed to wilt like that. Flowers should be healthy and colorful and bright and beautiful.” And she found herself hopping over the hill toward the other flower, taking the water there instead.

At the top of the hill, the rabbit got a bit nervous. Her nose twitched as she sniffed the air. It might be dangerous over there. She shouldn’t be watering other animals’ flowers. But then she said, “It’s just not right,” and kept going, over the hill and down the other side.

The rabbit hopped close to the dry flower, closer than she had been before. Suddenly, a hedgehog suddenly popped out of a hole in the ground. The hedgehog yelled, “Hey! What are you doing?”

“I’m going to water this flower,” the rabbit said. “It’s too dry, and if I don’t water it, it will die!”

The hedgehog said, “What business is it of yours whether this flower dies? This is my flower. I’ll take care of it how I want. Go home and take care of your own flower!”

But the rabbit answered, “I’m sorry, but I tried that. Flowers are supposed to be bright and beautiful, not wilting and droopy. So I’m going to water this flower.” She watered that dry, wilted, drooping daisy, right in front of the hedgehog, though he fussed and mumbled and gave her mean looks. And she turned around and hopped back over the hill.

The next day, she came back with a leaf full of water, and watered it again.

And the day after that, she watered it again.

And then another day, and another, and another. The hedgehog continued to fuss and mumble and give the rabbit mean looks. But the flower started to look better. First the petals perked up. Then the stem began to stand up a little straighter. Then its leaves started to fill out and get bigger. The flower even grew a little taller.

Strangely enough, as this flower got brighter and healthier and taller and more beautiful, so did the rabbit’s own flower. And so did every other flower, all the flowers in the field, even ones she never watered—flowers she had never even noticed before. The whole field began to brighten as the colors of every flower became more vivid and the flowers stretched taller. It was almost as if there was more water everywhere.

How could that be? Were other rabbits and hedgehogs and field mice and even badgers sneaking around and watering other animals’ flowers, too? Or was it because when someone waters a wilting flower somewhere, all flowers everywhere grow a little brighter?

Who knows? Maybe we’ll just have to try it and see.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop3/149496.shtml>

**3.24:** *The Great Kapok Tree*, A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest (916 words)

Book by Lynne Cherry (A Gulliver Green Book), (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990); permission pending.

Two men walked into the rain forest. Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as the creatures watched the two men and wondered why they had come. The larger man stopped and pointed to a great Kapok tree. Then he left.

The smaller man took an ax he carried and struck the trunk of the tree. Whack! Whack! Whack! The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard. Chop! Chop! Chop! The man wiped off the sweat that ran down his face and neck. Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop! Soon the man grew tired. He sat down to rest at the foot of the great Kapok tree. Before he knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled him to sleep.

A boa constrictor lived in the Kapok tree. He slithered down its trunk to where the man was sleeping. He looked at the gash the ax had made in the tree. Then the huge snake slid very close to the man and hissed in his ear: “Senhor, this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down.”

A bee buzzed in the sleeping man’s ear: “Senhor, my hive is in this Kapok tree, and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the rain forest. You see, all living things depend on one another.”

A troupe of monkeys scampered down from the canopy of the Kapok tree. They chattered to the sleeping man: “Senhor, we have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. When the heavy rains come, the soil will be washed away and the forest will become a desert.”

A toucan, a macaw, and a cock-of-the-rock flew down from the canopy. “Senhor!” squawked the toucan, “you must not cut down this tree. We have flown over the rain forest and seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They set fires to clear the underbrush, and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty only black and smoldering ruins remain.”

A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the man’s ear: “Senhor, a ruined rain forest means ruined lives... many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great Kapok tree.

A jaguar had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his spotted coat blended into the dappled light and shadows of the understory, no one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping man. He growled in his ear: “Senhor, the Kapok tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down, where will I find my dinner?”

Four tree porcupines swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the man: “Senhor, do you know what we animals need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Senhor, do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forests you will destroy that which gives us all life.”

Several anteaters climbed down the Kapok tree with their young clinging to their backs. The unstriped anteater said to the sleeping man: “Senhor, you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. The big man tells you to chop down a beautiful tree. He does not think of his own children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees.”

A three-toed sloth had begun climbing down from the canopy when the men first appeared. Only now did she reach the ground. Plodding ever so slowly over to the sleeping man, she spoke in her deep and lazy voice: “Senhor, how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the rain forest, on what would you feast your eyes?”

A child from the Yanomamo tribe who lived in the rain forest knelt over the sleeping man. He murmured in his ear: “Senhor, when you awake, please look upon us all with new eyes.”

The man awoke with a start. Before him stood the rain forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great Kapok tree. What wondrous and rare animals they were!

The man looked about and saw the sun streaming through the canopy. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. Strange and beautiful plants seemed to dangle in the air, suspended from the great Kapok tree. The man smelled the fragrant perfume of their flowers. He felt the steamy mist rising from the forest floor. But he heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent.

The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child. He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax and walked out of the rain forest.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session14/170354.shtml>

**3.25:** *Mabouya, Chief of the Well*, adapted from a Haitian tale (545 words)

To whom does the water belong?

There was once a drought in the country. The streams dried up and the wells went dry. God saw there was no place for the animals to drink. God provided a well with the condition that it must be taken care of so all may use it. God said, “You’ll have to take good care of my well. One of you will have to be caretaker. The caretaker will stay by the well at all times to see that no one abuses it or makes it dirty.”

Mabouya, the lizard spoke up saying, “I will be the caretaker.”

God looked at all the animals. He said at last, “Mabouya, the lizard, will be the caretaker. The well is over there in the mango grove.”

The others animals went away. Mabouya went directly to the well. When the other animals began to come back for water, Mabouya challenged them. First the cow came to drink. The lizard sang out in a big voice: “Who is it? Who is it? Who is walking in my grove?”

The cow replied: “It is I, the cow, I am coming for water.”

Mabouya called back: “Go away! This is God’s grove, and the well is dry.”

So, the cow went away and suffered from thirst.

Then the horse came and Mabouya challenged him, saying: “Who is walking in my grove?”

The horse answered: “I am the horse and, I am coming for water.”

And Mabouya called back:” Go away! This is God’s grove, And the well is dry.”

So, the horse went away and he too suffered from thirst.

Other animals came to the well and the lizard challenged all of them in the same way, saying: “Go away! This is God’s grove, and the well is dry.”

So, the animals went away and suffered much because they had no water to drink.

God saw all the suffering going on and said, “I gave the animals a well to drink from, but they are all dying of thirst. What is the matter?” And God went to the well.

When the lizard heard footsteps, she called out: “Who is it? Who is it? Who is walking in my grove?”

God answered: “It is I, Papa God. I am coming for water.”

And Mabouya said: “Go away, Papa God. The well is dry.”

God was very angry. He said once more: “It is I, Papa God. I am coming for water.”

And the lizard called back again: “Go away, Papa God. The well is dry.”

God said no more to the lizard. He sent for the animals to come to the well. He said, “You came to me because you were thirsty and I gave you a well. I made Mabouya the caretaker. But she gave no thought to the suffering creatures all around her. If one has a banana tree in their garden, it is theirs. If one has a cotton tree in their garden, it is theirs. But if one has a well in their garden, only the hole in the ground belongs to that one. The water is God’s and belongs to all creatures.”

And it is a saying among the people: “The hole in the ground is yours, the water is God’s.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop5/149579.shtml>

**3.26:** *The Caican Water Project* (1,030 words)

Based on information provided by Rev. Mike Young, The First Unitarian Church of Honolulu.

Sometimes, the moment you meet someone, you know they will be a very important friend in your life. Other times, friendships start slowly. You might not know how important the friendship is for many years.

The partnership between a congregation in Honolulu, Hawaii, and a Unitarian Universalist Church in Caican, Philippines began slowly, with children exchanging letters and pictures.

After some years, Mike Young, minister of First Unitarian Church of Honolulu, had a chance to visit the Philippines, and he went to Caican. He met many generous, wonderful people at the partner church. But, it was the Caican children he fell in love with. One time a whole crowd, all ages, came swimming with him in the ocean of their coastal village.

The next year, Rev. Young went back to the Philippines and again, he spent a few days in Caican. Again, he swam in the ocean with the children. This time, one of their ministers came swimming too. Mike let the children use the dive mask he had brought. It was too big for them. Some water leaked in, but the Caican children did not mind because the mask helped them see their ocean fish, up close and personal!

Back on land, a Caican minister, Rev. Tirso Ponca, took Mike to one of the village’s hand-pumped wells to wash off the salt water. The fresh water felt good. Rev. Young cupped his hands to take a drink.

Rev. Ponca sounded angry. He told Mike, “You must never do that! The water is not safe!” Later, Mike learned why Rev. Ponca had tried to protect him. For 20 years, the children of Caican had been born with yellow eyes. They had a condition called jaundice, a sign of a disease called Hepatitis A. Hepatitis germs were in the well water—the water he had wanted to drink. Caican’s simple septic tanks and shallow aquifer could not adequately filter and recycle the village’s water. Water used for bathing and washing came back again through the public hand-pumped wells. The village of Caican had no safe drinking water.

Mike Young decided right then: Babies in Caican would no longer be born with yellow eyes! Now he knew their congregation’s partnership could be so much more than letters, photographs, or even visits and playing in the ocean together. In his heart, Rev. Young had already begun the Caican Water Project.

In a true partnership, partners make plans together. Rev. Young had to find out if the people of Caican wanted to work on getting clean water for the village. Maybe there was something else more important the Honolulu congregation could help them get done.

So, the people of Caican had community meetings. They talked about what was good about life in Caican, and ways they could make life even better. They listed problems they had tried to solve in the past and what had worked to solve them. For problems that were not solved yet, the people talked about what they could do differently to reach a solution. They talked about the time, the money and other resources they already had, which they could use to create solutions. They talked about ways local organizations or the government could help.

Because some people don’t like to talk at big meetings, community members went around to each person’s house to talk with them individually. Everyone had a chance to give their ideas to make life in Caican even better.

And the result of all this talk? The people of Caican agreed that clean water was the top priority to work on with their partner, First Unitarian Church of Honolulu. After Mike Young went home to Hawaii, the Caican people elected a committee to lead the water project. They started looking for sources of clean water.

They looked upstream of their aquifer and upstream of the recycling septic system. They found a clean, flowing spring that seemed to produce enough water for the village! The owner of the land agreed they could drill a well and put a pump there. When Mike returned to Caican, a happy parade of children, teenagers and adults took the American minister to see.

At first it seemed getting water from this spring would be a lot of work. They had to dig a well, get the pump and a tank and lay almost two miles of pipe to bring the water to Caican. They had to provide ways for people along the pipeline to get water, set up another tank and build faucets. But sometimes we get ahead of ourselves with what a big job we’ve got. Rev. Young remembered the first step was just to drill the well and make sure the water would really be clean to drink.

Drilling the well cost $385, a fortune in the Philippines but not so much for the American congregation to raise. First Unitarian Church of Honolulu sent the money. The well was dug and everyone waited for test results. Would the water be safe to drink?

The new well was polluted. Not with hepatitis, but with a common bacteria, E. Coli. The people cleaned the well head. They pumped more water. This time the tester said, “Clean!”

Plans went ahead to lay pipe and build six faucets so the village would have drinkable water. Soon, maybe there will be a tap in every home. And Caican babies will no longer be born with yellow eyes.

It sounds like a happy ending: A partnership that started out as letters and photos, and became very, very important. But there have been two surprising results. One is that just as the Honolulu partners helped Caican’s Unitarian Universalist congregation bring their village clean water, the Caican congregation has helped other villages in the Philippines. Caican villagers now teach people in other communities to organize the meetings and interviews that bring good community solutions to real community problems.

Another surprise—and not so happy—is that the water improvement in Caican may worsen the village’s sewage problem. More water means more flushing. Mike Young knows the partnership’s work is not finished. The next project is inevitable: a sewage system for Caican that works. Everything is connected.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop6/caican-water-project>

**3.27:** *Henry David Thoreau and the Cottage* by Tracey L. Hurd (943 words)

This is a story is about a boy who loved the outdoors. His name was Henry David Thoreau. All his life, he loved nature. It was almost as if he had a small, still voice inside him that whispered, “Go outside. Be amidst the trees, and lakes, and grass. This is your true home.” Henry listened to that voice all of his life. This is his story.

Henry lived in Concord, Massachusetts more than 100 years ago. The town had some buildings, but all around there were forests and ponds, rivers and fields. Henry loved being outdoors; he loved to explore. He liked the feeling of being close to the earth, of being surrounded by plants, bugs, birds, and wildlife. Outside, Henry was never bored. He was busy watching, finding, and enjoying nature. Outside, Henry felt at home.

Henry kept notes about nature and liked to share ideas about what he saw. Later, when he was grown up, he wrote that nature was like a nursery (a special room for the care of children) for him. Henry went to school, and church, and he helped with the chores of his family but most of all he loved being outdoors. When he went to bed at night, he placed his bed so that he could look out at the stars. For Henry, seeing nature and knowing that he was part of the world around him made him feel most comfortable.

Henry grew up and went to school and later to college. He read a lot of books. He was especially interested in books written by Transcendentalists, who believed that appreciating the beauty of nature is a way of feeling close to the Spirit of Life or God. Henry listened to that small voice inside him, telling him to spend time outside—exploring in the icy snow or in the summer heat. He became friends with Transcendentalists who agreed that even grown-ups can learn a lot by spending time in nature. Henry hoped that one day he could live very simply in nature. He knew he would feel at home.

One Transcendentalist friend named Ralph Waldo Emerson told Henry, “You should keep a journal about all the things you notice in nature.” He also invited Henry to try out his idea of living close to nature. Henry called it his great experiment. He decided to make a very simple home on a large area of land that surrounded Walden Pond. The land was owned by his friend Emerson, who allowed him to live there in exchange for Henry’s help doing some repairs around Emerson’s house.

Henry decided to build his home as small, simple, and plain as it could be. He wanted to spend most of his time outside; he wanted to feel close to the land. Henry wanted to have time to notice and write about the changes in nature—the birds, the plants, and the leaves on the trees. Henry made a list of all the things he would need to live on Walden Pond. He tried to include as few things as possible. The list included some tools for farming, a bed, a writing desk, a table and three chairs. With the help of his friends, Henry built a small cabin, just one room, ten feet wide and fifteen feet long. He used old wood, bricks from other houses, windows that nobody else needed, to build his small cabin. When it was completed, Henry moved in.

Although his friends and family understood what Henry was doing, townspeople found Henry’s experiment in living in nature confusing. They wondered why he would want to live that way. But Henry listened to that small, still voice. He felt at home in nature. He planted food for himself to eat, using a small amount of land. He took great care to notice all around him. He watched the changes in the Walden Pond over the seasons. He found everything from grasshoppers to wildflowers to be beautiful and interesting. Henry wrote in his journal, “I look down into the quiet parlor (living room) of the fishes, pervaded by a softened light. Ah, the pickerel (fish) of Walden!  When I see them lying on the ice, I am always surprised by their rare beauty, as if they were fabulous fishes. They possess a quite dazzling… beauty.”

Henry lived on Walden Pond for more than two years. He came to town to see people, to work for Emerson, to get some supplies, but mostly Henry remained at his home in the woods. Sometimes people would visit him there. Many children liked his small cabin and they understood that feeling of being at home in nature.

And then, one day, Henry decided that he was finished. He had learned so much from living in nature that he felt ready to try something else. He felt ready to make his home with people again. But he never forgot his time on Walden Pond. He wrote books about it. And he taught other people that caring about nature is important.

Some people say that Henry David Thoreau was one of the most important naturalists (writers about nature) that ever lived. Henry was able to listen to that voice inside him that told him that he was at home in nature. He was able to live his dream; he felt at peace. As he finished his book about his time at Walden Pond he wrote:  “I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently [goes] in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors [tries] to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session5/59343.shtml>

**3.28:** *The Dog at the Well* by Marilyn McFarlane (730 words)

Permission to use “The Dog at the Well” in this curriculum granted by Marilyn McFarlane, author of Sacred Myths: Stories of World Religions (Sibyl Publications, 1996).

One day Muhammad told his friends and followers a story about a thirsty man, a well, and a dog. This was the story:

A man left his home to take a long journey. It was a hot day, and he had not walked far before his head began to ache and his mouth felt dry. The sun blazed overhead, the fields he passed were brown and withered, and no water could be seen.

“I’m so thirsty. I must find water,” he muttered. “Surely I will soon come to a well.”

Just as he had the thought, he saw a well by the side of the road. Thankfully, he hurried to it, almost tasting the sweetness of the cool water that lay in its depths. But when he peered into the well, he saw no water. The well was dry. Disheartened, and even more thirsty now, he continued along the scorching road, hoping to find another well. Sure enough, before long he saw one. “At last, water!” he whispered, looking into the well. But it too was dry.

There wasn’t a drop of moisture in the land. With a parched throat and feeling weak, the man walked on. “I can’t go much further without water,” he thought. And then he saw a well. Almost afraid to hope, he looked over the edge. Far below, in the darkness, water sparkled.

“Allah be praised!” the man said. He looked around for a rope and bucket to lower into the well so he could bring up the life-giving water. There was no rope, no bucket. How could he reach the water he needed so badly?

Only one way remained. If the water would not come up to him, he would have to go down to it. He scrambled over the top and carefully, bracing himself against the sides with his arms and feet, descended into the well. Deeper and deeper he went, until at last he touched the cool, wet water. Cupping his hands, he scooped the water and drank and drank. He murmured, “Praise Allah for the liquid of life.”

Feeling much better, the man began the long, difficult climb up out of the well. At last he reached the top and stood again on the road under the hot sun. He was starting to walk away when he heard a sound—a soft, sad whine. He looked down and saw a dog, sniffing at the ground. The dog looked miserable. His eyes were glazed, and he was panting with thirst. He came up to the man and licked the edge of his robe, which was wet from the trip down the well.

“This poor animal is as thirsty as I was,” the man thought. “He’ll die in this heat if he doesn’t get water.”

The dog looked up at the man and wagged his tail, grateful for the bit of moisture.

The man made his decision. “Wait here,” he said. “I will bring you some water.”

Into the well he went. Again, he descended down, down, all the way to the bottom where the cool liquid lay. When he got there, the man braced himself against the walls of the well and took off his soft leather boots. He dipped one boot and then the other into the water and filled them. He clamped the tops of the boots between his teeth and began to climb up again.

This time the trip to the top was much harder. The heavy, water-filled boots pulled on his mouth, and his teeth hurt. Once the slick, wet leather slipped, and he almost dropped the boots, but he tightened his grip and held on. Slowly he kept climbing until he reached the top.

When he was on the ground again, he knelt and opened the boots so the dog could drink. The dog drank all the water in both boots, his tail wagging happily.

The man smiled. “Now neither of us will die of thirst,” he said. He pulled on his damp boots, patted the dog again, and continued on his way.

Allah was pleased by this kind act. He was so pleased that all the man’s past sins were forgiven, and years later, when the kind man died, his soul was taken to heaven.

The blessed prophet Muhammad concluded his story by saying, “You too will be rewarded for being good to all living creatures.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop7/149663.shtml>

**3.29:** *Rachel Carson Shapes Tomorrow* by Greta Anderson (878 words)

“Better Living through Chemistry.” This was the motto of one of America’s leading corporations in the 1950s. Chemicals could make better clothing. Chemicals could improve food—not to mention food packaging. Chemicals could increase farm yields and improve our environment. Chemicals had helped us win the Second World War and would help us win future wars. Magazine and television ads and billboards shouted the message to the public. “Better living through chemistry” was the American way.

Marine biologist Rachel Carson disagreed. But, she was used to going against the tide. Starting out in the 1920s, she was a rarity in the largely male science professions. Yet, she moved up in her chosen field, working as an aquatic biologist at Woods Hole on Cape Cod and then in Washington, DC with the U.S. government. Eventually she became editor-in-chief at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Carson was both a marine biologist and a writer. As much as she was fascinated by the creatures of the ocean and their intricate, interconnected web, she loved to share her fascination with the public. And the public loved her books, from Under the Sea Wind, published in 1941 through The Sea Around Us and The Edge of the Sea in the 1950s. Rachel Carson took readers on a journey from the teeming abundance of the tide pool to the dark, mysterious ocean depths, a tour of microscopic marine life. Life was everywhere; life was diverse; life was a celebration.

This sense of celebrating all forms of life made Rachel’s writing different. People in the United States were used to being told they were at the top of the “food chain,” that other life on Earth existed to serve us. According to many religions, Nature was created for “Man,” to meet “his” needs—food, shelter or even a beautiful scene to contemplate. Such a view is called “anthropocentric,” or human-centered: The world was made for us and we are the most important creature in it. Instead, Rachel’s vision was “biocentric,” or life-centered. Her books helped people appreciate, joyfully, that we humans are just one part of nature’s web of life.

Imagine how Rachel felt when the United States dropped destructive atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945. Imagine, too, how she felt when the U.S. government began dropping “bombs” on tiny enemies within our own borders: insects such as fire ants and mosquitoes. Before, humans had lived with the inconvenience of nature’s insects; now, the corporations that promised “better living” were manufacturing deadly chemicals such as DDT to eradicate insects completely. Throughout the 1950s, airplanes sprayed these chlorinated compounds over America’s bountiful farmlands, pretty suburbs and crowded towns. The government supported it. No one stopped to question it.

Of course, the chemicals only eradicated the pests for a short while. Usually the insects came back, even stronger than before. Worse, the chemicals killed much more than insects. A friend of Rachel’s lived next to a bird sanctuary. She wrote to Rachel and told her how, after the government sprayed DDT to kill mosquitoes, she found dozens of dying birds at her birdbath, suffering painful deaths.

Though her own health was weak from stomach ulcers and the early stages of breast cancer, Rachel commenced the fight of her life. She gathered data to show how chemistry was not giving us better living, but harming life. Originally called “Man against Nature,” the book she published as Silent Spring argued that spraying chemicals like DDT endangered life, including human life. To convince her readers, Rachel included information from hundreds of scientific studies, explained in language the public could understand. She took care to avoid errors or exaggerating. She knew she must be ready to back up every statement, 100 percent, or the chemical companies could discredit her whole work. Rachel Carson knew she had one chance to change the course of history.

Rachel had many friends in the scientific community who helped her fact-check and fine-tune the manuscript. Silent Spring leaped onto the bestseller list. Yes, government and industry spokespeople tried to discredit Rachel—for being “sentimental” or “hysterical,” for being a “back-to-nature” type and probably a Communist. But the many, many people who saw her on a television show saw a frail, clear-eyed woman with a detailed, objective truth to tell. On the other hand, the government officials responsible for the spraying had very few facts to prove DDT was safe. The public sensed that Rachel was right.

The debate about pesticide use sparked by Silent Spring gave momentum to the 1960s’ environmental movement. In 1970, the government formed the Environmental Protection Agency. In 1972, the government banned the use of DDT in the United States. The same year, Earth Day was proclaimed.

Rachel Carson died shortly after the publication of Silent Spring. One could say “it’s a shame” she could not witness the growth of the environmental movement she did so much to create. But, for Rachel, life was not about the individual. It was about diverse communities of beings that continuously recycle and renew life. In this sense, Rachel’s courage, her vision of life and her fierce argument against pesticides have become part of us. How will we live that vision in our lifetimes? What courage of ours will inform the next generation?

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/riddle/session3/rachel-carlson>

**3.30:** *Swimming Home* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (919 words)

In the warm salty waters of the great blue sea, little orange and white fish called clown fish played their favorite game: chasing each other round and round, swimming as fast as they could go. Yet always they stayed close to their sea anemone home. Their sea anemone had thousands of soft white tendrils all over her body, and the tendrils were just perfect to hide in.

Aliq was following his brother Twyl. His bright orange and white stripes, outlined with black, flashed as he swam through the forest of tendrils. The sea anemone’s tendrils tickled when they touched Aliq. He liked watching the tendrils sway back and forth as the water moved.

“Look,” Twyl called suddenly. His side fins were going in little circles, holding him steady in one place. “Here come Mother Fish and Father Fish!”

Aliq and Twyl and their other brothers watched as Mother Fish and Father Fish slowly glided by. Their side fins touched each other as they swam.

Suddenly, Mother Fish flicked her tail and zipped on past. Father Fish went, too. A yellow striped fish with a pointy mouth was eating a tendril of the sea anemone, taking big bites. Mother and Father Fish headed right at that strange fish and started biting at it. The yellow fish swam away, and Mother and Father swam after it.

“What’s happening?” Aliq asked.

Zorn, one of his older brothers, answered. “They’re protecting our sea anemone. They’ll be back soon.”

When Mother and Father came home, a shrimp was following them and swam into the anemone. As soon as it touched the tendrils, the shrimp went still.

“What happened?” Twyl asked.

“Our sea anemone killed the shrimp with the poison on her tendrils,” Zorn said.

“But we swim in her tendrils every day,” Aliq said. “The poison doesn’t kill us.”

“That’s because we’re her friends,” Zorn said. “We have a special covering on our scales that keeps us safe. Now watch!”

The soft white tendrils shimmered and waved. The shrimp was tossed to the middle of the sea anemone, right to the circle of her open mouth. The sea anemone swallowed the shrimp whole.

“She was hungry,” Zorn said then swam away. Mother and Father Fish began gliding again. Their tails brushed against the sea anemone’s tendrils, soft and gentle on their skin.

“Mother and Father Fish are so big and so brave!” Aliq said.

“I can’t wait until I’m big like them, but right now, I’m hungry!” Twyl said.

They began nibbling the tiny bits of plants that clung to their sea anemone’s tendrils. Twyl found a crunchy isopod, and Aliq found another shrimp. But that was all, and they were still hungry. “We could leave our sea anemone,” Aliq said.

Twyl and Aliq looked out into the great blue sea. Sting rays lived out there. Sharks did too. Huge dark fish with double rows of teeth lurked in the deep water. But there were also tasty things to eat.

“Come on!” Aliq said to Twyl. “Let’s explore!” With a flick of his tail he was off, swimming away from their sea anemone home. Twyl followed him, and they swam side by side, their side fins touching each other as they glided along.

Farther and farther they went, away from their family, and away from their sea anemone home. Aliq and Twyl had never left the forest of tendrils before. They had never swum without the soft touch of their sea anemone on their fins. But Aliq found another shrimp to eat, small and tasty. Twyl found plankton, little bits of green floating by. Aliq and Twyl kept eating and swimming and eating some more.

Then Aliq stopped swimming. He looked around. Far off in the water, a dark shadow appeared. “Twyl,” Aliq whispered. “What’s that?”

Twyl stopped eating and looked at the shadow. It was coming closer, weaving slowly back and forth. “Shark!” Twyl yelled. “Swim! Go back home!”

Aliq and Twyl turned around and flicked their tails, zipping through the water as fast as they could go, heading for their sea anemone home. Aliq didn’t want to look behind him. He didn’t want to know how close the shark was. But he could feel the rippling of the water. He could hear the shark getting near. Aliq twitched his tail faster. Beside him, Twyl was swimming just as hard.

The tendrils of their sea anemone shimmered ahead of them, soft and white and warm. They were almost home.

“Swim, swim, swim,” Aliq chanted to himself. “Swim! Swim! SWIM!” The water swirled around them; it smelled and tasted like shark—oily and dark and cold. Aliq and Twyl flicked their tails extra hard.

Finally! Aliq and Twyl reached their sea anemone home just in time, hiding in the soft white tendrils. The water exploded around them in bubbles as the shark turned to go. The poison of the sea anemone was keeping it away.

Twyl and Aliq peeked between the tendrils to look at each other. Both of them were still scared. Both of them were very glad to be home, safe with Mother Fish and Father Fish and all their brothers. Both of them were very, very glad they had a sea anemone to protect them and to be their home. And both of them knew it was their job as clown fish to take care of her. They would chase away any fish that tried to eat her tendrils. They would bring her food. And she would take care of them.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session2/swimming-home>

**3.31:** *How Coyote Stole Fire*

Adapted with permission from the version of a Native American folktale on [Stonee’s WebLodge: A Native American Lore Website](http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore06.html).

**I. Short version (577 words)**

A long time ago, humans came into being and they loved the world. They loved the springtime with the beautiful emerging green plant life. They loved the summer, a time of berries and growth. As autumn came, the nights became colder and the humans shivered. The children and elders would die from the cold. Winter was a hard time.

One day Coyote wandered by the human village. He could hear the wailing of the humans as they mourned their loved ones who had died in the cold of winter. Spring was finally coming and Coyote heard an old one say, “Feel the warmth of the sun. If only we could have such warmth in the winter to heat our teepees.” Coyote was not of the People and had no need for fire, but he felt sorry for the men and women who were sad about the others who had died.

Coyote knew that on the top of a far mountain, three Fire Beings lived. These Fire Beings hoarded the fire and would not share with others. Coyote crept to the mountain to see how the Fire Beings were guarding the fire. Coyote watched the Fire Beings for many days. He watched as the fire was fed with dry things from the land like pine cones and twigs. He watched how the Fire Beings took turns guarding the fire one at a time at night while the others slept.

Coyote went back down the mountain to speak to his friends among the People. He told them of the shivering hairless humans and their need for fire. He told them of the selfish Fire Beings and their inability to share. He asked his friends among the People to help him. Squirrel, Chipmunk, Frog and Wood all offered to help Coyote bring fire to the humans.

Coyote crept back up the mountain. As the Fire Beings were changing the guard for the fire, Coyote leapt up to the fire and took a burning coal. Immediately, he turned and ran down the mountain. The Fire Beings flew after him, clawing to try and get the fire back. One Being touched the tip of Coyote’s tail which has since always been white.

Coyote threw the fire and Squirrel caught it. The coal touched his back and his tail has been arched since then. Then Squirrel threw the ember to Chipmunk, who froze in fear. Finally, he turned and ran. A Fire Being clawed his back, giving him white stripes forever. Chipmunk threw the burning coal to Frog who turned and ran. One of the Fire Beings grabbed Frog’s tail, but Frog jumped and tore free and thus he has no tail. The Fire Beings came at Frog again and Frog flung the coal at Wood.

Wood kept the coal safe, but the Fire Beings could not figure out how to get the coal from Wood. They yelled at Wood, they sang to Wood, they even promised presents to Wood, but Wood did not give up the coal. Finally, the Fire Beings returned to the mountain and left the People alone, assuming that if they could not release the coal, neither could the People.

Coyote took Wood to the human village and showed them how to get fire from Wood. He took two sticks and rubbed them together. Then he spun a sharpened stick in a hole in another piece of wood. Fire came to the humans and they were never cold again.

**II. Long version (1,235 words)**

Long ago, when man was newly come into the world, there were days when he was the happiest creature of all. Those were the days when spring brushed across the willow tails or when his children ripened with the blueberries in the sun of summer, or when the goldenrod bloomed in the autumn haze. But always the mists of autumn evenings grew more chill, and the sun’s strokes grew shorter. Then man saw winter moving near, and he became fearful and unhappy. He was afraid for his children, and for the grandfathers and grandmothers who carried in their heads the sacred tales of the tribe. Many of these, young and old, would die in the long, ice-bitter months of winter.

Coyote, like the rest of the People, had no need for fire. So, he seldom concerned himself with it, until one spring day when he was passing a human village. There the women were singing a song of mourning for the babies and the old ones who had died in the winter. Their voices moaned like the west wind through a buffalo skull, prickling the hairs on Coyote’s neck. “Feel how the sun is now warm on our backs,” one of the men was saying. “Feel how it warms the earth and makes these stones hot to the touch. If only we could have had a small piece of the sun in our teepees during the winter.” Coyote, overhearing this, felt sorry for the men and women. He also felt that there was something he could do to help them. He knew of a faraway mountain-top where the three Fire Beings lived. These Beings kept fire to themselves, guarding it carefully for fear that man might somehow acquire it and become as strong as they. Coyote saw that he could do a good turn for man at the expense of these selfish Fire Beings. So, Coyote went to the mountain of the Fire Beings and crept to its top, to watch the way that the Beings guarded their fire. As he came near, the Beings leaped to their feet and gazed searchingly round their camp. Their eyes glinted like bloodstones, and their hands were clawed like the talons of the great black vulture.

“What’s that? What’s that I hear?” hissed one of the Beings. A thief, skulking in the bushes!” screeched another. The third looked more closely, and saw Coyote. But he had gone to the mountain-top on all fours, so the Being thought she saw only an ordinary coyote slinking among the trees. “It is no one, it is nothing!” she cried, and the other two looked where she pointed and also saw only a grey coyote. They sat down again by their fire and paid Coyote no more attention. So, he watched all day and night as the Fire Beings guarded their fire. He saw how they fed it pine cones and dry branches from the sycamore trees. He saw how they stamped furiously on runaway rivulets of flame that sometimes nibbled outwards on edges of dry grass. He saw also how, at night, the Beings took turns to sit by the fire. Two would sleep while one was on guard; and at certain times the Being by the fire would get up and go into their teepee, and another would come out to sit by the fire. Coyote saw that the Beings were always jealously watchful of their fire except during one part of the day. That was in the earliest morning, when the first winds of dawn arose on the mountains. Then the Being by the fire would hurry, shivering, into the teepee calling, “Sister, sister, go out and watch the fire.” But the next Being would always be slow to go out for her turn, her head spinning with sleep and the thin dreams of dawn. Coyote, seeing all this, went down the mountain and spoke to some of his friends among the People. He told them of hairless man, fearing the cold and death of winter. And he told them of the Fire Beings, and the warmth and brightness of the flame. They all agreed that man should have fire, and they all promised to help Coyote’s undertaking. Then Coyote sped again to the mountain-top. Again, the Fire Beings leaped up when he came close, and one cried out, “What’s that? A thief, a thief!” But again, the others looked closely, and saw only a grey coyote hunting among the bushes. So, they sat down again and paid him no more attention. Coyote waited through the day, and watched as night fell and two of the Beings went off to the teepee to sleep. He watched as they changed over at certain times all the night long, until at last the dawn winds rose. Then the Being on guard called, “Sister, sister, get up and watch the fire.” And the Being whose turn it was climbed slow and sleepy from her bed, saying, “Yes, yes, I am coming. Do not shout so.” But before she could come out of the teepee, Coyote lunged from the bushes, snatched up a glowing portion of fire, and sprang away down the mountainside.

Screaming, the Fire Beings flew after him. Swift as Coyote ran, they caught up with him, and one of them reached out a clutching hand. Her fingers touched only the tip of the tail, but the touch was enough to turn the hairs white, and coyote tail-tips are white still. Coyote shouted, and flung the fire away from him. But the others of the People had gathered at the mountain’s foot, in case they were needed. Squirrel saw the fire falling, and caught it, putting it on her back and fleeing away through the tree-tops. The fire scorched her back so painfully that her tail curled up and back, as squirrels’ tails still do today.

The Fire Beings then pursued Squirrel, who threw the fire to Chipmunk. Chattering with fear, Chipmunk stood still as if rooted until the Beings were almost upon her. Then, as she turned to run, one Being clawed at her, tearing down the length of her back and leaving three stripes that are to be seen on chipmunks’ backs even today. Chipmunk threw the fire to Frog, and the Beings turned towards him. One of the Beings grasped his tail, but Frog gave a mighty leap and tore himself free, leaving his tail behind in the Being’s hand---which is why frogs have had no tails ever since.

As the Beings came after him again, Frog flung the fire on to Wood. And Wood swallowed it.

The Fire Beings gathered round, but they did not know how to get the fire out of Wood. They promised it gifts, sang to it and shouted at it. They twisted it and struck it and tore it with their knives. But Wood did not give up the fire. In the end, defeated, the Beings went back to their mountain-top and left the People alone.

But Coyote knew how to get fire out of Wood. And he went to the village of men and showed them how. He showed them the trick of rubbing two dry sticks together, and the trick of spinning a sharpened stick in a hole made in another piece of wood. So, man was from then on warm and safe through the killing cold of winter.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session6/59344.shtml>

**3.32:** *We Are All One* (1,078 words)

Adapted from the story, “We Are All One,” in Stories in Faith by Gail Forsyth-Vail (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007), which was adapted from a Cantonese tale adapted by Lawrence Yep.

Once there was a young woman who lived simply but happily with her husband and their three children until one day a strange illness of the eyes came into their home. First her husband and then their eldest son started having trouble with their eyesight. Everything looked blurry and grey to them. They went to the local doctor and they tried medicine after medicine. But nothing worked, and soon they found they could not see at all.

Within a week, the illness had spread and now their middle son also could not see, and their youngest, a daughter, was showing the beginning symptoms of the illness, rubbing her eyes and complaining that everything looked blurry. Some of their neighbors, as well, were afflicted with this strange illness. The people of the village began to wonder if they would all soon lose their eyesight.

The woman was beside herself with worry. She visited doctor after doctor until finally one doctor told her of a miracle herb that might cure this illness. This healing herb was a plant that grew only in the deepest part of the forest. The woman decided she must leave her family to seek the herb.

Early the next morning she headed into the forest. She looked under bushes. She looked behind trees. She looked everywhere, but the herb was nowhere to be seen. Many hours later, exhausted, but still determined, the woman came upon a small stream. She sat down to rest, still looking around her for the herb.

Then she noticed a big rock had fallen into the stream, making the water run out of the stream to form a little pool. That little pool of water was flooding an anthill. Although she was in a hurry to find the herb, her heart went out to the ants. The woman stopped looking for the herb long enough to remove the big rock and dig a new channel for the water. With satisfaction, she watched as the water flowed away from the anthill. “We are all one,” she stated simply, and she continued on her way.

The woman slept soundly that night, curled up under a large tree with a blanket to keep her warm. As she slept a strange dream came to her. In it she was inside the anthill, surrounded by cheering ants. The queen ant stepped forward majestically. “Do not be afraid,” she reassured the woman. “We have brought you here to thank you for saving our home and our lives. In return, if you ever need our help, all you need do is call for us, and we will hear you and come to your aid.” As the dream faded and the woman began to wake, she heard the queen ant’s voice calling after her, distinctly saying, “We are all one.”

All through that day, the woman searched for the herb. She wondered if she were already too late — and if everyone in her village was already blind. She was startled from her thoughts by the sound of a bird, intent upon catching a small centipede. The centipede was scurrying across the ground as quickly as his many legs would carry him. Taking pity upon the defenseless centipede, she quickly scooped him up and frightened the bird from her prey. Saying, “We are all one,” she carried the centipede to some leaves and placed him gently in their cover.

That night she again had strange dreams. This time she was visited by the centipede. “Thank you for saving my life,” the tiny voice proclaimed. “And now I will help you as you helped me. The herb you seek can be found by an ancient oak tree, in the very center of the forest.” An image of a gnarled and twisting trunk came to her mind as she heard the centipede state, “We are all one.” Then she awoke.

The woman spent the next morning making her way into the heart of the woods, searching for the oak tree. As the day progressed, she noticed that the trees around her were getting blurry. Gazing towards the sky, she saw that the sun was still high in the sky. With a dawning horror she realized that she, too, must have contracted the strange illness. Quickening her pace, she continued toward the center of the forest, but with every step her eyesight worsened.

Just as she was giving way to despair, she found the ancient oak tree! Even though she could barely see, she could tell it looked just like the one she had seen in her dream. Stumbling and out of breath, she began to search for the herb frantically. It was no use — her eyes could no longer tell one plant from another. Crying with frustration she wept for her husband, her children, herself, and the people of her village.

She turned to try to retrace her steps to her home and then she remembered. The ants! Perhaps they could help her now. She called to them and soon enough small voices responded.

“Bend down,” the queen ant’s voice called. “The herb you seek is right here. I am standing on it.”

Gently the woman knelt and reached towards the sound. With cautious movements so as not to harm the queen ant, she found the herb and plucked it. Slowly and carefully she tore a small piece of the leaf and chewed it. Almost instantaneously, her sight was restored! Joyfully she harvested the herbs and prepared to return to her village. Before she left, however, she thanked the ants and proclaimed one last time, “We are all one.”

The woman walked as swiftly as she could — all day and then all night, by the light of the moon. She hoped, oh, how she hoped, that she would return on time to save her village from blindness.

Finally, she reached her home. As she called to her children, they followed her voice, for by now they were all completely blind. Anxiously she gave them bits of the herb and then she waited to see what would happen. One minute passed — and then another — and then her eldest son laughed with joy. “I see you!” he shouted, “I truly see you!”

Soon everyone in the village had been cured of the strange illness and the woman who had saved them all returned to her simple but happy life with her husband and their three children. And she never forgot that “We are all one.”

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/tales/session1/123113.shtml>

**3.33:** *Amrita’s Tree* (1,137 words)

Adapted from “Amrita’s Tree” in The Barefoot Book of Earth Tales by Dawn Casey and Anne Wilson (Cambridge: Barefoot Books, 2009). Used by permission.

Amrita leaned back against her favorite tree and rested. After the glare of the desert sun, it was cool and green in the forest grove. Sometimes, Amrita climbed her tree. Sometimes the wind swayed her and she was a forest queen. Sometimes she talked to her tree, sharing her daydreams and her secrets, but today was so peaceful that she sat in silence.

Amrita closed her eyes and sighed with pleasure.

CAAWK! She heard un unearthly shriek, the shrill alarm call of the peacock, echoing through the forest. A shiver shot down Amrita’s spine and she scrambled to her feet.

With a flick of their tails, the gazelles were gone. The rabbits scattered. Now Amrita heard the tramp of many heavy boots, the crack of branches snapping. Through the trees she saw men marching, each one carrying something. Amrita strained to see. Bright edges! Sharp flashes! They were carrying axes.

“Cut down every tree you can,” she heard the chief woodcutter say. “The Maharajahs need plenty of wood.” Amrita drew in her breath. They couldn’t cut down the forest! Without these trees there’d be no fruit to eat, no leaves to feed the cows, no shelter from the sun.

Above her, watching over her, Amrita’s own tree stirred in the breeze. “I won’t let them hurt you,” she said out loud. “I promise I’ll protect you. I don’t know how, but I will!”

Quick as a blackbuck, she ran to the village. Amrita found her mother. “Amma, Amma,” she panted, pushing wind-swept hair out of her eyes, “I saw men in the forest, men with axes, and they are going to cut down the trees!”

Amrita’s mother rushed around the village, calling the women away from their work. “We must save the trees!” she urged. “Come on!”

They arrived to find the woodcutters sharpening their axes. Amrita’s mother greeted the men politely, pressing her hands together and bowing her head: Namaste. We do not want trouble, but we cannot let you cut down these trees.”

The chief woodcutter cast his eyes over the straggle of women before him and snorted. “You do not own these trees. We have orders from the Maharajah.”

“Sir, these trees are our life,” Amrita’s mother implored. “Their roots hold the soil together; they keep the land from sliding away during the monsoon rains. Without them our fields and homes will be washed away.”

“Never mind your mud huts,” the chief replied with a sweep of his hand. “With this timber the Maharajah will have the finest palace in all of India!”

“Please!” begged Amrita’s mother. “These roots soak up rain, so the earth can give us spring water. Can’t you see? We need these trees to survive.”

“Enough!” barked the chief. “Now, out of my way and let me work. Now!” He turned to the woodcutters and ordered, “Cut down the trees!” A burly woodcutter shouldered his axe and strolled over to an ancient khejari. With a swift swoop his iron blade bit deep into the bark.

With a terrible groan the mighty tree came crashing to the ground. Amrita’s mother covered her mouth with her hands. Amrita stared in disbelief.

The woodcutters began to chop at another tree, and another. Soon the grove was a graveyard of trees. Broken limbs scattered the floor. Leaves dropped like tears.

A woodcutter brushed past Amrita, toward her own special tree. “No! No! Please don’t!” she cried, tears springing to her eyes. “Please don’t cut down my tree.” The woodcutter advanced.

Amrita stepped in front of him, blocking his path. Her voice shook as she spoke: “I will not let anyone harm my tree.”

The woodcutter laughed out loud. “Little girl, there’s nothing you can do to stop us.” Amrita thought of her beloved tree lying dead on the forest floor and she ran from the woodcutter toward her tree.

Amrita flung her arms around her tree, pressing herself against it. “If you want to cut the tree, you will have to cut me first!” The man and his axe were behind her. She could hear the sound of her own breathing, hard and loud and fast. The man raised his sharp blade.

“Swing your axe!” commanded the chief. Amrita clenched her teeth and clung onto her old friend, so that the bumpy bark was pressing into her cheek and arms. She felt the strength of the tree coursing through her. And she knew with a fierce bright certainty that she was doing the right thing.

“Swing your axe!” the chief shouted again.

“I...” the woodcutter faltered. He looked down at the girl—this mere sapling of a girl—her eyes squeezed shut, her thin arms hugging so tight, her tearstained cheeks pale with fright. “I... I cannot.”

Amrita opened one eye, then another, to see the woodcutter’s head bowed, his axe at his feet. All around her, people were hugging trees. Women and children, wives and daughters, grandmothers and toddlers all hugged the trees. Some ancient trees had trunks so broad that generations of women were joining hands to embrace them.

The axes lay on the forest floor. The men huddled together and talked in low voices. Then, without a word, the laborers picked up their axes and walked out of the wood.

Amrita’s mother called to her. “What were you thinking of? I was so afraid.”

“So was I,” said Amrita. Her mother sat down beside her on the forest floor and stroked her hair. “You know the woodcutters will tell the Maharajah what happened,” she said gently. “They will come back, or the Maharajah himself will come... “

The next morning, the women were distracted at their work. Their hands were busy, but their eyes strayed to the horizon. Would the woodcutters return? Or the Maharajah? Would he punish those who had defied his orders?

That afternoon, in a thunder of hooves and a cloud of dust, the Maharajah arrived.

The women joined hands and pulled their children close. But Amrita rose to greet the Maharajah with all the dignity of a forest queen.

She was surprised to see that he carried not an axe but a bright bundle. He climbed down from his horse. Amrita watched in wonder as he unwrapped the silken cloth. “I present this royal decree to you, Amrita,” said the Maharajah, “and to the women of your village, in honor of your courage and your wisdom. I promise that, from this day on, no tree in this forest will ever be cut down.”

Hundreds of years later, folk songs of the people who hugged the trees still echo through the villages of India. Amrita’s courage has inspired people across the land to stand together to protect forests. Thousands of trees have been saved, and a million more planted.

And in one sacred grove, Amrita’s tree still grows.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session3/amritas-tree>

**3.34:** *The Farmer’s Legacy* (726 words)

Once there was a farmer. He was very old and ill and knew he would soon die. He had lived a good life and his only regret was that his three children fought all the time. None of them seemed interested in taking care of the large farm the old man had established. They were rather lazy. The farm was big enough for several farmhouses and produced enough food to easily provide for any families his children might someday start. The only reason the old farmer had worked so hard his entire life was to leave a legacy to his children so their life would be easier. Now that his life was near its end, he wanted to find some way to help them see what a precious thing it is to be able to work your own land and provide for your family. So he did.

One winter day, the old farmer called his children to his sick bed. “My children, I have accumulated great wealth.”

“Where is this great wealth?”, they asked.

“You have never seen it. It exists out, deep in the fields. That is where you will find your legacy.” A short time later, the farmer died.

His children grieved, because they loved their father. Their sadness brought them together and they stopped fighting. One day, they decided to go looking for their legacy.

“He said it is deep in the fields. It must be buried.”

“We’ll need to dig for it.”

So they dug and dug for days. They dug until they had dug up almost all the farmland, but they found nothing. One sibling said, “We have dug up all this land, but we haven’t found our legacy. We must have missed it and I am too tired to keep digging. Still, it is spring and time to plant crops. Since we have already dug up the earth, we might as well plant this field.” So they did.

Fall came and after harvesting their crops, they set to digging again, looking for their legacy. They dug and dug for days. They dug until, once again, they had dug up almost all the farmland, but they found nothing. One sibling said, “We have dug up all this land, but we haven’t found our legacy. We must have missed it and I am too tired to keep digging. Still, it is spring and time to plant crops. Since we have already dug up the earth, we might as well plant as we did last year.” So they did.

Yet again, fall came and they harvested their crops. This year’s harvest was even bigger than the year’s before. After the harvest, they dug for their legacy and, not finding it again, decided to plant their crops. This continued for a few years. During that time, they got married and started families and they lived comfortable lives off the money from selling their crops. They grew strong from working in the fields and no longer were lazy. They were healthy and happy.

One spring, they all three realized that the rich land of the farm and being able to provide for themselves and their families was the true legacy their father left them. They stopped digging for treasure and started working the farm, happy that that their father had been wise enough to leave them this great gift. They decided that they would all share the land and take good care of it, so they could leave it to their children someday.

And so they did.

Everyone doesn’t own farmland to leave to his or her children. But every parent leaves something, a legacy to his or her children. It might be a house, but it could also be a value, like hard work. It might be beautiful necklace, but it could also be a belief or a religion, like Unitarian Universalism. The legacy might be a favorite book, but it could also be photographs and memories of special times.

What about the way you look? Maybe you got your eye color from your great grandmother. Maybe you got your height from your dad’s side of the family. Maybe you get your sense of humor from your mother. Maybe your cousin is the person handing down the family recipe that goes back several generations. What did you receive as a legacy from an ancestor?

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/home/session9/60096.shtml>

**3.35:** *Habitat at Home* by Julie Simon (628 words)

Kylie groaned on the sofa. Her best friend Georgia was sick. It was Saturday, and the girls had planned to ride their bikes to Sundale Preserve that morning. But Georgia had a sore throat. Kylie had been looking forward to the trip all week. Sundale was her favorite place to go on weekends. She and Georgia could ride there without a grown-up if they stayed on the bike trail.

The park was amazing. It had lots of space for exploring—flower gardens, fields, woods, a pond, and a stream. Kylie loved looking for the animals—fish, birds, lizards, and her favorite, butterflies. There was even a bat box that bats roosted in during the day and left at dusk. In the summer, Kylie would pick and eat wild blackberries, cool her feet in the bubbling stream, and watch turtles sunning on logs in the pond.

The animals in the park had everything they needed to live—plants and other animals for food, places for shelter and nesting, and the pond and stream for water.

Kylie’s kindergarten teacher called the Sundale Preserve a wildlife habitat. Earlier in the year, Kylie’s whole class had helped plant milkweed in the garden for butterfly food. Last weekend, Kylie and Georgia had seen tiny, golden eggs clinging to the leaves of some milkweed plants. She wanted to see if any of them had hatched into caterpillars yet.

Unfortunately, Sundale was too far for her to ride to without her friend. Kylie had graduated from training wheels more than a year ago, but she had just turned six years old last month. Her mom offered to walk with her, but she didn’t really want to go without Georgia.

So instead she moped on the sofa.

“Why don’t you go look for caterpillars in the backyard?” her dad suggested.

“We don’t have caterpillars in our yard,” Kylie said.

“How do you know unless you look?” he asked.

“But you need milkweed plants for caterpillars,” said Kylie. “And we don’t have those.”

“Hmmm? We had caterpillars last year,” said Kylie’s dad. “Don’t you remember they ate up my parsley last summer? I planted extra parsley plants this year, just so we could have some for the caterpillars and some for us to eat.”

Kylie had forgotten about that. Then she got an idea. She would go look for caterpillars in the backyard and also look to see if there was a spot where they could plant their own milkweed to feed the butterflies. Kylie smiled and raced outside.

She headed straight for the veggie patch where the parsley was growing. Sure enough, a tiny, black caterpillar with a white band around the middle was climbing along a stem. She also spotted tiny eggs the color of butter on the leaves.

Then she raced back inside the house. “Dad, can we plant milkweed for the butterflies today so they can have food this summer?” she asked.

“Well, I’m pretty sure they already have some food out back. Remember, they loved gathering nectar from the coneflowers and asters last summer. We can plant some milkweed next spring. I think milkweed is what Monarch butterflies need for their eggs and caterpillars. We can also put out ripe fruit and see if the butterflies sip nectar from it.”

“Ok. But today could we also dig a butterfly bath? And put out some basking rocks?” asked Kylie. She had learned that butterflies like to have “puddle parties” in shallow pools with muddy edges and they need heat-holding places to rest and sun their wings so they can warm up on cool mornings.”

“Sure,” he said. “Let’s go look for some flat rocks and find a good, sunny spot.”

Kylie was excited. She couldn’t wait create their new backyard habitat for butterflies.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session5/habitat-home>

**3.36:***The Green Man* by Rev. Dr. Sophia Lyon Fahs (788 words)

From Stories in Faith: Exploring Our UU Principles and Sources Through Wisdom Tales (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2007).

Once upon a time, there lived a rich and vain young squire. Servants prepared his favorite foods each day. His every wish was granted.

One of the young man’s favorite things to do was to ride through the woods that were part of his kingdom, hunting small animals for sport. He thought that the woods and all its creatures belonged to him and he could do as he pleased with them.

The people in the village had a different idea about the woods. The woods provided a home to all the creatures that lived there: chipmunks, birds, squirrels, rabbits, deer, and wild pigs. They told their children a story about a Green Man who lived in the woods and cared for all of the small creatures. They said he even watched out for children in the woods. The villagers faithfully left out food on winter nights for the Green Man to eat.

One autumn day, the squire decided to go on a hunt. He called to all of his servants to saddle up the horses and get on their riding clothes: they were going into his woods.

They rode into the woods, trampling nests and dens as they went, sending dogs out ahead to chase small animals out of their homes so they could be easily hunted. After a time, the squire became separated from the rest of the hunting party. He was looking for them when he came to a pond — a beautiful, clear, cool pond.

“How clever of me to have a pond in my woods to refresh myself!” he said.

The young man began to remove all of his fine clothing — his shoes, his hat, his jacket, his shirt, his pants, and his socks. He laid his clothes neatly folded by the edge of the pond and jumped into the cool water. He swam back and forth, enjoying himself immensely.

While he was swimming and splashing away, a hand reached out from behind a tree and took his clothing and led his horse away. When the squire got out of the water, he discovered that he had nothing left to wear save a piece of rope. He took the rope and fastened some leaves to it to make a cover up. When his hunting party came looking for him, he was embarrassed to be seen dressed in nothing but leaves. So, he hid.

At night, the squire went looking for some shelter and he stumbled into a cave. He didn’t sleep much that night. It was dark, and he was frightened, and he kept hearing animal noises all night.

In the morning, when the daylight came, he saw that he was not alone in the cave. There was a goat there, and a chicken, and a gourd for holding water. Someone had been living in that cave! He found some grass for the goat and feed for the chicken. He discovered some grain that he could eat as well.

Over time, the squire settled in to life in the cave. He fashioned a whole garment out of leaves. He ate eggs from the hen and drank milk from the goat. He covered his hand with mud to prevent stings and reached into a beehive for honey to eat. He became acquainted with all the small woodland creatures, and he cared for them, helping them over swollen streams when heavy rains fell, making sure they had food and water, and sheltering them in the cave on the chilly nights.

One day he came upon two small children trapped by a wild pig threatening to bite. When he had chased the pig off, they looked at him. There he was, covered head to toe with leaves and mud, with a wild-looking beard and hair. “Are you the Green Man?” they asked.

“I guess I am,” said the man, who no longer looked anything like a squire.

When winter came, the Green Man was happy to go into the village at night and to take the food that the villagers left out for him, sharing it with all his animal friends. A year passed peacefully, until one warm day when a hunting party came into the woods. The Green Man hid behind a tree to watch. A rich young man, a squire perhaps, became separated from his hunting group and decided to take a swim in the clear, cool pond. He took off his clothes, folded them, and left them under a tree. The Green Man reached out a hand and took the clothes and the horse, leaving behind his garment of leaves and a coil of rope. He used a sharp stick to trim his hair and beard, and rode into town, back to his parents’ castle.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session10/green-man>

**3.37:** *A Caterpillar Grows Up* (1,197 words)

Adapted from The Family Finds Out by Edith Hunter (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Ellen was sitting up on a branch of the apple tree, swinging her legs. Her mother was looking over the vegetable garden.

“Want to see a nice fat green worm?” her mother called.

Ellen jumped down from the tree and ran over.

“I guess that’s a cabbage worm,” said her mom. “He’s sitting on a cabbage leaf. See the big holes he’s eaten in the leaf?”

“He’s just the same color as the leaf,” said Ellen. “He’s hard to see.”

“I suppose there are a lot more of these worms around,” said her mother. “They don’t help us a bit, because they eat the cabbages.”

“Would that worm grow up to be a butterfly, like a caterpillar does?” asked Ellen.

“I guess so,” said her mother. “I suppose that really is a cabbage caterpillar, not a worm, and there are cabbage butterflies. You know those yellow ones with big black spots?”

“Do you think we could keep him, Mommy, and watch him grow up?” asked Ellen. “Maybe we could see him turn into a butterfly!”

“We could try it, Ellen. We know what he eats. You could feed him cabbage leaves every day.”

“Let’s show him to Daddy,” said Ellen. “Maybe we can find something to keep him in.” She ran off into the house holding the green cabbage caterpillar close in her hand.

Her father was working in the kitchen. “See my caterpillar, Daddy,” said Ellen. “I’m going to watch him grow up into a butterfly. Would you help me find a house for him?”

“Let’s build him a house right now,” he said. “I have four small panes of window glass. We can use those for the sides of the house, and a piece of screen for the top of the house, and some wood for the floor of the house.”

In just a few minutes they had made a fine large glass house and Ellen put the caterpillar right in. They put the screen over the top.

“You can pull up one little cabbage plant each day to feed your caterpillar,” said her father. “There are more plants growing in the garden than we will ever be able to use. Probably if you wet the leaves before you put them in, he’ll get enough water. We’ll keep his glass house on the living-room table, so we can all see what happens to him.”

Ellen ran right out into the yard and her mom helped her pull up one baby cabbage plant. Ellen brought it in and wet the leaves. Then she put it into the glass house.

“There you are, Mr. Caterpillar! I hope you’ll grow up to be a butterfly soon,” said Ellen.

For three days the caterpillar crawled around inside his glass house. Ellen put in fresh cabbage leaves each day. He seemed to be fine. On the third day he crawled up the glass on one side of his house. About half way up, he stopped.

When her parents came home from work that night Ellen said, “My caterpillar is just sitting on the side of his house. He hasn’t moved all day. Do you think he’s dead?”

They looked at the caterpillar. He seemed rather dried up. He wasn’t moving at all. “But if he were dead,” said her father, “I should think he would fall down. We’ll just have to wait and see. I never raised a butterfly before.”

“You know,” said her mother, “when a caterpillar is nearly ready to become a butterfly he stays very still for a while. Sometimes he spins a cocoon, or he buries himself in the ground, or he just sits quietly in his old skin. They call him a chrysalis when he’s doing that. Then, when he’s ready, he comes out a butterfly.”

They decided that either their caterpillar was a chrysalis now or he was dead. For about a week he didn’t seem to change much, except he got a little smaller looking. He didn’t look like a caterpillar any more even, just a dried-up little skin.

A few days later, Ellen was standing in front of the glass house, wondering if anything was ever going to happen to that old caterpillar. Suddenly she noticed something! “Mom, Dad” she called. “I think I can see yellow wings inside. I’m sure I can.”

Her parents came into the living room quickly.

“See,” said Ellen, “there are two tiny yellow wings all folded up in there. I see some black spots too. Do you think he is going to come out and be a butterfly now?”

“I guess that is exactly what is going to happen,” said her mother. “Why, this is the most wonderful thing I have ever seen! Let’s take the glass house out on the porch. We’ll watch the butterfly come out.”

They put the caterpillar’s house on the porch railing and sat down beside it. They waited and waited and waited. Nothing seemed to be happening.

“Maybe it will take a long time still,” said her father. “I guess we better not just sit here the rest of the day. Let’s go weed the beets and then come back and take a look.”

After they had worked for a little while, Ellen said, “I’m going to go see the chrysalis for a minute,” and she ran up onto the porch.

“Oh, look!” she called to her parents. “He’s a butterfly, already! He’s come out. He’s beautiful!”

They came running. Instead of a dried-up old worm, there was a beautiful creamy yellow butterfly! His wings looked soft as silk. They were much, much bigger than the little wings that Ellen had seen all folded up. Now the butterfly was flapping them back and forth, back and forth.

“Oh, I’m so sorry we missed seeing him come out of the chrysalis,” said her dad. “I shouldn’t have been in such a hurry. But isn’t he a beauty? See his long tongue! He can reach way down in the flowers with that.” The butterfly kept unrolling his tongue, and then rolling it up again.

“I’m going to take off the roof of his house now,” said Ellen, “so he can fly away if he’s ready.” The butterfly did not fly away right away.

Then after a minute her mother slipped her finger down next to him. Carefully he put out one of his long legs, his long new butterfly legs, and stepped onto her finger.

Then Ellen put her finger next to her mother’s. Once again. the butterfly reached out a long leg, and stepped out onto Ellen’s finger. Ellen lifted up her hand carefully. She held the butterfly out over the porch, in the bright afternoon sun.

For a moment he clung to her finger. And then, opening out his silken wings, he flapped them gently and rose up in the air.

“Fly away, fly away, butterfly dear,” Ellen and her parents sang as the lovely yellow butterfly flew off. They watched him fly across the street to the meadow.

“He’s landing!” said Ellen. “He’s landed on a meadow flower!”

It made them glad to see their very own brand-new butterfly having his first drink of the sweetness of a flower.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session6/276528.shtml>

**3.38:** *And It Is Good* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (875 words)

A Lamp in Every Corner (Boston: Skinner House, 2004).

On a day not so very long ago, in a place not so very far away, a grass seed lay waiting. All through the cold, dark days of winter the seed waited, covered by a blanket of earth. In the spring, when the air was warmed by the sun and the land was watered by the rain, the seed began to grow. It grew roots deep into the earth. It grew a delicate pale green shoot up into the air. As the days went by, the shoot grew into a firm stalk, which waved in the hot summer breeze. It grew bright green leaves that opened to the sunshine, and then grew darker green as more days went by.

It grew and grew and grew, until the seed was a tall stem of grass and was ready to make seeds of its own. In the fall, when the nights turned cool and the leaves on the trees flamed red and orange and gold, the grass plant knew it would soon be dying, and so it set free its seeds. They traveled on the wind, above field and stream and hill. Some of them slowly settled to the ground in a meadow, where they lay waiting, covered by a blanket of earth. And it was good.

Now in that place not so very far away, a small field mouse was looking for food. Winter was coming, and the mouse was hungry. He went here and he went there, sniffing his way through the meadow, ears perked, eyes open, whiskers quivering, careful and cautious always, for there are many creatures that will eat a mouse. And as he sniffed and nibbled and then sniffed some more, he found a few of those grass seeds that lay covered by the blanket of earth. So he dug them up—scritch scratch!—and he ate them. And it was good.

Now in that place not so very far away, a snake was hunting. Winter was coming, and she was hungry. She went here and she went there, gliding through the faded fallen leaves from the trees, and tasting the air with flickerings of her forked tongue. She tasted the scent of mouse, and followed the scent to the meadow. After a while, she found him. So she caught him—quick, snap!—in her jaws, and she ate him. And it was good.

Now in the sky, high above that place not so very far away, a hawk was searching. Winter was coming, and the hawk was hungry. He went here and he went there, soaring on the wind with outstretched wings, looking down to the earth far below. And at the edge of the meadow, he saw the snake gliding through the faded fallen leaves. So he folded his wings and he plummeted, straight down to the ground, and he caught that snake—snatch, catch!—in his fiercely curved claws, and he ate her. And it was good.

The days went by in that place no so very far away. The sun no longer warmed the air. Instead of rain, snow fell. The last of the leaves fell from the trees. The grass froze, and died. Winter had come.

The hawk soared on outstretched wings, lifted high by the winter winds, hunting. But he was an old hawk. His wings did not beat so strongly as they used to. His eyes did not see so clearly. His hunts did not go well. One day, he plummeted to earth for the last time, and he died. And it was good.

The body of the hawk lay on the ground all winter long, covered by snow. When spring came, the sun warmed the air, and the rain watered the land. Flies buzzed in the air. Ants scurried over the ground. Spring was here, and they were hungry. The ants and the flies found the body of the hawk. The flies laid their eggs in it, and the eggs hatched into maggots. The days went by, and the body of the hawk slowly disappeared, the flesh and feathers eaten by ants and maggots, the bones chewed on by small animals, and whatever was left provided food for bacteria and mold. In just a few weeks, the body of the hawk had completely melted back into the earth. And it was good.

Now in the earth where the hawk had melted, a seed lay waiting. As spring turned into summer, and as the sun warmed the air and the rain watered the land, the seed began to grow. It shot a pale shoot up into the air. It pushed roots deep into the earth, which was made up of the body of the hawk, who had eaten the snake, who had eaten the mouse, who had eaten the seeds. And it was good.

So, remember, in that place not so very far away, and in all the places all around, there is sun and there is rain. There are seeds and mice and snakes and hawks. There are ants and maggots and bacteria and mold. There are crocodiles and humans and plankton and daffodils and mushrooms. They all eat from each other. They all live, and they all die. And it is all good.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session7/and-it-is-good>

**3.39:** *The Way of the Otter* by Julie Simon (565 words)

Daniel firmly grips his paddle and pulls hard against the water. He watches as the paddle tip dives below the surface, then leaves behind a tiny whirlpool as the paddle rises above the water. The kayak glides forward. He peers into the tall cattails arching above the sides of the kayak and scans for mud chutes. A light breeze wafts his hair back from his eyes. But he cannot see the banks at all in the dim dawn light.

They paddle on and soon emerge from the cattails and reeds of the marsh channel, into a small open stream. The sun climbs and glows up over the horizon. Now Daniel can see muddy, grassy chutes among the roots and bushes covering the banks of the stream.

“Mom, over there,” he whispers, pointing to some marshy grasses across from the second chute. “We can wait over there. If we’re quiet, they won’t notice us.”

They slowly paddle the kayak to the spot Daniel has suggested, backing it in so they can look out at the chute, undetected among the grasses. Then they wait—quiet and watchful—breathing in the moist air. Daniel is prepared to wait the whole morning—or longer—if need be. He is an experienced otter spotter.

But he does not have to wait long today. Three river otters amble along the bank. They have long, slender, brown, fur-covered bodies, with long narrow tails, and cute faces with long whiskers. One is much bigger than the other two. A mom and her two pups are out looking for breakfast. They slide down the mud chute into the stream unaware that they are being watched. Daniel is excited but he stays quiet, hardly breathing with delight.

The otters dive underwater looking for small fish, clams, and crayfish. They each find a meal and climb up the bank to enjoy it. Then the otters slide back down the chute and dive for more food. One of the pups must be full. He quickly emerges from under the water with a rock instead of a fish, flips onto his back, and tosses the rock between his front paws. He looks like he is juggling.

Daniel can barely keep back his giggles. But he is hoping for even more fun. Sure enough, after the other pup eats her fill of fish, she joins her brother juggling two rocks while floating on her back. Then her brother decides it’s time to play slide and chase. He dashes up the bank and slides down the chute on his stomach. He lands in the stream with a swoosh, then dives and swims up beside his sister. She rolls and drops her rock. The two pups splash and roll across the stream. They chase each other up the bank and down the mud slide over and over again.

Eventually, Momma Otter finishes her breakfast too. She joins the pups in the slide and chase game. They are three otters rolling and splashing and frolicking their way along the stream.

Finally, Daniel can no longer contain his laughter. He giggles through his fingers. The otters stop and look over at the reeds where Daniel and his mom are hidden. Then they scramble up the bank and disappear into the shrubs. Daniel sighs a tired, contented sigh. Now he will go have his own breakfast. He has seen the play of the otter.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session10/otter>

**3.40:** *Trees for Kenya* (543 words)

When Wangari Maathai was a little girl growing up in central Kenya in Africa, the land was green, the streams full, and the trees grew thick and lush. To help her family with meals, Wangari gathered firewood from the trees around her village.

On her first day gathering, her mother told her “Don’t collect any firewood from a fig tree.” Wangari asked “Why not?” Her mother answered, “That is a tree of God. We don’t cut it, we don’t burn it, we don’t use it all.” And so Wangari was careful, along with the rest of the village, to let the fig trees live a good long time. She didn’t know it then, but the roots of the strong tree helped water come to the surface from deep below the earth. Until they fell to the ground naturally of old age, the fig trees helped the Kenyan soil stay rich and alive.

Wangari was a smart girl and worked hard in school. When she grew up, she went to America to study biology in college.

But when Wangari returned six years later, Kenya had changed. Many trees had been cut to make way for new buildings and large coffee and tea plantations. In some places, the land was bare and the streams had dried up. Even the fig trees had been cut. And no one had thought to put in new trees. Kenya was becoming a desert. That was hard for the birds, insects, and many other animals.

It was also hard for the people. Soon Wangari was hearing from the women of Kenya that many people did not have enough to eat. Clean water was hard to find and so was firewood for cooking. Wangari listened to the women who spoke to her, and she began to get an idea.

Wangari’s idea to help everything was to plant trees. She planted small seedling trees in her own back yard, right in the city. When she saw the trees grow strong and green, she taught the women in her village to plant trees and gave them seedlings to plant. When other women saw the village turn green again, they wanted to plant trees too. Soon Wangari started a nursery and gave tree seedlings to women all over Kenya. She paid them money for each tree planted and kept alive, which helped them to buy food.

Some people laughed and said that women could not plant trees, but more and more women planted trees. And dried, brown land in Kenya turned soft and green again. But the cutting of trees continued. Wangari tried to protect the trees and told the tree cutters to stop. She did not believe so much building was needed. But powerful people disagreed. Wangari was arrested and went to jail for what she believed in. But others continued to plant trees and protect those that were still alive. Eventually, Wangari was released from jail.

As more trees were planted, the desert was pushed away and the land came back to life. Streams flowed once more. The soil became rich and healthy again. More and more people helped plant trees. By 2004, when Wangari won the Nobel Peace Prize, more than 30 million trees had been planted. Kenya was green again.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop8/288840.shtml>

**3.41:** *The Noble Ibex: A Jataka Tale* by Sarah Conover (1,046 words)

From the book Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents.

Once upon a time, the Buddha was born as a magnificent ibex. The forest in which he lived was far from civilization and therefore tranquil, inhabited by many creatures both small and large. Along the banks of clear, babbling brooks were found rare flowers, which blossomed nowhere else on earth. Trees towered above the lush undergrowth and kept the forest cool and mild.

The noble ibex that lived in this forest, the Former Buddha, was as beautiful as he was sleek and swift. He had the body of an animal but the intelligence and empathy of a human being. So deep was his kindness for all living creatures that he often trod delicately so as not to crush anything. He ate nothing but the tips of grasses already gone to seed.

As this region was renowned for its great beauty, hunting parties would at times make long journeys to reach it. On one such occasion, a king and his friends camped on the edge of the forest, hoping to bag large amounts of game before the end of their stay. One morning, the king set out on horseback with his small group following him. Not long after, the king caught a glimpse of the splendid ibex and wanted to hunt him down. Snapping his reins across his horse’s neck, the king dashed away in chase, leaving the group far behind.

When the ibex heard the quick pounding of hooves, he turned and saw the king swiftly bearing down upon him. The king’s bow was drawn taut and an arrow ready in the sites. Although the ibex could have fought the king’s attack, he chose to avoid violence, even in self-defense. So the ibex spun around and took off with great speed towards the dense center of the forest, confident the king could not catch him. Through the thick forest he sprang, still pursued by the king, but the distance between them was increasing. The ibex came to a familiar, small, deep chasm and leapt over it effortlessly. But the king’s horse, coming to that same rocky cliff, abruptly pressed his weight backwards and refused to jump. The king had been watching the ibex, not the forest floor. So when the horse stopped with a jolt, the surprised king fell forward, headlong, into the chasm.

After a time, the ibex heard no hoof beats in pursuit. He slowed and twisted his head around to examine the situation behind him. There in the distance he spotted the rider-less horse at the chasm’s edge and correctly guessed what had happened to the king. A sudden welling of kindness overcame him. He anticipated that the king must be in severe pain, surely having broken a number of bones in the fall. He knew also that the king would never survive long in this forest because there were many tigers and other beasts.

The ibex walked up to the chasm edge and saw the king far below, moaning and writhing in pain. He no longer looked upon the king as his enemy, but felt his suffering keenly. The Former Buddha gently inquired, “I hope your majesty has no serious wounds? Might the pain of your injuries be diminishing by now?”

The king looked up at the ibex in utter astonishment. He felt a dreadful pang of remorse for his behavior towards this noble animal. Oh, how the king felt his shame!

“You see, your Excellency,” comforted the Ibex, “I am no wild devil to be hunted for sport. I am just a peaceful creature living within the bounds of this beautiful forest.”

“Oh!” blurted the king. “It is I who acted as a beast, not you! Can you ever forgive me?” he asked. “My physical pain right now,” continued the king, “is far less than the pain I feel for having threatened a noble creature as yourself.”

“Sire,” responded the ibex, “let me help you out of your predicament. I can rescue you if you’ll trust me.” The ibex took the king’s silence as a sign of goodwill and knew that the king would accept his help. He then searched for a boulder as heavy as a man and practiced lifting it. When he felt he could do it safely, without slipping, he made his way down the rocks beside the king. “If you mount me as you would your horse, your Excellency, I believe I can leap out of the chasm with you on my back,” offered the ibex.

The king followed these directions and held on as best he could. In an instant the ibex leapt in a great arc onto the cliff rim. There the king found his waiting horse but was so overtaken by the goodness of the ibex he could not leave. “What can I do to repay you?” begged the king. “If you would come to my palace, we would see that your every need was met. I can’t bear to think of you left in this forest with hunters in pursuit. Please, please come back with me,” insisted the king.

“Sire, do you think I, who am so contented in the forest, could really adjust to that? I love nothing better than to live here, in peace. But there is one great favor I would ask of you.”

“Anything,” said the king.

“I ask that you give up hunting for sport. You now realize that all creatures want happiness and security. Can it be right to do to them what you yourself would despise? A true king,” proclaimed the ibex, “will gain his people’s love by showing great goodness, not by showing power.”

The grateful king agreed to the request. “Now, let me show you the way back to safety,” suggested the ibex. “Mount your horse and I will guide you home to your camp.”

The king soon returned to his palace, and the ibex disappeared into the shelter of the forest. But forevermore, the king lived by the wise words of the noble ibex, the Former Buddha. He forbade hunting for sport throughout his kingdom’s domain. He protected his people, but no longer waged costly wars against nearby countries. His kingdom flourished. And thus, the good king was greatly loved and respected by his people as the gentlest and wisest of all kings.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session11/noble-ibex>

**3.42:** *The Most Beautiful Bower in the World* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (1,095 words)

In the land of Australia, where koalas climb high in eucalyptus trees and kangaroos bound across grassy plains on great big feet, a baby bird pecked his way out of his shell.

His mother called him Kejaro, and she brought him good fruit to eat. Every day, for dessert, she brought him bugs. His feathers were brown and green, just like his mother’s. Both Kejaro and his mother had pale blue eyes.

Every day, Kejaro ate fruit and bugs, to help him grow bigger. Every day, he flapped his wings hard, to help him grow stronger.

And every night, his mother told him stories about his father. “He was handsome, with satiny blue feathers,” she told him. “He was graceful, with a beautiful dance. He was charming, with a lovely voice. And he built the most beautiful bower in the world.”

“What’s a bower?” asked Kejaro, for all he knew of the world was their nest, high in a tree and surrounded by green leaves, and the slivers of blue far above them that his mother said was “sky.”

“A bower is a special nest, built upon the ground,” his mother told him. “With his feet, your father smoothed the ground to make a dancing floor. With his beak, he placed each twig, just so, to make an archway. He chewed leaves and berries to make paint then dipped a piece of bark into it and painted the archway’s walls. He flew far and wide to find the prettiest flowers and feathers and shells to decorate the bower with, and all of them were of the most beautiful blue.”

“Like the sky?” Kejaro asked.

“Like the sky,” his mother agreed. “When I came to the bower, your father danced and sang for me, and then I joined him on the dancing floor. Someday, Kejaro, you will build a bower for your lady love.”

Then his mother covered him with her wing, for it was time to sleep. Kejaro closed his eyes, wondering what kind of bower he would build when he was grown.

When Kejaro was three weeks old, he flew for the very first time. Soon, he could swoop and soar and zoom up and zoom down. He went high enough to see the sky, and it was huge, not just little slivers. It stretched from one end of the world to the other, and all of it was of the most beautiful blue.

A few days later, he and his mother left their nest. They flew until they found a flock of other birds. All of them had brown and green feathers and pale blue eyes.

Kejaro spent his days playing with his new friends. They flew high in the sky, zipping and zooming and swooping and soaring. They ate fruit from trees and bushes. Sometimes, for dessert, they would hunt bugs. At night, they slept on the branches of trees. Around them, koalas climbed high in the eucalyptus trees and kangaroos bounded across the grassy plains on great big feet.

When Kejaro was five years old, he noticed that he had some new feathers that were a dark, satiny blue. The other boys had some new dark feathers, too. All the girls were still green and brown. Kejaro decided he didn’t want to spend his days zipping and zooming and swooping and soaring.

He wanted to build.

Kejaro flew into the forest, searching for just the right spot. He found it, surrounded by four tall trees, with a little rivulet of water not far away. With his feet, he smoothed the ground to make a dancing floor. With his beak, he placed each twig, just so, to make an archway. He chewed leaves and berries to make paint then used a piece of bark to paint the archway’s walls. He flew far and wide to find the prettiest flowers and feathers and shells to decorate his bower with, and all of them were of the most beautiful blue.

Every day, he noticed that more of his own feathers were turning satiny blue. Every day, he practiced dancing and singing, making the sounds of other creatures he heard. Every day, he smoothed the dancing floor and rearranged the flowers and feathers and shells.

Some days he went hunting for more decorations. Kejaro found snail shells and bright leaves and beetle wings, but he liked blue parrot feathers the best. He took a few from another bird’s bower a few flights away. The next day when he came back from a trip, every single one of his blue parrot feathers were gone. So Kejaro went searching again.

In the spring, a lovely green and brown bird with pale blue eyes came to his bower. He danced and sang his best for her, but then she flew away.

Kejaro was sad, but he promised himself, “I’ll do it better next time.” All that next year he built and rebuilt his bower, painting the archway, smoothing the dancing floor, finding and arranging his decorations of the most beautiful blue. Almost half of his own feathers were satiny blue now, and he practiced his singing and his dancing, too.

That spring, three birds came to his bower, and he sang and danced for each of them. Two of them left when he was finished, and one of them stayed for a little while, but none of them joined him on the dancing floor.

Once again, Kejaro was sad, but once again he promised himself: “I’ll do it better next time.” All that year he worked hard, trying to build the most beautiful bower in the world. When spring came again, all of his own feathers were dark satiny blue. He gleamed in the sunshine, and his eyes were as blue as the sky.

One morning, a lovely green and brown bird with pale blue eyes came to his bower. She watched as he danced and sang his best for her. Kejaro finished his song and waited, hoping she thought he was handsome and graceful and charming, hoping she would stay.

She hopped over to him and said, “My name is Camira.”

“My name is Kejaro,” he told her, wondering if she would be his lady love.

Camira fluttered her wings a little and said, “You have built the most beautiful bower in the world.”

And Kejaro was happy, for that meant he had finally done it right this time.

Then he was happier still, for Camira joined him on the dancing floor, and the two of them danced together inside the most beautiful bower in the world.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session9/beautiful-bower>

**3.43:** *Treasure Stones* by Janeen Grohsmeyer (825 words)

In a time not so long ago and in a place not so far away, there lived a boy named Arthur Lismer. Arthur always had a pencil in his pocket, because Arthur loved to draw. He drew clouds. He drew birds. He drew flowers. He drew many beautiful things. And he drew pictures of stones.

“Why are you drawing a boring old stone?” his friends would ask. “They’re just... gray. They’re just... rocks.”

“Stones are beautiful,” Arthur told them. “Just look. Some stones have gold flecks. Some have tiny crystals. In the rain, a stone can change color. In the sunshine, it can sparkle. Every stone is a treasure; every stone is beautiful. Just look!”

Arthur would draw pictures anywhere, anytime. He drew in the morning at the breakfast table. He drew during lunchtime at school. He drew on moonlit nights outside, surrounded by trees. He drew on train rides through the countryside. He even drew on Sundays in church.

“Put that away,” his mother would tell him, and so Arthur would close his sketchbook and put his pencil in his pocket, and he would listen to their minister at the Unitarian chapel in Sheffield. But sometimes during the service he would still be thinking about drawing.

When Arthur was thirteen, he went to a school just for artists. After he graduated, he sold his drawings to people. But he didn’t make very much money at it.

So, when he was twenty-six years old, Arthur decided to leave England and sail across the Atlantic Ocean, all the way to Canada. He got an ax and chopped up his desk, and he used its wood to build a trunk. He put some clothes and his drawing paper and his pencils into the trunk, and he moved to Canada.

The trees and the flowers and the animals in Canada were all new to Arthur, and all of them were beautiful. He traveled to many places, going to the mountains and the prairies and the lakes and the rivers of that great land, painting pictures of the things he saw.

People liked his pictures. They liked seeing the world through his eyes. Most people hadn’t traveled very far, and Canada is a very big country. Arthur’s pictures were like windows into a new world.

In his pictures, people could see a river of snow flowing down a mountainside. They saw trees with great gnarly roots all twisted together. They saw a church and houses surrounded by fields of grain. They saw gray rocks colored bright red by the setting sun. They saw a tree bowing in the wind, and above it, little white clouds following each other across the sky like little ducklings in a row.

People hadn’t seen that before. They hadn’t realized just how magnificent Canada was. “Just look,” Arthur said. “Look and see.”

Many people bought Arthur’s pictures to put in their homes. People put his pictures in schools, and in offices, and even on postage stamps.

Five years after Arthur came to Canada, he became a teacher in an art school, showing people how to create art. Not just with paper and pencil, but with wire and cloth and felt and feather and bits of rock and all kinds of things.

On Saturdays, he taught classes in a museum. People of all ages came, all in the same room. Parents learned right along with their children. Arthur would talk for a while about the paintings, about the artists who created them and where and when the paintings were made. And then, he would ask everyone: “What do you see in that picture? What do you think it means? What do you like? What kind of beauty is there for you?”

On Sundays, he taught children at his Unitarian church. “Let’s go outside!” he would usually say. “Let’s see what we can find. Let’s see.”

“I found a stone,” a child said, one day. “It’s just gray.”

“Let’s see,” Arthur said. He licked his finger to get it wet. Then he rubbed his finger on the little stone. The stone turned pink and then purple and then gray again.

“It’s like a rainbow!” the child said.

Arthur took out his pencil from his pocket (he always carried a pencil) and drew two small dots on one end of the stone, and then a long curving line on the other.

“It’s like a mouse!” the child said.

He turned the rock over so they could see all the little spidery lines in the cracks.

“It’s a like a map!” the child said.

Then sunshine came, and the rock began to sparkle.

“Now it’s silver and gold!” the child said. “It’s like treasure.”

“It is treasure,” Arthur said.

The child nodded, holding tightly the stone that was a rainbow and a mouse and a map and a treasure. “It’s my treasure stone,” the child said. “I can see that now.”

What kind of treasures do you see?

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session12/treasure-stones>

**3.44:** *Cooperation,*a French parable retold by Margaret Silf (388 words)

One morning, the sun got up in a bad mood.

“I’m really tired of getting up every morning and giving light to the earth, day after day,” it said. “I’m tired of ripening the corn and melting the snow. What does the human race ever do for me in return?”

The sun was still thinking all this over, when the rain arrived.

“Lady Rain,” the sun remarked, “you water the earth all the time and make the flowers grow. You turn the fields green, and fill up the rivers. What does the human race ever do for you in return?”

Hearing this, the rain furrowed her brow, broke out in a terrible noise and fell headlong onto the earth. And as she fell, she pounded out these words: “Listen, Mother Earth. You let humankind work you, rip you open, scratch and scrape you. What does the human race ever do for you in return?”

The earth turned into its own furrows and murmured to the grain of wheat, “Hey, little grain of wheat. You let yourself die so that humankind can eat bread. What does the human race ever do for you in return?”

And then the sun stopped shining.

The rain stopped falling.

The earth stopped holding the grain.

The grain stopped germinating.

And life disappeared from the face of the earth.

Eventually, the sun became bored, because there were no longer any children dancing in its warmth and light.

The rain became saddened at never seeing the smile of the gardener in his garden.

The earth became weary at never hearing the joyful steps of the laborer on her back.

And the grain of wheat began to rot in solitude.

Together, they decided to have a meeting with God, the creator, and this is what they said to him: “Lord, everything is dying in this universe that you created to be so good and fruitful. Give back life to the earth, we beg you.”

And God replied, “My friends, I have given you everything you need to support life on earth. Life cannot be born except of you and between you. And life will be born anew if each of you shares of its nature with all creation.”

“For life is born out of a sharing of life. And where cooperation is refused, life cannot be.”

Source: *One Hundred Wisdom Stories from Around the World* by Margaret Silf

**3.45:** *The Golden Chain: an Ife Creation Story* by Erica Shadowsong (1,081 words)

Long ago, before there were any people, all life existed in the sky. Olorun lived in the sky, and with Olorun were many orishas. They all lived by a young baobab tree, where they found everything they ever needed for food, work or play. In fact, they were all very creative and made things all the time, clothing themselves in beautiful robes and skirts, and gold jewelry. Now Olorun had told them that all the vast sky was theirs to explore, but all of the orishas seemed happy to stay near the baobab tree.

Except for Obatala.

Obatala was the curious orisha who wasn’t content to live blissfully by the baobab tree. Like all orishas, he had certain powers, and he wanted to put them to use. As he pondered what to do, he looked far down through the mists below the sky. As he looked and looked, he began to realize that there was a vast empty ocean below the mist.

Obatala went to Olorun and said, “I want to go down from the heavens to the dark seas below, and make something. Maybe beings, like you did, so I can share with them my knowledge and teach them.” Olorun, who himself had been made by Olodumare, the mysterious god beyond all things, understood Obatala’s desire to create, and was more than willing to say yes.

“I suggest you talk to Orunmila,” he advised. “He can see far into the future how things will go. And if anyone knows the magic you will need to do this, it is him.”

So Obatala consulted Orunmila of the far sight. Orunmila cast his seeds on his tray and frowned, looking at them thoughtfully. Finally, he said that Obatala would need, among other things, three important things to take with him: a snail shell filled with powder, made from the boabab tree, some palm kernels, and the sacred golden egg that contained all of the spirits of the orishas. “You will also need a way to get down. Go to the goldsmith and ask him to make you a chain that reaches to the world below.”

Even though Obatala did not know what everything was for, he did exactly as Olorun said. First, he went to all the other orishas and asked them for all the gold they had, which they gave him.

Then he took it to the goldsmith and said, “Make me a gold chain, that drops down into the world below, so that I can climb safely down.” He dressed in clean, white robes and packed his belongings, the snail shell with the tree powder, and the palm seeds. Last, he removed the sacred egg from the tree and held it carefully clutched to his chest.

Then Obatala began to climb down the golden chain, down to the dark, swirling waters. For seven days he climbed, as the dark waters got closer and closer. On the last day, when he got to the end of the chain, he found that it was too short! Obatala hung there, swinging gently on the golden chain from heaven, wondering what to do.

Then Orunmilla, who was watching, called to him from above. “Use the shell!” Obatala remembered the snail shell and pulled it out of his pack. But he was carrying so many things as he balanced in the air, that he did so, the powder in the shell spilled out onto the water. As the sand hit the waters, it formed masses of solid land: mountains, islands and plains. And as he watched, he did not notice how tightly he was holding the egg, until suddenly, it cracked against his chest!

Out of the egg flew the Sankofa! The great, golden bird, who was always looking behind it into the past, to carry its wisdom into the present. And with the Sankofa bird came the spirits of all the orishas, in a crowd of colors, carrying tools and musical instruments, machetes and crossbows, for they all had their own powers and knowledge; they were hunters and fighters, dancers and diviners, and they brought the powers of nature and the elements as they explored the new world, and each found a home where they were most comfortable.

When all of the orishas had been released into the world, Obatala himself got to work. He dropped from the golden chain onto the ground and took a walk, dropping the palm nuts into the ground.  Giant trees burst forth and grew with great speed as he hummed and walked along. Then he sat down and began to mold shapes in the sand and water, until he had made many beings that looked a little bit like him, and like the other orishas.

Olorun happened to look down from the skies as Obatala finished the people, and seeing that they were not yet alive, he took a deep breath, and breathed their spirits into them! Obatala was so happy! But he began to notice something was wrong: the bodies were all different. They were not perfect. And the way they talked and behaved toward each other was sometimes strange and unkind.

Then he remembered: During his crafting, he had gotten thirsty and taken some of the juice from the palm trees. But the juice had been fermented into wine, and made him tipsy. He felt horrible!

Obatala sat down and groaned into the earth. “I’ve been careless,” he cried to himself, “and now the people will suffer because I was not paying attention to how I made them.” Now the other orishas had heard their brother groaning in pain, and from the forests and streams, the ocean and the forge, they spoke.

“Obatala,” they said, “didn’t you create these beings, so you could share your wisdom in the first place? What does it matter that they aren’t perfect? Now not only you are here, but so are we! And we swear to you that we will also bring our gifts to help them. We will teach them all the things we know, how to take care of themselves, protect each other, and love each other as a great family, as we were. Wherever they go and whatever happens to them, we promise you that as long as your world exists, they will find us in it.”

Obatala smiled as he listened to his brothers and sisters, comforted. For now, he knew that whenever his people found trouble, they would have help to see them through it.

Source: <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/time-all-ages/promise-and-practice-story-all-ages>

**4.0: Children’s Books about Creation, the Earth, and Nature**

# 4.1: *The Blessing Seed: A Creation Myth for the New Millennium* by Caitlin Matthews, author and Alison Dexter, illustrator (1999)

# The Blessing Seed: A Creation Myth for the New Millennium ...“A modern reinterpretation of the traditional Christian story of creation tells how Man and Woman are amazed by the many animals and plants with which they share their home and eventually eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.”

# 4.2: *Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun* byGeri Keams, author and James Bernardin (1995)

# Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun: A Cherokee Story - Kindle ...“After Possum and Buzzard fail in their attempts to steal a piece of the sun, Grandmother Spider succeeds in bringing light to the animals on her side of the world.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ok_b46A9hvE> (10:00)

# 4.3: *The Earth Made New: Plains Indian Stories of Creation* by Paul Goble, author, foreword by Joe Medicine Crow (2009)

# The Earth Made New: Plains Indian Stories of Creation by Paul Goble“This beautifully illustrated Plains Indian Creation story celebrates a new Earth after the flood and narrates the making of the buffaloes, mountains, plants, colorful horses and Thunderbirds among others. Weaving together the legends of the Plains Indian tribes, including the stories of the Cheyenne, Blackfoot, Arapaho, and the Crow, this revised edition contains 8 pages of additional illustrations and stories, as well as a new foreword. It also includes an extensive reference list and detailed introductory note.”

# 4.4: *All Our Relatives: Traditional Native American Thoughts about Nature* by Paul Goble, author (2005)

# “Through carefully chosen stories from the olden days and art that meticulously reflects traditional designs and colors, Goble provides wonderful insights into the spiritual life of the Plains Indians. His intimate knowledge of their world transports the reader into a vision of the sacred beauty and wisdom that defined traditional Native America.”

**4.5:** *Born With a Bang: The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2002)

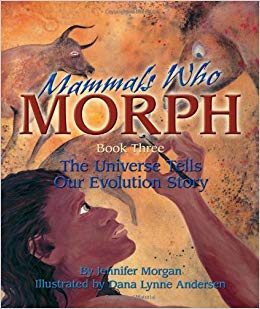
# Born with a Bang Book One( The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story ...“Lots of people have gotten very excited about this book and its sequels. It succeeds at telling the amazing story of the universe and the creation of Earth with scientific accuracy but without diminishing the mystery and wonder. The three books together tell OUR STORY. As cosmologist and author Dr. Brian Swimme said: In the magic of this story . . . suddenly, we have the feeling that we BELONG.”

# Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2klOCdhqUfI> (11:15)

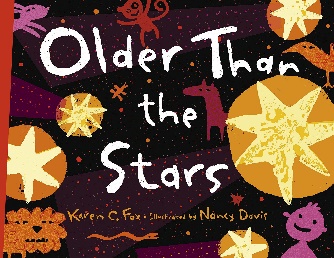
**4.6:***From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth Story* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2003)

# From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth Story: Book 2 (The ...“The second in a trilogy of Universe stories ― the first being *Born with a Bang: The Universe Tells Our Cosmic Story*― this book picks up the story with the first appearance of life on Earth. It’s a thrilling story about how Earth triumphs over crisis to become bacteria, jellyfish, flowers...even dinosaurs!”

# 4.7: *Mammals Who Morph: The Universe Tells Our Evolution Story Book 3* by Jennifer Morgan, author and Dana Lynne Andersen, illustrator (2006)

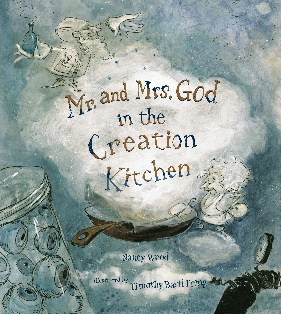
 “This remarkable evolution series, narrated by the Universe itself, concludes with this third book, the amazing story of mammals and humans. It picks up after *From Lava to Life: The Universe Tells Our Earth Story* with the extinction of dinosaurs, and tells how tiny mammals survived and morphed into lots of new Earthlings ... horses, whales and a kind of mammal with a powerful imagination you! It is a story of chaos, creativity and heroes the greatest adventure on Earth! And it is a personal story...about our bodies, our minds, and spirits. It is our story. As the president of the American Montessori Society said, ‘These books are alive with wonder, radiance, and deep relevance.’”

# 4.8: *Older Than the Stars* by Karen C. Fox, author and Nancy Davis, illustrator (2010)

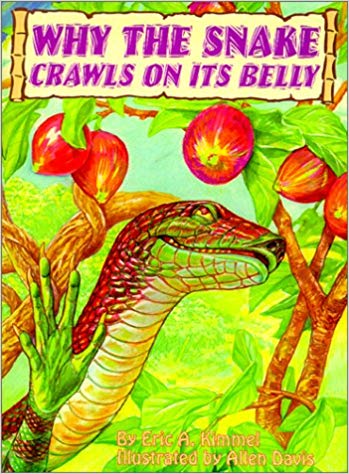
 “This lively and vibrant picture book offers an introduction to the science between The Big Bang theory and other cosmology that explains the beginning of the universe. In a way, we are all as old as the stars and the universe itself. In fact, every bit of every one of us was created billions of years ago from the same stuff as stars. Stunningly bright illustrations and simple verse tell the story of the cosmic connections that tie human beings to the beginning of the universe. Simple, informative prose provides additional facts.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp1_dCIXqSw> (4:25)

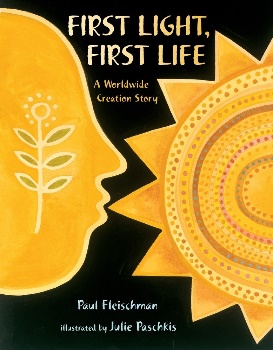
**4.9:** *Mr. and Mrs. God in the Creation Kitchen* by Nancy Wood, author and Timothy Basil Ering, illustrator (2005)

 “Deep in the heavens, in the space between the clouds, Mr. and Mrs. God are hard at work in their Creation Kitchen. They’ve got frying pans and mixing bowls, beaters and whisks, and an oven big enough to roast a star - which is just what they are doing! After the sun and earth are finished, all kinds of interesting creations come next, with beaks and claws and growls and roars baked right in. When each creature is cooked to perfection, they set it down on Earth. But that’s only the beginning…”

**4.10:** *Why the Snake Crawls on its Belly* by Eric Kimmel, author and Allen Davis, illustrator (2001)

 “A ladder stands in the Garden of Eden, reaching all the way to Heaven. Adam and Eve go up and down the ladder as they please, singing with the angels and talking to God. When the snake convinces them to sin, the ladder is broken. God and the angels decide the snake’s punishment, but so the snake does not give up hope, he is given the opportunity to periodically shed his skin and start over again. Eventually, the snake may understand his mistake and, in the future, will take his place next to man on the ladder to Heaven.”

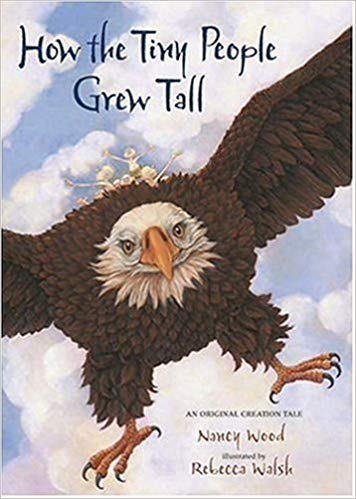
**4.11:** *First Light, First Life: A Worldwide Creation Story* by Paul Fleischman, author and Julie Paschkis, illustrator (2016)

 “In the beginning there was only darkness…. There was fire and ice.… There was a single drop of milk.

“Combining elements of the creation story from different traditions, this narrative weaves together one complete picture of how the world began. First Light, First Life is a celebration of the many and varied peoples of the earth, of their commonalities and their differences. It is a celebration of life.”

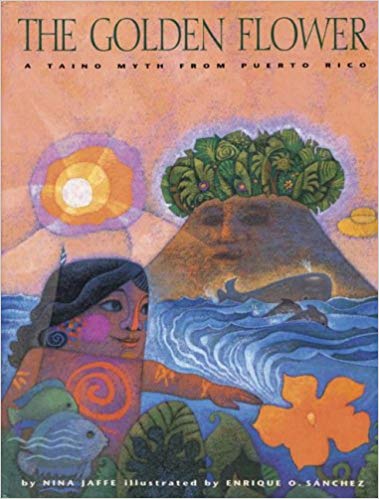
Teaching Resources: <https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/book/first-light-first-life-worldwide-creation-story>

**4.12:** *How the Tiny People Grew Tall: An Original Creation Tale* by Nancy Wood, author and Rebecca Walsh, illustrator (2005)

 “A long time ago, when everything was new, the Tiny People lived in the Center of the Earth. It was hot and crowded.

“‘Let’s get out of here,’ says the smallest and boldest of the Tiny People under the earth. But it’s not until a star crashes into the ground that they first see the blue sky above—and each other—and dare to crawl up a cornstalk into a strange, scary world. Terrified but curious, the wee folk hitch rides with Eagle, Turtle, and Bear, who advise them to rise above the earth, take their time, and be strong, just like them. Other creatures show how to build a home and find food. And sure enough, after many seasons, the Tiny People grow as tall as young trees and are ready to kick up their heels and celebrate with all the animal friends who have taught them so well.”

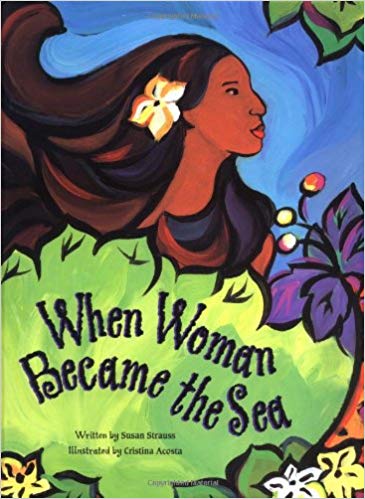
**4.13:** *The Golden Flower: A Taino Myth from Puerto Rico* by Nina Jaffe, author and Enrique O. Sanchez, illustrator (2005)

 “The syncopated prose of Nina Jaffe draws the reader to the island of Puerto Rico, back before the Spaniards arrived. The island was inhabited by the Taínos, and they called their beloved island, Boriquén. This is their story of how Boriquén came to be.

“In the beginning, there is only a giant mountain above a dry plain without water or plants. When a child walks over the flat land below the mountain, he finds seeds dancing in the wind. When he plants the seeds on the top of the mountain, a forest grows on the crest and in that forest, a large golden flower appears. Soon, the boy and his community reap benefits that they had never before imagined.”

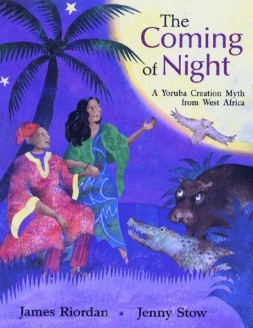
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v0TZoA7vrQ> (5:28)

**4.14:** *When Woman Became the Sea: A Costa Rican Creation Myth* by Susan Strauss, author and Cristina Acosta, illustrator (1998)

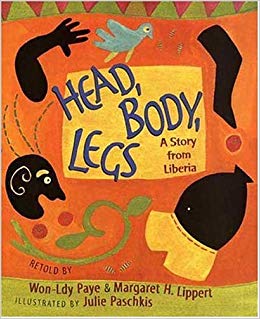
 “Sibu has created the world, filling it with mountains, valleys, jungles, and many creatures. But something is missing. He enlists his friend Thunder to help complete the world, but Thunder is too busy cracking and booming to pay attention.

“So Sibu creates woman, making her as beautiful as the skies and the earth. Thunder, spellbound by this woman named Sea, takes her as his bride. Sea finds herself caught between Sibu and Thunder’s demands, so she decides to go off by herself Once alone, she is bitten by an enchanted snake. A series of magical transformations takes place in Sea, turning her into a wondrous tree that attracts birds of every color and feather. Sibu, annoyed by the ensuing racket, has two birds destroy the tree, and as it comes crashing down, all the water in the world -- seas, oceans, lakes, and rivers -- comes pouring from the trunk. Of course, it was water that was missing all along!”

**4.15:** *The Coming of Night: A Yoruba Creation Myth from West Africa* by James Riordan, author and Jenny Stow, illustrator (2011)

 “Long, long ago, when the earth was new, the great river goddess Yemoya sent her daughter Aje to marry a handsome earth chief in the Land of Shining Day. At first Aje was happy, but soon she started to pine for the cool shadows of her mother’s realm. So, her husband asked Crocodile and Hippopotamus to bring Aje a sackful of Night. As they carried it back, the animals heard strange noises coming from the sack - and curiosity finally got the better of them....”

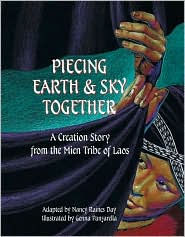
**4.16:** *Head, Body, Legs: A Story from Liberia* by Won-Ldy Paye & Margaret H. Lippert, authors, and Julie Paschkis, illustrator (2005)

 “A magical retelling of a Liberian creation story. Head is all alone. Body bounces along. Arms swing about. Legs stand around. They can’t do much by themselves, so they try to work together. But how? This vibrant, joyous retelling of a traditional Liberian creation story shows how much can be accomplished with a little cooperation.”

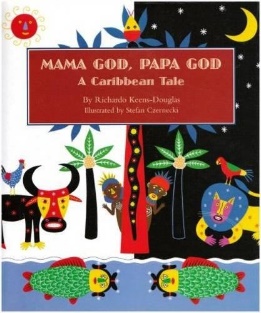
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXmFhjQhgpk> (4:54)

Shadow Puppet Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R_N_YejdmQ> (4:07)

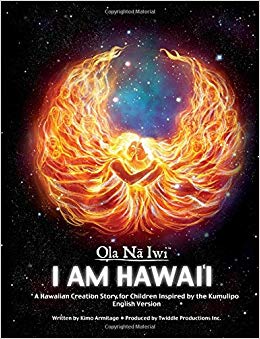
**4.17:** *Piecing Earth and Sky Together: A Creation Story from the Mien Tribe of Laos* by Nancy Raines Day, author and Genna Panzarella, illustrator (2001)

 “While she and her grandmother work on their embroidery, Mei Yoon listens to an old Mein tale about the creation of the earth and the sky.” Two siblings, a brother and a sister, work independently on their embroidery. The bother’s sky is too small for the sister’s earth, so they must help each other to piece them together.

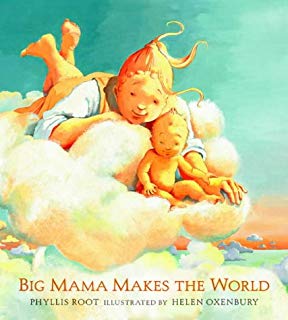
**4.18:** *Mama God, Papa God: A Caribbean Tale* by Richardo Keens-Douglas, author and Stefan Czernecki, illustrator (1999)

 “This West Indian tale revisits the creation story from a new perspective. Both Mama God and Papa God create the world.”

**4.19:** *Ola Na Iwi: I Am Hawaii: A Hawaiian Creation Story for Children Inspired by the Kumulipo* by Kimo Armitage, author and many illustrators including Michael Q. Ceballos & Matthew Kawika Ortiz (2016)

 “The Creation of Hawaii told in this beautifully illustrated children’s book will capture the hearts and imaginations of young readers as wondrous creatures from the ocean and land emerge from the time of darkness until the birth of man heralds the period of light. The heart-wrenching story of Wakea and Haohokakalani, ancestors to Hawaiians, becomes a lesson for the way that we must take care of the earth so that it continues to nourish us.”

**4.20:** *Big Momma Makes the World* by Phyllis Root, author and Helen Oxenbury, illustrator (2002)

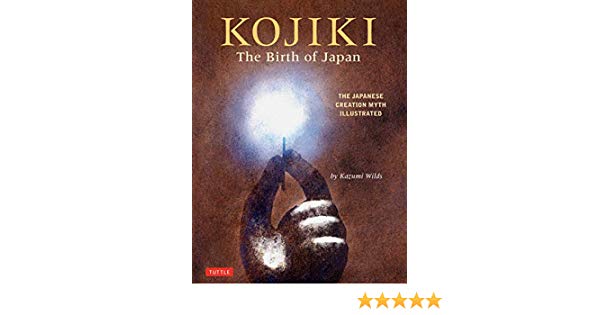
 “‘Earth,’ said Big Momma, ‘Get over here.’ And it did. All one big ball of mud it was, nothing much to look at. Baby liked it all right just the way it was, but Big Momma wasn’t finished yet.

“When Big Momma makes the world, she doesn’t mess around. With a little baby on her hip and laundry piling up, she demands light and dark, earth and sky, creepers and crawlers, and lots of folks to trade stories with on the front porch. And when the work is done, Big Momma, she is pleased all right. ‘That’s good,’ she says. ‘That’s real good.’

“With down-home language and infectious rhythms, storyteller Phyllis Root spins a creation myth like no other, brilliantly illustrated by the incomparable Helen Oxenbury.

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z9mYHw8W4aI> (7:54)

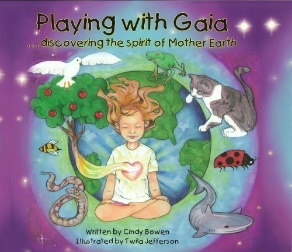
**4.21:***Kojiki: The Birth of Japan* by Kazumi Wilds, author (2019)

 “In the beginning there was nothing—a void. Then the heavens and the earth took shape, as the ancient gods of Japan breathed the first sparks of life into these islands. The 1300-year-old Kojiki myth traces the beginnings of the Japanese people, following the rise of the Japanese islands from their humble origins as a lump of clay to a great nation that would one day take its rightful place among the leading nations of the world.” For readers 14 & up

# Sample Pages: <https://www.overdrive.com/media/4644470/kojiki>

# *Gaia*

# 4.22: *Playing with Gaia: discovering the spirit of Mother Earth* by Cindy Bowen, author and Twila Jefferson, illustrator (2009)

 “Play with the ever-present energy of life in Mother Earth—play with Gaia! This is not yoga, dance or tai chi; it is an awakening and discovery of playfulness and inner freedom. Open a new doorway with yourself or the children in your life. Together you can heal wounds, dissolve boundaries, create deep inner bonds and bring new creativity and awareness into your world.”

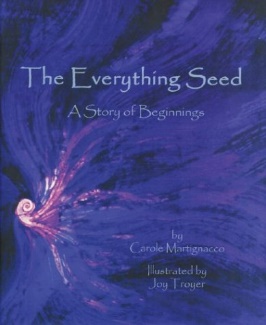
# Video Teaser:

# <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDKZ2OL9VGM> (1:13)

# 4.23: *Everything is Connected* by Jason Gruhl, author and Ignasi Font, illustrator (2019)

 “This is a magical story about the powerful idea that we are connected to absolutely everything in the universe. ‘Everything is connected. And since you are part of everything, you are connected to everything: to pharaohs, Ben Franklin, T. Rex, ancient Greece, to love and to poverty, hunger and peace!’”

# 4.24: *The Everything Seed* by Carole Martignacco, author and Joy Troyer, illustrator (2015)

“From a single seed cradled and nourished in the rich soil of space, comes the entire universe...and even you! The Everything Seed is a new myth for a new generation, one that explains to the youngest child where we, and the world around us, originated. This joyous celebration of the origins of life is told through captivating poetry and luminous artwork. A gentle look at the Big Bang for young children. Incredible batik artwork. ‘A captivating, refreshing, and life-affirming treasure to read over and again.’ Earthlight Magazine”

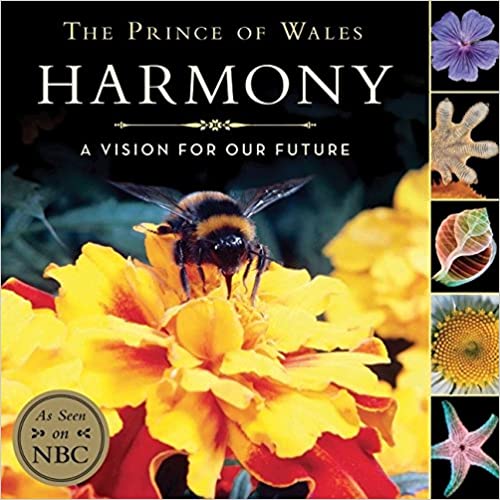
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txTQy_M6nDM> (4:12)

# *Taking Care of the Earth*

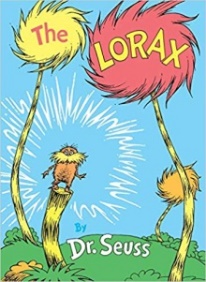
# 4.25: *Our Planet* by Jimi Lee (2014)

# Our Planet: Lee, Jimi: 9789888240609: Amazon.com: Books“Children are the future, but will they take better care of our planet than we have? Can they repair the damage before it’s too late? Author Jimi Lee believes change is possible. Her powerful images show that when we work together with nature, everything is in harmony. This unusual, thought-provoking—and wordless—tale observes without passing judgment. The delicate, expressive illustrations and inventive die-cut silently convey information while captivating readers of all ages.”

# 4.26: *Harmony Children’s Edition: A Vision for Our Future* by Charles, Prince of Wales (2010)

“In an adaptation of his adult book *Harmony: A New Way of Looking at Our World* for young readers, The Prince shares how many years of research have led him to a series of holistic solutions for change. He encourages global citizens of all ages to search for a harmonious balance with Nature in order to solve the greatest crisis in modern history—the survival of our planet.”

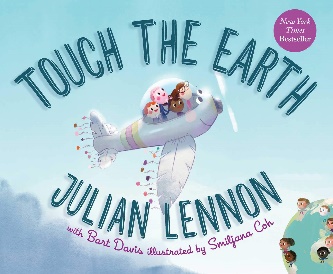
**4.27:** *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss (1971)

“Long before saving the earth became a global concern, Dr. Seuss, speaking through his character the Lorax, warned against mindless progress and the danger it posed to the earth’s natural beauty.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdWesdMfyd4> (18:18)

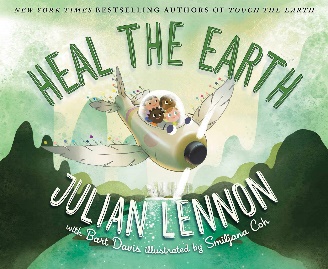
Discussion Guide: <https://www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org/BookModule/TheLorax>

**4.28:** Touch the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2017)**

**“This interactive book immerses children in a fun and unique journey. Jump aboard the White Feather Flier, a magical plane that can go wherever you want! Just press a button printed on the page, and point the plane up in the air to fly, or down to land it! Fly to the top of a mountain! Send clean water to thirsty people! Dive deep into the ocean (the Flier turns into a submarine!) to pick up pollution and bring back the fish! Explore the planet, meet new people, and help make the world a better place!”**

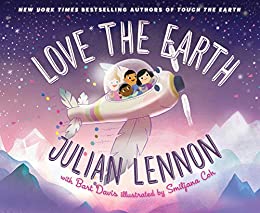
**Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFUfEyqnfH4> **(12:58)**

**4.29:** Heal the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2018)**

**“Jump aboard the White Feather Flier, a magical plane that can go wherever you want. This time, children can Bring medicine to people in need! Dive below the ocean to bleached coral reefs! Visit the city to cultivate green spaces! Help the rain forest return and give its animals a home! Explore the planet, meet new people, and help make the world a better place!”**

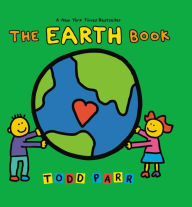
**Video Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xy39umNd5Zk> (7:19)

**4.30:** Love the Earth **by Julian Lennon & Bart Davis, authors and Smiljana Coh, illustrator (2019)**

“The …book in …encourages young environmentalists to crisscross the entire planet in the magical White Feather Flier plane, stopping along the way to plant gardens, build schools, clean up the oceans, and save endangered species. This series encourages children’s curiosity about far-flung places all over the world, and teaches them about solutions, with impacts both big and small, to the environmental issues facing us today.”

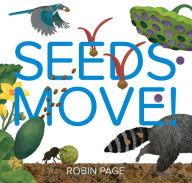
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa1j1Ny0VQE> (6:33)

**4.31:** The Earth Book **by Todd Parr (2010)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/earth-book-todd-parr/1100270017?ean=9780316042659)“The Earth Book is definitely inspiring. ‘I take care of the earth because I know I can do little things every day to make a BIG difference.…,’ This book also includes a poster with tips/reminders on how kids can “go green” every day, such as bringing your own bags to the grocery story, planting a tree, turning off the faucet when you brush your teeth, and using both sides of the paper. It’s printed on recycled materials with soy ink, too.”

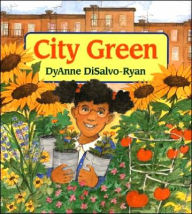
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpEc5nHqO2c> (2:56)

**4.32:** Seeds Move! **by Robin Page (2019)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/seeds-move-robin-page/1128863850?ean=9781534409156)“Sure, animals are pretty great at building their homes, but seeds are nature’s real stunners of ingenuity. Seeds might seem inert, but in fact engage in all kinds of maneuvers to get themselves planted in a good spot. Robin Page’s vibrant illustrations and clear, detailed text show how seeds make their move, from sticktight seeds catching a ride on a passing raccoon, to exploding cucumber seeds ejecting from their pods, to coconuts traveling on ocean waves to find just the right deserted island to set down roots in.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dQIIcJZ68c> (6:02)

**4.33:** City Green **by DyAnne DiSalvo-Ryan (1994)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/city-green-dyanne-disalvo-ryan/1102256658?ean=9780688127862)“On the street where Marcy lives, there’s is a garbage-filled, vacant lot that saddens her because ‘this block looks like a big smile with one tooth missing.’ As spring arrives, Marcy gets an idea: what if she grew flowers here? Her neighbor Miss Rosa helps Marcy clean up the lot and plant seeds, and soon people on the street are coming to help. Even the cranky Old Man Hammer warms up to the new changes. DiSalvo-Ryan’s watercolor-and-pencil vignettes make the landscape come alive with the abundant rainbow of plants. This is a timely story about urban renewal and one girl’s determination to improve her community.”

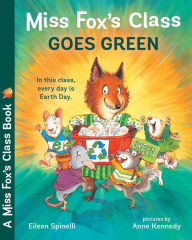
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wny3wrhC9mk> (11:49)

**4.34:** When Grandma Gives You a Lemon Tree **by Jamie L.B. Deenihan, author and Lorraine Rocha, illustrator (2019)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/when-grandma-gives-you-a-lemon-tree-jamie-lb-deenihan/1129245460?ean=9781454923817)“This charming tale, told in playfully instructive second-person prose, is a cheerful addition to any shelf. A little girl has thoughtfully distributed a detailed birthday list to all family members, so when Grandma arrives at the party bearing, of all things, a LEMON TREE, disappointment oozes from the vibrant page. The girl soon realizes, however, that growing something out of nothing can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Even better, the end result is, quite literally, LEMONADE (delicious recipe included)!”

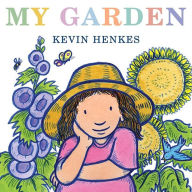
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGy2oeXVeUE> (3:48)

**4.35:** Miss Fox’s Class Goes Green **by Eileen Spinelli, author and Anne Kennedy, illustrator (2011)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/miss-foxs-class-goes-green-eileen-spinelli/1101038019?ean=9780807551677)“When Miss Fox rides a bike to school, her students assume her car got a flat tire. But no. Miss Fox tells her kids that she’s “going green” to cut down on pollution. Her class is excited to help heal the earth, too. Mouse takes shorter showers, Bunny brings her own bag to the grocery story, and Possum turns all the lights off when he’s leaving. Soon, the whole school notices all the changes, and everyone starts cycling to school, even the principal. Kennedy’s colorful watercolor and ink illustrations are a sweet bonus to the story.”

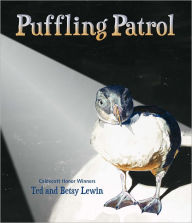
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-UNKPdwpTg> (7:08)

**4.36:** My Garden **by Kevin Henkes (2010)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/my-garden-kevin-henkes/1014996254?ean=9780061715174)“While this imaginative title, in which a young girl dreams of a garden in which anything that’s planted can grow, might not offer much factual information, it gets a high score for sowing seeds of enthusiasm. Case in point: after my then-toddler first heard this story, he excitedly planted a jellybean in hopes of growing a “jellybean tree.” He’s still checking for a sprout over a year later. If nothing else, he’s learned that gardening often involves waiting. Its cheerful hopefulness earns this book a perennial place on our shelves.”

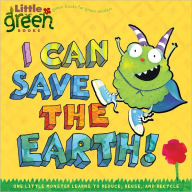
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTwIk5pgS4A> (3:29)

**4.37:** *Puffling Patrol* **by Ted and Betsy Lewin (2012)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/puffling-patrol-ted-lewin/1105946334?ean=9781600604249)“Many puffins make their homes on the rocky cliffs of an Icelandic Island, and each year the grown-up puffins fly away before their babies can join them. The little pufflings, as the babies are called, leave their cliff nests a few days later, but many get confused, and land on the roads instead of in the ocean. They can’t take off again, and are at risk from cars and predators. That’s when the island’s kids, who are members of the Puffling Patrol, spring in to action, and head out to rescue the stranded little birds! This book documents the island’s bird rescue efforts, focusing on a brother and sister who are members of the patrol. The illustrations are charming, and it’s heartening to see kids directly involved in saving the little pufflings.”

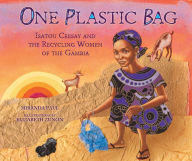
Seabirds by Ted Brown: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqAUUii44BU> (5:56)

**4.38:** *I Can Save the Earth!: One Little Monster Learns to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle* by Alison Inches, author and Viviana Garofoli, illustrator (2008)

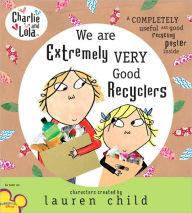
[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/i-can-save-the-earth-alison-inches/1112218185?ean=9781416967897)“In I Can Save the Earth!, Max the Little Monster is an environmental nightmare who leaves on all the lights, keeps his computer plugged in, blasts the TV, and uses so much toilet paper it clogs the toilet. When he causes a power outage, there’s no more TV to watch or computer games to play, so Max ventures outside where he finds a new big world.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mkwhe6LOBo> (5:13)

**4.39:** *One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* **by Miranda Paul, author and Elizabeth Zunon, illustrator (2015)**

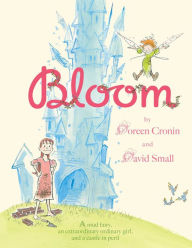
[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/one-plastic-bag-miranda-paul/1120221345?ean=9781467716086)“Isatou Ceesay didn’t give much thought to the torn and worthless plastic bags building up in her village in West Africa, until the bags started killing her family’s goats. The goats had been eating the bags and were being choked from the inside by the indigestible plastic. Isatou had an idea. She convinced other young women to tear the bags into strips, and from those they crocheted strong and pretty purses. Some laughed at them, but when the purses started to sell, the laughter ended. Today Isatou’s village is much cleaner, the goats are safe, and other Gambian women come there to learn how to recycle. The bright illustrations bring Isatou’s home to life, and the story will inspire young readers!”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B6p04Zph04> (11:37)

**4.40:** [](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/we-are-extremely-very-good-recyclers-lauren-child/1100475303?ean=9780803733350)*We are Extremely Very Good Recyclers***, characters created by Lauren Child, and Bridget Hurst, author (2009)** *Charlie & Lola Series*

“Lola loves keeping things, even broken, old useless things. But when Lola and her brother Charlie take a peek at the bedroom of their friend Marv’s big brother, Lola is appalled by the horror of its mess.  So Lola decides to throw her stuff away. Charlie suggests that she recycle things instead, because if everything were thrown away, piles of garbage would cover everything. Inspired, Lola enters a recycling competition to win her very own tree to plant. Realizing she can’t do it alone, she enlists her classmates, and soon all the kids are collecting recyclables and then rejoicing in the new tree they won for their school. It’s a great introduction to the reason why we should recycle, and though there’s not much detail about what actually can be recycled, it gets the point across very nicely within the framework of an engaging story.”

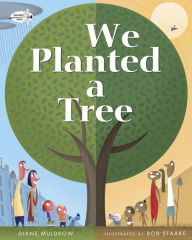
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDGt_jCAEs4> (6:09)

**4.41:** [](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/bloom-doreen-cronin/1122088231?ean=9781442406209)Bloom **by Doreen Cronin, author and David Small, illustrator (2016)**

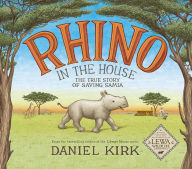
“This charming fable immediately introduces us to a Mud Fairy named Bloom, who possesses the extraordinary ability to transform weeds into flowers and sand into glass. She’s lithe and powerful, but she leaves dirt in her wake, which is an affront to the delicate citizens of her glass kingdom who cannot abide a mess. Underappreciated and disappointed, Bloom goes into seclusion, and it will take another extraordinary being to convince her to save the kingdom. Charmingly subversive, this layered narrative is an important read for all ages.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPCBrgtwr0w> (13:50)

**4.42:** We Planted a Tree **by Diane Muldrow, author and Bob Staake, illustrator (2010)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/we-planted-a-tree-diane-muldrow/1100168967?ean=9780553539035)“In a celebration of the outdoors both in our own backyard and beyond, We Planted A Tree journeys through the seasons. By exploring a tree’s growth in communities in Brooklyn, Tokyo, and the African savanna, the reader gets a sense of global community and oneness. It’s a big wide world, but something as simple as a tree is a commonality we can share.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__Ag4L5zy44> (4:52)

**4.43:** *[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/rhino-in-the-house-daniel-kirk/1124227159?ean=9781419723162)Rhino in the House: The Story of Saving Samia* **by Daniel Kirk (2017)**

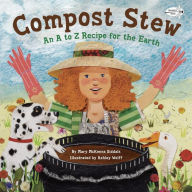
“This is the true story of a woman who adopted a baby rhino. Anna Merz was horrified by the slaughter of rhinos by poachers, and decided to take action. She was able to establish a wildlife sanctuary in Kenya, and when one of the baby rhinos born there was neglected by its mother, Anna took on the role of rhino mother herself. Samira the baby rhino loved and trusted Anna, but of course rhinos grow, and Anna eventually had to push Samira away so that she could find her own place in the wild. Samira is as cute a baby animal as you can imagine, and hers is a sweet and loving story that will make young readers care about conservation (and possibly ask for a baby rhino of their own…).”

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nt-WiAFsxXc> (2:50)

**4.44:** *The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever* **by H. Joseph Hopkins, author and Jill McElmurry, illustrator (2013)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-tree-lady-h-joseph-hopkins/1114307255?ean=9781442414020)“Kate Sessions was a girl who loved being outside with trees back, in the 1860s when girls weren’t supposed to get their hands dirty. But Kate did. And her love of nature became a love of learning, and she became the first woman to graduate with a degree in science from the University of California. When she moved to dry and dusty San Diego, she was unhappy to be living in a city with no trees. So, she did something about it, and became an expert in trees that could live in such an arid place, and convinced the city to help her plant them. Thanks directly to Kate’s work and all the volunteers who joined her, San Diego is now a greener place both literally and figuratively. The book tells Kate’s story in simple words, but highlights her determination beautifully!”

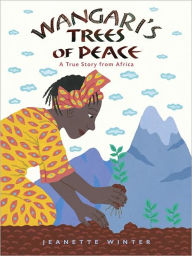
Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKCQfE4Ib4g> (6:08)

**4.45:** [](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/compost-stew-mary-mckenna-siddals/1017770813?ean=9780385755382)Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth **by Mary McKenna Siddals, author and Ashley Wolff, illustrator (2010)**

“What’s more fun than digging in the dirt? Making dirt! This alphabet book presents a simple and engaging rhyming ‘recipe’ for home composting. Children can quickly grasp which items can be composted and which can’t and can participate in every step of the process, from collecting materials, to turning the pile, to spreading the finished product in the garden. Enjoy this title together and then grab a pitchfork and start your own ‘compost stew.’”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQvzuIiEsB4> (4:14)

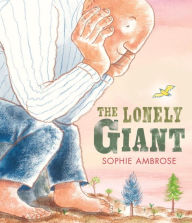
**4.46:** *Wangari’s Trees of Peace****: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter (2008)**

[](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/wangaris-trees-of-peace-jeanette-winter/1100302608?ean=9780152065454)“When Wangari was a little girl in Kenya, she lived surrounded by trees. But when she returned to her home in the countryside after being away at school for several years, she was horrified to see how few remained. And without the trees, life was harder and hotter. So Wangari decided to take action, and start planting. Other women joined her, and now the Green Belt Movement has planted more that 30 million trees. This accessible and enjoyable picture book is a great introduction to this inspiring woman, who went from planting nine trees in her backyard to winning the Nobel Peace Prize for her environmental activism.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08PbLwOtZJA> (4:28)

Wangari Maathai Tribute Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koMunNH1J3Y> (6:51)

**4.47:** *The Lonely Giant***, by Sophie Ambrose (2016)**

“A giant living in a forest spends his days pulling up trees and smashing mountains, just because that’s what he’s used to doing—he’s thoughtless; not greedy or deliberately destructive. But because of his actions, the creatures who live in the forest disappear as their home is destroyed, and the giant finds himself [](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-lonely-giant-sophie-ambrose/1123565405?ean=9780763682255)all alone. When he finds one last yellow bird, he captures her to be a friend, but in her cage she grows too sad to sing. The giant is moved by her sadness, and lets her go…and he realizes that if he wants birds to stay with him and sing, he must repair the damage he’s done, and he sets to work. Although the point is not subtle, it’s a sweetly effective story that is hopeful rather than depressing.”

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfaa-imElpI> (5:16)

# 4.48: *One Diverse Universe* by Phyllis Reid (2011)

# Amazon.com: One Diverse Universe eBook: Reid, Phyliss, Aguilar ...“One Diverse Universe offers from the tapestry of life woven in the universe around them, concepts of peace, unity, harmony and diversity to give wings to their minds. These concepts are tools they will need to navigate and thrive in their world tomorrow.”

**5.0: Music & Videos for Children (no resources identified)**

**6.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Children**

# *from Tapestry of Faith*

**6.1: Chalice Children: A Program about Our Unitarian Universalist Community for Preschoolers**

**6.1.1:** *Session 7: The Beauty of Nature*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session7>

“Participants will:

* Feel a sense of joy and appreciation for the beauty of nature
* Observe signs of the changing of the seasons
* Experience the mystery of growing things.”

**6.1.2:** *Session 36: Earth Day*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/chalicechildren/session36>

“Participants will:

* Learn about the holiday called Earth Day
* Internalize that part of being a Unitarian Universalist is to take care of the earth
* Make the connection between the animals and plants in nature and the efforts their congregation and families make to care for the earth.”

**6.2: Love Surrounds Us: A Program on the UU Principles and Beloved Community for Grades K-1**

**6.2.1:** *Session 14: Love Surrounds Us in Nature*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session14>

“Participants will:

* Learn that Unitarian Universalists believe we must show love to all living things by taking special care of the earth
* Understand the interdependence of all life, through a story in which one tree is important to the survival of many other living things
* Learn about the Amazon Rainforest, an endangered animal habitat.”

**6.2.2:** *Session 15: Caring for the Earth*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/lovesurrounds/session15>

“This session will:

* Introduce the Unitarian Universalist seventh Principle: We believe in caring for our planet Earth and every living thing that shares it with us
* Affirm that although people have damaged our world it is not too late for people to save it
* Develop understanding that we can show love for the earth by actively participating in planet-affirming activities.”

**6.3: Wonderful Welcome: A Program for Children Grades K-1**

**6.3.1:** *Session 10: The Gift of Protection*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/welcome/session10>

“Participants will:

* Learn how to take care of the Earth on a daily basis
* Spend time in mindfully in nature
* Understand ‘protection’ as an intangible gift they can give through their attitudes and actions on behalf of the Earth.”

**6.4: World of Wonder: A Program on the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism for Grades K-1**

**6.4.1:** *Session 1: The Web of Life*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session1>

“This session will:

* Introduce core concepts of this program and make the concept of the interdependent web concrete
* Demonstrate that we are all part of the web of life
* Teach the idea of unity contained within diversity
* Have participant make a gecko as a tangible reminder of the web of life”

**6.4.2:** *Session 2: Nature’s Partnerships*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session2>

“This session will:

* Introduce partnership as an important aspect of the interdependent web of life
* Demonstrate the complexity of relationships in the natural world
* Build trust and cooperation in the group
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.3:** *Session 3: Thanks Be for Trees!*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session3>

“This session will:

* Teach the importance of trees in our ecosystems and how trees grow and thrive in nature
* Foster a spiritual orientation of awe in relationship with the web of life
* Demonstrate the inspirational leadership of a child in India
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the Seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

**6.4.4:** *Session 4: Balance in Our Ecosystem*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session4>

“This session will:

* Introduce the critical role of balance in protecting the interdependent web of life
* Give concrete opportunities to experience balance and imbalance in an ecosystem
* Emphasize balance as a spiritual orientation which can guide how we interact with the Earth
* Empower participants as leaders within the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.5:** *Session 5: Habitats*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session5>

“This session will:

* Demonstrate the elements of support that people and other organisms need to live
* Evoke empathy for all members of the interdependent web of life
* Foster awe and appreciation for how habitats and ecosystems work
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.6:** *Session 6: Lifecycles*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session6>

“This session will:

* Lift up science as a Source in Unitarian Universalism, by teaching the changes that occur in the life cycles of butterflies and frogs
* Foster awe and wonder toward the process of metamorphosis
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.7:** *Session 7: Decomposition*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session7>

“This session will:

* Introduce decomposition’s role in the cycle of life
* Teach children how to compost with worms
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.8:** *Session 8: Life-Giving Plants*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session8>

“This session will:

* Introduce the concepts of abundance and diversity in the plant world
* Teach children how to plant seedlings and care for them
* Connect plant life’s abundance and diversity with creative expression, through a role play and learning ‘The Garden Song’
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.9:** *Session 11: Kindness in Nature*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session11>

“This session will:

* Demonstrate altruism in non-human parts of the web of life
* Foster empathy and a sense of connection with other living beings
* Encourage emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize their own and others’ feelings and to respond helpfully when someone is distressed
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.10:** *Session 12: Beauty in Nature*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session12>

“Participants will:

* Identify aspects of nature they find beautiful, and share with the group
* Learn how Canadian Unitarian artist and art educator Arthur Lismer noticed and responded to nature’s beauty
* Sharpen observation skills by becoming a “Nature Camera”
* Express nature’s beauty in a work of art”

**6.4.11:** *Session 13: Green Energy*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session13>

“Participants will:

* Learn definitions of energy and “green” energy
* Consider a “real-life” story about green energy and community problem solving
* Understand ways to conserve energy and demonstrate leadership by encouraging others to conserve as well
* Make pinwheels or bookmarks, as a reminder of wind power”

**6.4.12:** *Session 14: Enough Stuff*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session14>

“This session will:

* Foster an environmentalist ethic for refusing, in addition to reducing, reusing, and recycling by understanding the 5 Rs: refuse, reduce, re-use, recycle, and rot
* Explore the difference between needs and wants
* Consider a ‘no presents’ birthday party, by responding to a real-life story
* Make use of recycled materials in a creative project
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.13:** *Session 15: Working Together to Make a Difference*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session15>

“This session will:

* Foster an ethic of responsibility to take action to nurture and protect the web of life
* Engage participants in cooperative activities and demonstrate the power of working cooperatively with others
* Introduce the UUA’s Green Sanctuary program
* Empower participants as leaders in the group
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.4.14:** *Session 16: Using Our Senses of Wonder*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/wonder/session16>

“This session will:

* Engage participants’ senses of wonder and hone their observation skills
* Nurture a sense of responsibility for the interdependent web
* Reinforce the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

**6.5: Faithful Journeys: A Program about Pilgrimages of Faith in Action for Grades 2-3**

**6.5.1:** *Session 15: Protect the Earth*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/journeys/session15>

“Participants will:

* Connect Unitarian Universalism with actions that affirm human responsibility to protect the interdependent web of all life of which we are a part
* Identify with contemporary children who act in faith to help the environment
* Engage in environmentally responsible action by creating “Make a Difference” signs to display at home and in your congregation and/or making reusable cloth bags their families can use instead of plastic bags
* Identify actions they might take that would reflect the signpost “Protect the Earth”
* Name ways they did or could translate their Unitarian Universalist faith and/or Principles into action.”

**6.6: Love Will Guide Us: A Program for Grades 2-3 that Applies the Wisdom of the Six Sources to the Big Questions**

**6.6.1:** *Session 1: Love Is Like a Seed*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session1>

“Participants will:

* Learn chalice-lighting words and opening and closing songs to use in each session
* Learn about the Sources of our Unitarian Universalist beliefs
* Connect a story about the beginnings of the universe with our higher calling to love
* Portray love unfolding in the universe, by making a seed art project.”

**6.6.2:** *Love Will Guide Us, Grades 2-3*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session2>

“Participants will:

* Articulate the first Source of Unitarian Universalism in their own words
* Experience and express the awe and wonder of nature
* Replicate a soothing sound from nature by creating rain sticks.”

**6.6.3:** *Session 3: We Love to Discover*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session3>

“Participants will:

* Identify the fifth Source of Unitarian Universalism
* Practice using reason to find answers
* Explore how science helps us research and understand our world
* Consider the theory of evolution and how it relates to facts and beliefs.”

**6.6.4:** *Session 11: Love and Gratitude*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/loveguide/session11>

“Participants will:

* Learn about the sixth Unitarian Universalist source, “The harmony of nature and the sacred circle of life,” through a story about the winter solstice in which children express their gratitude to the sun.
* Experience and articulate emotional and physical feelings that accompany a focus on gratitude
* Appreciate the gifts we receive from nature’s cycles and rhythms, and embrace our responsibility to care for the Earth just as the Earth cares for us
* Practice saying thank-you meaningfully to one another, in a gratitude circle.”

**6.7: Sing to the Power: A Social Justice Program for Children Grades 4-5**

**6.7.1:** *Session 1: The Power of Earth*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session1>

“Participants will:

* Learn the Sing to the Power theme song and Opening and Closing rituals
* Discover ways everyone is grounded in their own life and location
* Discover connections that tie people together
* Understand the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water) by creating a graphic representation
* Articulate that power has many forms, and that each of us can choose to exercise many kinds of power.”

**6.7.2:** *Session 3: The Power of Growth*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session3>

“Participants will:

* Respond to a story about a man who is transforming his economically depressed Detroit neighborhood with a community garden
* Explore the sources of their own food and consider the impact of locally versus globally produced food
* Experience tangible connection to earth, through planting herb seeds in clay pots
* Appreciate how their gifts can connect them to others
* Understand that there are many kinds of growth, from the literal growth of plants to the growth of one’s identity as a leader and the growth of community through joint action.”

**6.7.3:** *Session 11: The Power of Action*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session11>

“Participants will:

* Learn how Bill McKibben founded 350.org to combat climate change, and how 350.org has engaged people around the world, including many Unitarian Universalists
* Experience the inspiration of others’ actions to solve a shared problem
* Explore alternative energy sources, by making a solar-powered oven or using wind power to move a penny
* Identify ways they and their friends can take action to combat climate change.”

**6.7.4:** *Session 13: The Power of Water*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session13>

“Participants will:

* Discover how solutions to problems can often be found using indirect routes and flexibility, two attributes of water power
* Consider the scientific story of how the Grand Canyon was formed by the action of the Colorado River
* Explore processes of working cooperatively for mutually beneficial solutions as a form of water power.”

**6.7.5:** *Session 15: The Power of Gathering*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session15>

“Participants will:

* Learn about the California UU Legislative Ministry’s Water Justice Tours which engage young people in protecting clean water
* Gather knowledge about where their own water comes from and local issues related to conservation and water protection
* Brainstorm ways to carry forward the knowledge they have gathered, and advocate for water conservation and protection by decorating and distributing reusable water bottles.”

**6.7.6:** *Session 16: The Power to Make Change*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/children/sing/session16>

“Participants will:

* Respond to expressions of elemental power in the Hopi story of the Four Creations
* Honor earth power through a ritual of naming where they are from
* Honor fire power through a ritual of burning paper with words that describe obstacles which prevent their becoming leaders for positive change
* Honor air power through a meditation on breath
* Honor water power through a ritual in which they pledge to create positive change
* Experience affirmation of their ability to be leaders in using their own elemental powers for positive change.”

**6.8: Miracles: A Multigenerational Program on Living in Awe and Wonder**

**6.8.1:** *Session 1: Naming Miracles*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-1>

“Participants will:

* Begin to define “miracle”
* Understand that defining the miraculous is a subjective activity
* Consider ideas of how the Earth came to be.
* Learn the subjective nature of miracles through creation stories.”

**6.8.2:** *Session 3: The Miracle of Transformation*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-3>

“Participants will:

* Practice discernment as to what they believe is a “miracle” as they share their own experiences of “miracle moments”
* Create and observe changes of state (gas, liquid, solid) through a number of experiments
* Identify and consider the variety of transformations—some magical, some natural, and some by human agency—in a folk tale from Korea
* Appreciate the miracle of transformation and life cycles in the natural, physical world
* Optional: Share the miracle of transformation with the congregation by planning and implementing a Transformation Station project.”

**6.8.3:** *Session 7: Miracles We Can Make*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/miracles/session-7>

Participants will:

* Understand human causes and global effects of climate change
* Investigate and imagine the future of our planet
* Consider the human potential for miracle-making with regard to our planet’s future
* Commit to actions to take within the congregation and beyond.

**6.9: Gather the Spirit: A Multigenerational Program about Stewardship**

**6.9.1:** *Workshop 1: Gather the Spirit*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop1>

“Participants will:

* Become familiar with the rituals of Gather the Spirit
* Experience the power of joined group by making rain and beginning a mural
* Hear a water-based creation story from the Navajo tradition
* Consider big questions concerning human community and water
* Express in art and action the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, respect for the web of all existence
* Explore ways to steward Earth’s water resources.”

**6.9.2:** *Workshop 2: Gather in Sympathy*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop2>

“Participants will:

* Experience wanting to drink water when no clean water is available
* Understand the human role in water pollution and human potential to clean and protect our shared waters
* Consider who their neighbor is and what their responsibilities are
* Understand that upriver acts have downriver consequences
* Hear a story from the Masai people of Kenya
* See water as central to the full web of life
* Explore Unitarian Universalist stewardship of water resources.”

**6.9.3:** *Workshop 3: Separate Fires, Kindle One Flame*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop3>

“Participants will:

* Explore the outdoor area near their meeting with attention to how creatures appear and disappear into the care and holding of their environment
* Explore why caring for plant life is important
* Learn what contributions plant make to the environment.”

**6.9.4:** *Workshop 4: Conscience Refined*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop4>

“Participants will:

* Reflect on abundance and lack of clean water in two meditations
* Understand the global scarcity of clean, drinkable water
* Learn that sanitation is a critical factor in community health and how toilets ensure clean, healthy water
* Discover water conservation at home and fundraising for communities which lack clean water abroad as two strategies we can use to promote for global sanitation and clean water equity.”

**6.9.5:** *Workshop 5: Chorus of Life Resounding as One*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop5>

“Participants will:

* Imagine the relationship two different children, in different parts of the world, have with the water they use
* Consider what it means to claim ownership of water—a resource all life needs
* Understand how human boundaries and claims of ownership affect equitable sharing of this common global resource.”

**6.9.6:** *Workshop 7: Gather in Thanks*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop7>

“Participants will:

* Explore generosity and gratitude in song
* Experience their own gratitude and capacity for generosity in the context of water resources
* Understand that Unitarian Universalism calls us to express both gratitude and generosity through stewardship and social action
* Consider a story from the Muslim tradition that illustrates how we can express our gratitude through generosity to others.”

**6.9.7:** *Workshop 8: Gather to Celebrate*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/gather/workshop8>

“Participants will:

* Experience how working together advances a shared goal
* Hear a contemporary story of social action and water stewardship;
* Learn about activist, musician and Unitarian Universalist Pete Seeger
* Consider how boating affects water resources
* Commit to specific actions to conserve water, protect water resources and/or promote equitable sharing of Earth’s water
* Optional: Explore the relationship of seeds and water resources.”

**6.10: Wisdom from the Hebrew Scriptures: A Multigenerational Program**

**6.10.1:** *Workshop 8: Creation*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/hebrewscriptures/workshop8>

“Participants will:

* Explore the first Genesis story of Creation in the context in which it was written
* Respond to the text
* Explore contemporary implications of this story and consider its wisdom for their lives and the world
* Connect with people of all ages and be enriched by a variety of perspectives.”

**6.11: Circle of Trees: A Multigenerational Program about Nourishing Deep Connections with Nature**

**6.11.1:** *Workshop 2: Trees: Providers of Life*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop2>

“Participants will:

* Understand the fundamental importance of trees through the story “You’re Saved by Something Green”
* Reinforce their knowledge of the benefits of trees by playing “Tree Jeopardy”
* Build on their understanding of and respect for trees through multiple modes of learning, including movement, meditation, and song
* Experience multigenerational learning.”

**6.11.2:** *Workshop 3: Trees: Connected to All Life*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop3>

“This workshop will:

* Further understanding of how trees impact all creatures and plants in the web of life
* Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”
* Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.”

**6.11.3:** *Workshop 5: Trees: From Peril to Progress*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop5>

“This workshop will:

* Show how one person’s actions to combat climate change can make a difference
* Encourage participants to take personal actions and work with others to address climate change
* Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”
* Affirm stewardship of the earth as an explicit act of faith.”

**6.11.4:** *Workshop 6: Council Among the Trees, Part 1*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop6>

“This workshop will:

* Introduce a ritual that fosters a deep connection between participants and trees
* Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part”
* Affirm stewardship of the earth as an explicit act of faith.”

**6.11.5:** *Workshop 7: Council Among the Trees, Part 2*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop7>

“This workshop will:

* Foster a deep connection between participants and trees by completing a ritual
* Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part’
* Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.”

**6.11.6:** *Workshop 8: Come Be With Trees*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/multigenerational/trees/workshop8>

“This workshop will:

* Celebrate the completion of the Circle of Trees program
* Share the story of Wangari Maathai
* Honor the relationships developed over the program, among participants and with trees and the web of life
* Reinforce the concept of interdependence as expressed in the seventh Unitarian Universalist Principle, ‘Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part’
* Affirm that stewardship of the earth is an explicit act of faith.”

# *from Other Sources*

# 6.12: *Big Myth Project* by Fiona Passantino (25 creation myths)

# This website features 25 myths: Navajo, Iroquois, Aztec, Hawaiian, Voudon, Mayan, Inca, Mapuche, Norse, Celtic, Greek, Babylonian, Sumerian, Egyptian, Dogon, Old Testament, Yoruba, Zulu, Hindu, Chinese, Japanese, Ceram, Aboriginal, and Maori. In addition to animated videos, the text of the creation stories is also provided, along with other resources.

# Website: <http://www.bigmyth.com/> and <http://www.bigmyth.com/2_eng_myths.html>

# 6.13: *In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Around the World* by Carolyn North, adapter) and Adrienne Robinson, illustrator) (2010)

# In the Beginning: Creation Myths from Around the World - Kindle ... IN THE BEGINNING: CREATION MYTHS FROM AROUND THE WORLD is a beautifully illustrated and informative collection of creation stories from 15 cultures, using indigenous sources. These stories demonstrate that creation is ongoing, everywhere and always, and that all of us are creators all of the time. This engaging book of images and stories is ultimately about creativity in all its forms. Originally an exhibition, IN THE BEGINNING has appeared in museums, galleries, churches, and schools in several U.S. cities. An audio version of the book, in which the myths are read by Amy Walker, is available from Findhorn Press.

**6.14:** *In the Beginning: Creation Stories from Around the World* by Virginia Hamilton, author and Barry Moser, illustrator (1991)

# Amazon.com: In the Beginning: Creation Stories from Around the ...A thought-provoking collection of twenty-five stories that reflect the wonder and glory of the origins of the world and humankind. With commentary by the author.

# 6.15: *Evolutionary Curricula for Children and Youth* by Connie Barlow

# from her work with Michael Dowd

# Website: <http://www.thegreatstory.org/kids.html>

**Resources for Youth & Adults**

**7.0: Reflections, Readings, Stories & Poetry**

**7.1:** *The Dreaming* byClive Barker (86 words)

I dreamed I spoke in another’s language,  
I dreamed I lived in another’s skin,  
I dreamed I was my own beloved,  
I dreamed I was a tiger’s kin.

I dreamed that Eden lived inside me,  
And when I breathed a garden came,  
I dreamed I knew all of Creation,  
I dreamed I knew the Creator’s name.

I dreamed—and this dream was the finest—  
That all I dreamed was real and true,  
And we would live in joy forever,  
You in me, and me in you.

Source: <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/10764-i-dreamed-i-spoke-in-another-s-language-i-dreamed-i>

**7.2:** *Not “My” Bread* by Matthew Fox (258 word)

…Meister Eckhart warns: “Bread is given to us so that not only we might eat but that we recognize others in need, lest anyone say ‘my bread’ is given to me instead of understanding that it is ours, given to me, to others through me and to me through others.” Here we have a beautiful summation of what the law of interdependence, the basis of what all compassion is about: an awareness of how energy flows to *others through me*—…Furthermore, the gifts themselves—the bread—are not *mine* but *ours.* The same holds for *all things which are necessary for sustaining this present life*—whether land or water, air or food, oil or rain, sunshine or laughter. *All things… are given to us with others and because of others and given to others in us.* Gifts exist for the sake of all of us, for we all are one and all in need. But our response is to be one of giving and of doing justice in order to see this sharing accomplished. It is not done by inheritance alone. We are not born into a world of justice and compassion, of *we,* not *I*. When we fail to act against injustice we are, in fact, busy stealing others' food, others' necessities. We are part of the problem of injustice instead of the healing that justice brings. Whoever does not give to another what belongs to the other, such a one does not eat his own bread but eats the bread of another along with his own.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/view/2261/passion-for-creation>

**7.3:** *A Habit of Beauty* by Matthew Fox (256 words)

Ernesto Cardenal says that we can argue about the reason for the universe and the meaning of the universe but not about the *beauty* of the universe. Annie Dillard comments that “unless all ages and races . . . have been deluded by the same mass hypnotist (who?), there seems to be such a thing as beauty, as grace wholly gratuitous." We all share beauty. It strikes us indiscriminately. It may be when our child was born into this world; or a simple flower; or a song; or a smile on a face; or a great act of courage; or a dance well done; or a child's laugh; or a loaf of bread baking; or finding a worthy job; or a snowfall; or to his or her Source. There is no end to beauty for the person who is aware. Even the cracks between the sidewalk contain geometric patterns of amazing beauty. If we take pictures of them and blow up the photographs, we realize we walk on beauty every day, even when things seem ugly around us.

…Because beauty is a habit of the universe, it is essential that humans be about the good work of showering one another with beauty, and of bringing out the beauty of one another. Not to do this is to obstruct the universe's intention. Injustice, it seems to me, is always ugly. What is just is beautiful and brings back the beautiful to what was broken. All works of healing are works of making beauty, and all beauty heals.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/14056>

**7.4:** *In Place of More, Simplicity* by Kent Nerburn (230 words)

Where does it come from, this strange unquenchable human urge for “more” that is both our blessing and our curse? It has caused us to lift our eyes to the heavens and thread together pieces of the universe until we can glimpse a shadow of the divine creation. Yet to gain this knowledge, we have sometimes lost the mystery of a cloud, the beauty of a garden, the joy of a single step.  
 We must learn to value the small as well as the great. [...]  
 Confucius told his followers, “Bring peace to the old, have trust in your friends, and cherish the young.”

Do we really need much more than this? To honor the dawn. To visit a garden. To talk to a friend. To contemplate a cloud. To cherish a meal. To bow our heads before the mystery of the day. Are these not enough?  
 The world we shape is the world we touch — with our words, our actions, our dreams.  
If we should be so lucky as to touch the lives of many, so be it. But if our lot is no more than the setting of a table, or the tending of a garden, or showing in a child a path in a wood, our lives are no less worthy.  
 …Sometimes, it seems, we ask too much. Sometimes we forget that the small graces are enough.

Source: <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2259>

**7.5:** *Every Seed Carries a Secret* by Angela Fischer (260 words)

Every seed carries a secret.

We will never come to fully know this secret, because it belongs to the mystery of creation. Yet we can …live with the secrets, …use them as gifts, and …honor them as a source of life on this planet.

The first step in learning to live with a secret is to listen.

When I was a young child, my mother gave me a seed of a bean. She showed me how to plant it into a pot filled with black soil and how to keep it warm and moist. And then I had to wait.

For a young child this took a very long time. Every morning I would visit my seed, invisible in the darkness of the soil, and because I could not see anything, I remember that instead I tried to hear something. It was around the same time that my mother was pregnant, and I used to put my ear to her belly to communicate with the baby I could not see or touch. So, I did the same with the invisible seed: I put my ears close to the soil and listened. I do not remember if I ever heard something, but I remember the listening.

…The seed is a symbol for the deepest mystery of creation, and at the same time it is the mystery. For thousands of years farmers have known how to listen to these mysteries, and so found ways how to grow and to harvest….

This goes back to …ancient …wisdom about the connection with the Earth….

Source: <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2127>

**7.6:** *Down the Drain* by Robert Kinloch Massie, Jr. (164 words)

…I went to Toronto, where I spent the weekend with a religious community called L'Arche. At L'Arche, able-bodied persons live in community with severely disabled persons as a witness to Christian love. …I stayed on the third floor of one of their houses. When I went into the bathroom, I noticed that the faucet was dripping. I could tell that it had been dripping for months or even for years, because where the water struck the sink, all the enamel had been worn away. There was a large ugly black circle of cast-iron, which was rusting without its protective coating.

I put a container under the drip to measure how much water was passing through. The leak filled a cup every three minutes. That's five quarts an hour. That means that every day they were losing thirty gallons of fresh spring water which they pumped from an underwater aquifer. Over a year they had lost eleven thousand gallons down the drain: drip, drip, drip.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/28547>

**7.7:** *The Mystery of the Other* by Maggie Ross (150 words)

What we have most in common with the creation and other people is otherness: the mysterious otherness of the deep mind, the mysterious otherness of other people, and the mysterious otherness of creation. It is through otherness that we share the common center of the circle that is everywhere. This otherness calls forth from us a reverence, a humility and respect, an awe before our self, one another, and the creation that turns our gaze away from the comparisons of difference and finally relinquishes even the seductive metaphors of difference. Our most profound commonality with our selves, with each other, with the creation, is not affected by what we can know, but by what we cannot know. Our communion is engagement with the mystery of otherness, our own, that of other people, the creation as a whole of which we are a part, and the mysterious Other beyond all knowing.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/28091>

**7.8:** *Let There Be Light* by Wayne Dosick (248 word)

But consider the candle.

…The lighting of the Sabbath candles can be a sublime moment, …a moment of supreme holiness.

For lighting the Shabbas candles can be our weekly connection to God, the Creator, and to the exact moment of creation.

The Sabbath prayers tell us that Shabbas is zecher l'ma'aseh v'rasheet, a “remembrance of the act of creation.” …

And what was God's very first act of creation? The Bible reports, “God said, "Let there be light.”

…Light is the symbol of God in us. …

…In that tiny second when we light the flickering flame of the Shabbas candle, we instantly transport ourselves backward through time; we connect ourselves and merge with that original primordial moment of creation.

…We renew creation in our time and place.

…To heighten the sense of seeing, …recite [these] words …as you light your candles.

“On this night / we see the world / in a new light.  
 On this night / we add a new spirit / to our lives.  
 On this night / we taste / a new time of peace.  
 We rest / from desire for gain, ambition for things.  
 We raise our eyes / to look beyond time and space / toward eternity.  
 We / come to see the world / in a new light.  
 Let a new light shine upon us / and may it be our blessing / to see its splendor.”

Consider the candle. …Open your eyes and see. Close your eyes and see.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/21648>

**7.9:** *Seed Power* by Robert Lawlor (250 words)

The earth holds an infinite profusion of seeds. Seeds contain forms and worlds yet to germinate; the roots, leaves, and flowers of the entire plant are invisibly enclosed in the seed. Paradoxically, the unborn potential of future life is fused, within a seed, to primordial patterns that were laid down in the very beginning.

…This image of the earth with its seeds is comparable to Carl Jung's description of humanity's collective unconscious: both hold the entire heritage of primal patterns that are continually reborn through nature's seasons. Like seeds, myths, ideas, and images are dispersed throughout the world on the winds of thought, the waters of emotion, and the fires of passion.

The Australian Aborigines speak of jiva or guruwari, a 'seed power' deposited in the earth. In the Aboriginal world view, every meaningful activity, event, or life process that occurs at a particular place leaves behind a vibrational residue in the earth, as plants leave an image of themselves as seeds. The shape of the land—its mountains, rocks, riverbeds, and waterholes—and its unseen vibrations echo the events that brought that place into creation. Everything in the natural world is a symbolic footprint of the metaphysical beings whose actions created our world. …The potency of an earthly location is wedded to the memory of its origin. The Aborigines called this …the 'Dreaming'…, and this Dreaming constitutes the sacredness of the earth. Only in extraordinary states of consciousness can one be aware of… the inner dreaming of the earth.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/21800>

**7.10:** *I Awaken Before Dawn* by Helen Moore (297 words)

I awaken before dawn, go into the kitchen and fix a cup of tea.  
I light the candle and sit in its glow on the meditation cushion.  
Taking my cup in both hands, I …give thanks.  
The feel of the cup against my palms brings the potter to mind  
and I offer a blessing for his hands.  
 I give thanks for the clay, the glaze and the kiln.  
I take a sip and follow the warmth into my body.  
I offer a blessing for those who brought electricity to my home,  
who dug the ditches for the lines,  
who built my home and put in the wires,  
who made my tea kettle and brought me water to fill it.  
 I take a sip and bless the people in India or China who grew the tea,  
cultivated it, picked and dried the leaves, took it to market,  
handled it through the many transactions to bring it to my home.  
I take a sip and bless those people in Florida, California or Central America  
who grew the tree that blossomed into flowers.  
 I give thanks for the warmth of the sun and the rain which turned the blossoms into lemons,  
and I bless the hands that picked the fruit, sorted it, touched it as it traveled from the orchard to my table.  
I take another sip and bless the hands of those who provided the sugar  
which sweetened the tea, harvested the cane, processed it,  
bagged it and sent it on its way to me.  
 I take another sip and lift my cup in gratitude as I feel the interconnection of my body now with theirs,  
my blood now with theirs,  
my bones now with theirs,  
and my heart fills with love for all of creation.  
 I give thanks.

Source: <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=2129>

**7.11:** *Creation Meditation* by Neil Douglas-Klotz (258 words)

…This “original meditation” focuses on the creation of the universe and the archetype of the first human. It seeks to bring the energy and power of this “beginning time” directly into our hearts and lives, so that we can experience its creative, life-giving power unfolding as our own personal story.

…This original meditation lies behind the awe and wonder of Christians at the rebirth of the Christ child…. It fuels the intense, heartfelt hope that Jews experience …at Rosh Hashana. It roots the devotion of Muslims each year during the fast of Ramadan…. These are all celebrations of hope, not fear; of love, not hate. By experiencing the creation story as our own personal story, we have the same opportunity to recreate and renew ourselves, as our ancestors did, and to find a deeper connection with the divine in our everyday lives.

…The original meditation of many early Christians, and possibly Jesus himself, was not primarily on an apocalyptic or cataclysmic ending. Instead it focused on the life-affirming, love-filled, creative beginning described in Genesis and the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus was not looking for the proverbial “Apocalypse Now!” to bring history crashing to a close. Instead he tried to reorient his listeners to the power of divine creation through the experience of “Genesis Now!”

…I believe that the actual practice of this meditation can …cultivate a sense of wholeness as opposed to separation. …It can affirm a radically different view of life in a world that looks to save its ecosystem and rediscover an authentic connection to the sacred.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/14105>

**7.12:** *Between the Mountain and the Ant* by Oren Lyons, Oneida chief (64 words)

I do not see a delegation

For the Four-footed.  
I see no seat for the eagles.  
 We forget and we consider  
Ourselves superior.  
 But we are after all  
A mere part of the Creation.  
….And we must consider  
To understand where we are.  
 And we stand somewhere between  
The mountain and the Ant.  
 Somewhere and only there  
As part and parcel  
Of the Creation.

Source: from an address of the Non-Governmental Organizations of the United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, 1977

**7.13:** *Creation, Maintenance and Destruction* by Deepak Chopra (251 words)

There are three forces pervading all of life: creation, maintenance, and destruction. All three are present in the life span of cells, stars, trees, planets, and galaxies, since every form must come into being, be maintained, and pass away. Even though each life span unfolds in a sequence over time, the three forces themselves exist simultaneously. The genes of every species include the code for creating new cells, maintaining each cell for a certain time, and destroying it to make way for another generation of tissue. This three-in-one intelligence is what you are trying to affect when you consciously shape your life; it is up to you which aspect—creation, maintenance, or destruction—is most dominant. Because you have the power to shift the balance of forces, you are above and beyond them.

As long as creation dominates your existence, you will keep growing and evolving. Evolution thwarts entropy, decay, and aging. The most creative people …[share] …certain traits….

1. They are able to contact and enjoy silence.
2. They connect with and enjoy Nature.
3. They trust their feelings.
4. They can remain centered and function amid confusion and chaos.
5. They are childlike—they enjoy fantasy and play.
6. They self-refer: They place the highest trust in their own consciousness
7. They are not rigidly attached to any point of view: Although passionately committed to their creativity, they remain open to new possibilities.

These seven points give us a practical standard to measure how creatively our lives are proceeding.

Source: <https://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=426>

**7:14:** *Creation’s Iris* by Brother David Steindl-Rast (257 words)

Irises are not just flowers to me; they are friends. They are sisters to me from way back in my father's garden, when I had to stretch and stand on tiptoe to smell them, for they were taller than me. …The iris awakened me to beauty then, and still does today.

In seven decades, the lure of these fanciful blossoms has not diminished for me…. I look and look and lose myself in this looking. Time stands still when I stand before an iris. Time is no more. All is now. And in this now, the iris comes forth from 'the no of all nothing' as an ever-so-delicate, ever-so-real “Yes!” All of Van Gogh's irises are summed up and surpassed in this single one, moving ever so slightly in the morning breeze.

When this happens, I have long left my thoughts far behind. …This iris springs forth: now and now and now it leaps from nonbeing into being — together with the firethorn bush behind it, with the rail fence, with the sky and its towering cloud, together with myself. With every breath I can say, “I am.” With every heartbeat I can affirm being out of nonbeing. Suddenly I understand what John Cage wrote: “Each something is a celebration of the nothing that supports it.”

Does this find an echo in your heart before you start to figure out what precisely it means? I personally put my faith in the process of continuous creation that this line implies. I trust that process; I entrust myself to it.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/20077>

**7.15:** *In Darkness* by Paul Coutinho (252 words)

Life begins in darkness and ends in darkness. In the beginning, there was only darkness. According to the Bible and according to science, it is from this darkness, emptiness, and nothingness that all of creation comes into being. Darkness is a mystery; it evokes curiosity and fear of the unknown, and at the same time it brings us into the embrace of reality. This reality is all around us, pregnant with the existential truths of life.

As the sacred story states, 'The earth was empty and without form and darkness covered the face of the deep.' Out of this darkness God commanded the revelation of light. This light was not the sun or the moon but light that came from within the darkness. This light is an integral and essential part of the darkness. That darkness at the heart of creation has its counterpart in the darkness living at the core of each of us.

In the dark moments and struggles of our lives, we often realize the beauty and the power that lie deep within us. This darkness sheds light on our external world and helps us not only cope with, but also live effectively and more fully in, the painful situations of our lives. This light comes from the darkness at our core. This light — the light within the dark cave of our being — draws us back to the very source of life. There is comfort, there is peace, and there is power in the dark cave of our being….

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/22884>

**7.16:***Creation’s Divine Immanence* by Anselm Grun and Leonardo Boff (250 words)

…The Creator and creatures are clearly distinct from each other; they also permeate each other and are permanently in community. …Christian theology has coined an expression…: the perichoresis of God and the world. The term perichoresis conveys that the Creator and creation permeate each other in such a way that the divine transcendence is not only strengthened regarding creation’s immanence, but so that each is always present in the other while not being identical with the other.

…This is what modern theologians have called panentheism. Philologically, this term is composed of the following: pan (“everything”); en (“in”); theos (“God”); literally means “everything is in God, and God is in everything.” …Panentheism differs fundamentally from pantheism, which does not distinguish between Creator and creation but regards them as identical. …This is …a philosophical error, for then there would only be identity without any kind of distinction.

Panentheism …emphasizes the distinction. One is not identical with the other. Rather, it stresses the close, mutual relationship that allows for the coexistence and living together of different creatures united in love in a relationship without a divide that separates them….

…The great North American physicist David Bohm …became a mystic…. Concerning the presence of God in the universe, Bohm liked to quote the short poem of the English poet and mystic William Blake…: “To see a world in a grain of sand / And a heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/ And eternity in an hour.”

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/28536>

**7.17:** *The Earth Within Us* by Valerie Andrews (252 words)

…When I was seven, I roamed the hillsides and the meadows, aware that the world around me was engaged in an endless cycle of renewal. I went to my birch grove, certain that the land would accept all my loves and disappointments and receive my childhood joys and tragedies as it received all other living things. It was the earth that gave me my first sense of communion and I felt that my best, my truest self was connected to a few square miles of land.

When I was twelve, my family moved from the country to the crowded suburbs of New Jersey, and I felt we had done the unforgiveable…. There were no more rose bushes or rows of irises and hollyhocks. I could no longer pick apples from our yard or run down the road to get fresh eggs from the neighbor's farm.

Years later, I realized that the land is always with us. The world as we first knew it remains imprinted on the body and the brain like tiny fossils embedded in a piece of shale. As a child, one has that magical capacity… to see the land as an animal does; to experience the sky from the perspective of a flower or a bee; to feel the earth quiver and breathe beneath us; to know a hundred different smells of mud and listen un-self-consciously to the soughing of the trees. …The whole earth lives within us, and in every moment, we are both its creators and discoverers.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/25235>

**7.18:** *Earth’ Sacredness Revealed* by Barry Lopez (124 words)

Whatever evaluation we finally make of a stretch of land, however, no matter how profound or accurate, we will find it inadequate. The land retains an identity of its own, still deeper and more subtle than we can know. Our obligation toward it then becomes simple: to approach with an uncalculating mind, with an attitude of regard. To try to sense the range and variety of its expression — its weather and colors and animals. To intend from the beginning to preserve some of the mystery within it as a kind of wisdom to be experienced, not questioned. And to be alert for its openings, for that moment when something sacred reveals itself within the mundane, and you know the land knows you are there.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/23982>

**7.19:** *Dark Green Religion* by Bron Taylor (256 words)

Dark green religion …is unnamed and has no institutions officially devoted to its promotion; no single sacred text that its devotees can plant in hotel rooms in hopes of reaping a future harvest of souls; no identified religious hierarchy or charismatic figure responsible for spreading the faith, ministering to the faithful, or practicing its rituals.

…It can be found in the minds and hearts of individuals who invent and are drawn to organizations that express its central convictions and moral commitments. It has charismatic figures and bureaucratic hierarchies devoted to its globalization. It is reinforced and spread through artistic forms that often resemble, and are sometimes explicitly designed, as religious rituals.

…Dark green religion—religion that considers nature to be sacred, imbued with intrinsic value, and worthy of reverent care—has been spreading rapidly around the world. I label such religion 'dark' not only to emphasize the depth of its consideration for nature (a deep shade of green concern) but also to suggest that such religion may have a shadow side—it might mislead and deceive; it could even precipitate or exacerbate violence.

Whether beneficent, dangerous, or both, such religion is becoming increasingly important in global environmental politics. It motivates a wide array of individuals and movements that are engaged in some of the most trenchant environment-related struggles of our time. It increasingly shapes the worldviews and practices of grassroots social activists and the world's intelligentsia. It is already important in global environmental politics. It may even inspire the emergence of a global, civic, earth religion.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/19659>

**7.20:** *The Dignity of the Creation* by Leonardo Boff (257 words)

We are not the focal point of creation. We are not, as it were, its landlord, adopting the attitude of Adam, who gave all things their names and thus possessed them. We are here to serve as shepherds and custodians of other beings, and we are responsible for their integrity.

…Men and women …are not the final purpose. There is no fixed central point, since all beings can be a center. What does exist is an equilibrium between life and death and an interplay of relationships embracing all beings…. We all exist thanks to others, with others, and through others. Together we make up the biosphere as a great integrated and integrating whole.

…We have to accept the otherness of all that exists in creation. …All beings, especially living beings, deserve to be accepted and even respected in their otherness. No one has the right to seize and destroy what the vast process of evolution has spent thousands of years in producing. Everything that exists and lives has the right to exist and live.

…Only human beings can bless this otherness, live freely with it, or wickedly destroy it. This is what grounds our ethical responsibility. The environment has its rights, and there is such a thing as ecological justice. Everything has the right to continue to exist, within the ecological balance. This right produces a corresponding duty in human beings to preserve and defend the existence of every being in creation. Today we call this the dignity of the earth (*dignitas terrae*), seen as a whole.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/14211>

**7.21:** *Making Amends with Creation* by Farley Mowat (249 words)

When our forebears commenced their exploitation of this continent, they believed its animate resources were infinite and inexhaustible. The vulnerability of the living fabric that clothes the world—the intricacy and fragility of its all-too-finite parts—was beyond their comprehension. …They were mostly ignorant of the inevitable results of their dreadful depredations.

We who are alive today can claim no such exculpation for our biocidal actions and their dire consequences. Modern humanity now has every opportunity to be aware of the complexity and interrelationships of the living world. If ignorance is to serve now as an excuse, then it can only be willful, murderous ignorance.

The hideous results of five centuries of death dealing on this continent are not to be… [denied], but there are at least some indications that we …are developing the will, and the conscience, to look beyond our own immediate gratification and desires. Belatedly, some part of humankind is trying to rejoin the community of living beings from which we have for so long been alienating ourselves—and of which we have for so long been the mortal enemy.

…My own hopes for a revival and continuance of life on Earth now turn to this newfound resolution to reassert our indivisibility with life, recognize the obligations incumbent upon us as the most powerful and deadly species ever to exist, and begin making amends for the havoc we have wrought. If we preserve in this new way, we may succeed in making humans humane …at last.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/21103>

**7.22:** *To Know and Be Known by Nature* by F. Lynne Bachleda (255 words)

Thoreau declared, “In wildness is the preservation of the world.” I believe that in wildness is the preservation of the soul. …We need to seek out a renewal of our spirits from the …source. Nature alone has always been regarded by all peoples as an authentic cache of the Holy.

John Burroughs …commented on the great availability of companionship that Nature offers. Her door is always open, her treasures, and often her terrors, on display. Nature unfailingly responds to our overtures in surprising and expected ways that can comfort, startle, amuse, charm, and challenge us.

…The miracle comes not when sought, but when least expected…. To know and be known by Nature requires nothing more and nothing less than spending time with her as we would a cherished friend—listening, looking, revealing, laughing, crying, and praying together.

The journey with Nature …is like her seasons, a cyclical process of ongoing renewal.

Sit on the step at sun's rise and drink your coffee. Circuit the backyard, the far pasture, or the beach to see the night's offerings. Take a walk in the city park with a friendly dog, or a friend who loves dogs. Sit by the lake with a lover, enchanted by reflected possibilities. Hike the paths that whisper a thrill. Languish in the grassy field, sunshine's magnetic sponge. Sit by the camp fire and merge into dreamtime. Bike sloshing creeks and fragrant pine paths. Paddle the river's roar or float on its glass. Trek to the summit's Marian blue vista, breathe, and wind down.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/25233>

**7.23:** *Falling in Love with the Earth* by Joyce Rupp (254 words)

When was the moment I fell in love with you, nurturing and elegant mother?

Was it when fresh dew danced on the cheeks of ripened cherries, or when the silent sentinel of Mt. Fuji smiled long at me?

Was it when I stooped down to admire little faces of pansies, or when the perfume of lavender lilacs sailed into my soul?

Was it when I tasted the tomatoes from the vegetable garden, or swallowed black raspberries from the wilderness bush?

Was it when I drank freely from an unpolluted stream, or when I canoed across the clear water of Lake Caribou?

Was it when I swam with dolphins in the Atlantic's waves, or when I listened to the steady laughter of a bubbling creek?

Was it when I looked in awe at the rainbow in Kauai's cleft, or when I sat under the scrub oak listening to mountain rain?

Was it when I felt the first snowflake melt upon my eyelashes, or when I walked aimlessly amid the musty autumn leaves?

Was it when I planted daffodil bulbs and pressed them in black soil, or when I touched the smoothness of an ancient stone?

O Gaia, each experience has drawn me to you, one and all have anchored me in your beauty.

All of my days, replete with your bounty.

All of my life, a savoring of your elegance.

All of my nurturing, suckled from your sources.

All of my love, astounded at your goodness.

All of my journey, one great moment of unity.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/25188>

**7.24:** *Reverence for Mother Earth* by Charles Cummings (255 words)

I remember the first time I visited the Grand Canyon in Arizona. I had seen pictures of it, but these were no preparation for the overpowering experience of being there, walking slowly toward the unfenced rim, seeing the solid earth end in a sudden void almost a mile deep and ten miles across, stretching further than I could see to right and left. After an involuntary gasp at the vastness of the canyon, I was struck by the stillness of the whole panorama. …The proper response was not words but silence. I felt dumb and dwarfed in the presence of something so immense, so primordial. I felt the same reverence I feel in a sacred place at a sacred moment. The Grand Canyon evokes that sort of reverence. It is a place of tremendous majesty.

…The reverence that people spontaneously feel at places like the Grand Canyon is the attitude we need to cultivate toward the entire earth. Eco-spirituality honors the earth. We walk the earth with humility and reverence, not with the arrogant air of an insensitive landlord.

…Our physical environment forms us in obvious as well as subtle ways. We are shaped by the landscape and imbued with the spirit of the place where we live.

…It is because the earth shapes and nurtures us that the earth is our mother. People rightly associate the earth with maternal qualities of fruitfulness, growth, creativity, protection, healing, guidance, beneficence. Mother earth deserves a loving reverence similar to that which we show to our human mothers.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/25237>

**7.25:** *Learn to Love the Dirt* by William Bryant Logan (255 words)

The soil is all of the earth that is really ours. The seasons, with their heat and their cold make the soil. The storms make the soil, with water, the most powerful substance on Earth. The winds make the soil, spreading dust across thousands of miles. The tides make the soil, stirring the river deltas and their fertile slimes. And above all, the trees and the plants, the dead and the digested, the eaters and the eaten, make the soil.

…Dirt is the gift of each to all. It is not so grand in appearance as even the muddiest shale. An ancient soil may be no more than half a million years old, piddling compared to any rock. …The soil is so young and fragile compared to stones. But youth and fragility are fruitful.

Soil appears where life does, and its characteristic is to build where erosion destroys. On the face of a stone a lichen takes hold. …A club moss roots in …compost, lives, and dies. …Grass seeds blow in, grass grows.

It is the nature of soil to build aggregates: plates or blocks or chunks, full of air and water channels. Gardeners in fact know their soils first and foremost by the size of the particles and the kinds of aggregates they build.

…We spend our lives hurrying away from the real, as though it were deadly to us. 'It must be somewhere up there on the horizon,' we think. And all the time it is in the soil, right beneath our feet.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/25187>

**7.26:** *We Are the Earth* by [Amanda McConnell](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Amanda&author_last=McConnell), [David Suzuki](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=David&author_last=Suzuki), and [Maria DeCambra](https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/search?author_first=Maria&author_last=DeCambra) (258 words)

Aboriginal people are right; we *are* the Earth….

…We are water in the most obvious ways. More than half the weight of every human being on Earth is water. …Water is the glue that holds life together. But …we deliberately release toxic materials into water and therefore …ourselves.

We are also air. If the planet were reduced to the size of a basketball, the atmosphere would be thinner than a sheet of plastic wrap. …We must breathe every minute of our lives. There is no boundary between air and ourselves. …Air is …a physical substance that …links us with trees and birds and worms and snakes that share that air. …What intelligent creature …would deliberately release the most toxic compounds into that air? …

We are fire because energy makes all life possible, and every bit of that energy was once sunlight. All the energy we need …came from the Sun through photosynthesis. But we take far more than our fair share of the Sun's gift to Earth, and our profligate use of fossil fuels …is imperiling our own future.

We are earth because every bit of nutrition that we consume to create our bodies and minds was once living and almost all of it came from the soil. …Why, then, do we knowingly use soil for dumping our toxic effluents, as if they won't affect us?

These sacred elements—water, air, sunlight, and soil—are basic to us as biological beings. They ought to be treasured beyond price, celebrated and cherished, and fiercely protected at all costs.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/14094>

**7.27:** *Extinction* by Richard Pearson (255 words)

Only about one in a thousand of the species that have ever existed on Earth are still alive today. We can't possibly know the proportion precisely, but the fossil record reveals that the vast majority of life forms …are long gone. The fossil record also reveals that many species went extinct during cataclysmic events scattered sporadically throughout Earth's history. Most famously, 65 million years ago something—most likely a massive meteorite smashing into the Earth—drove the dinosaurs to extinction, and there have been at least five other mass extinction events over the last 600 million years….

…After each catastrophic event, it took evolution at least 10 million years to rebuild the former levels of diversity. …The species alive today—however many millions there may be—are irreplaceable. …The current diversity of life is all we will ever have.

…Climate clearly has a fundamentally important influence on nature, with species having adapted to live under certain conditions. For instance, emperor penguins have evolved a thick layer of blubber under their feathers to enable them to withstand some of the coldest temperatures on Earth, while their relatives, the Galapagos penguins, have been on an evolutionary diet to shed the insulation and survive in hot, equatorial climates.

…But these are extreme examples of how the climate affects species—differences between climates don't need to be so dramatic for us to see variation in species. Throughout nature, subtle differences in the climate have a major impact on the plants and animals that are found in a particular area.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/21456>

**7.28:** *Ark-Builders* by Scott Russell Sanders (252 words)

Ark-builders realize …that nothing is gained by creating refuges in one place, if we behave in a way that contributes to the despoiling of land somewhere else. If we're going to build arks, we should do everything we can to avoid swelling the flood.

…The ark-builders understand the link between consumption and devastation: the more we consume—of gasoline, junk food, clothing, containers, electronic toys — the more the planet must be mined, bulldozed, clear-cut, and paved. Recognizing this, the ark-builders don't identify themselves as consumers but as conservers. Their aim in life is not to devour as much stuff as possible, but to savor the necessities of life. …The ark-builders don't rush from one sensation to the next, as the media propose, but instead they relish the pleasures of an unhurried pace.

…None of this would have seemed strange to our grandparents. Thrift is normal; it is what sensible people have always practiced in every land.

…By protecting wild land, they are helping to preserve the biological heritage — the seed stock, the diversity of species, the intricate web of fertility — that we will need to replenish the earth after the flood recedes. By living simply, by meeting more and more of their own needs from local and renewable sources, they are conserving the skills, knowledge, and values that our descendants will need in order to live decent lives without impoverishing the planet. By forming alternative communities, they are creating islands of sanity and integrity from which a new civilization may spread.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/18985>

**7.29:** *Trees May Save Us* by Jean Shinoda Bolen (265 words)

The tree is a powerful symbol. Trees appear in many creation stories, such as the World Ash or the Garden of Eden. Religions, especially the Druids, have revered trees. Buddha was enlightened sitting under a Bodhi tree. …There are sacred trees throughout the world.

…To learn about trees is to appreciate them as a species. Beliefs about sacred trees and symbols of them have been part of many religions, and turned trees into casualties of religious conflicts. The unintended consequences of cutting down all the trees on Easter Island were disastrous, with applicable parallels to the fate of the planet. In Kenya, the Green Belt Movement engaged rural women to plant trees. When this became known through honoring the founder, Wangari Maathai, thirty million trees had been planted and, in 2004, she became the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

…I learned that we wouldn't be here at all—we, the mammals and humans on this planet—if not for trees. Whether huge forests or a single specimen that is one of the oldest living things on Earth, trees continue to be cut down by corporations or individuals motivated by greed or poverty, who are ignorant of or indifferent to the consequences or meaning of what they do. I learned that reforestation was the difference between cultures that stayed in place and thrived, and those that cut down the trees and did not: these are very applicable object lessons for humanity now. It's possible to learn from past history and see what will befall us or how trees may save us.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/21063>

**7.30:** *Walking with Reverent Feet* by Chet Raymo(230 words)

Of course, no one person has the time, knowledge, or skill to learn everything about a landscape, so in my walks I have relied upon the labors of generations of botanists, ornithologists, zoologists, geologists, ecologists, meteorologists, astronomers, cultural historians, and a host of other specialists who have studied with particular care some feature of the natural world. Whenever possible, I queried people I met along the way: the old people who grew up in the landscape, who knew it in its former incarnations, who watched it change; and the children, who still have the capacity to see everything afresh and to see things the rest of us might miss.

…In my daily rambles along the path, I have been inspired by a famous observer of the Irish landscape, the early-20th century naturalist Robert Lloyd Praeger, who walked over all of Ireland “with reverent feet, …stopping often, watching closely, listening carefully.” …Tim Robinson, another close observer of the Irish landscape, defines something he calls the “adequate step,” a step worthy of the landscape it traverses. The adequate step takes note…. It …includes the consciousness of the walker. And even all of that …is not enough. No step, or series of steps, can ever be fully adequate.

… Step by step, year by year, the landscape I traverse became deeper, richer, more multidimensional, always overflowing the mind that sought to contain it.

Source: <https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/books/reviews/excerpts/view/1397>

**8.0: Curriculum & Theme-Based Classroom Activities for Youth & Adults**

***Youth***

**A Tapestry of Faith**

**8.1: Exploring Our Values Through Poetry: A Program for High School Youth**

**8.1.1:** *Workshop 3: Keenly Observing Nature*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/poetry/workshop3>

“This workshop will:

* Engage youth in reading and discussing a poem about nature
* Use poetry as a way to experience and think about the natural world and our relationship to it
* Guide participants to observe the natural world
* Utilize the participants’ sensory experiences to create poetry
* Optional: Give participants an opportunity to gift their community with a butterfly garden
* Optional: Expose participants to music about nature”

**8.2: Virtue Ethics: An Ethical Development Program for High School Youth**

**8.2.1:** *Workshop 6: Responsibility*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/virtueethics/workshop6>

“This workshop will:

* Examine the meaning of responsibility
* Explore scenarios in which people’s not taking responsibility causes problems
* Guide youth to identify themselves as responsible people.
* Explore a story about the ban on plastic bags in Zanzibar.”

***Adults***

**8.3: Spirit of Life: An Adult Program on Unitarian Universalist Spirituality**

**8.3.1:** *Workshop 4: Blow In the Wind, Rise In The Sea: Nature And Spirit*

Link: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/life/workshop4>

“Participants will:

* Reflect on the interdependent web of all existence
* Identify spiritual experiences they have had in relation to the natural world
* Relate their understandings of the natural world to their spirituality
* Optional: Create a ritual in praise of the natural world.”

**9.0: Popular Music**

**9.1:** *Morning Has Broken* by Cat Stevens (3:16)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0TInLOJuUM>

**9.2:** *Gaia* by James Taylor (5:31)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynttgx6lNL4>

**9.3:** *Blue Boat Home* by Peter Mayer (4:02)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhsXl1_rEwI>

**9.4:** *Everything is Holy Now* by Peter Mayer (4:55)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiypaURysz4>

**9.5:** *Human You* by Peter Mayer (4:17)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMypU9Mn54A>

**9.6:** *The Play* by Peter Mayer (5:13)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADl_q5u9dlU>

**9.7:** *John’s Garden* by Peter Mayer (5:31)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKgbmnPfZpo>

**9.8:** *One More Circle* by Peter Mayer (4:25)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksd0ACUvGdo>

**9.9:** *Awake* by Peter Mayer (3:59)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1dkIBNOBPo>

**9.10:** *God is a River* by Peter Mayer (3:58)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5a6zK6Sn4o>

**9.11:** *All the World is One* by Peter Mayer (3:46)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-ESaQz2IxI>

**9.12:** *Ordinary Day* by Peter Mayer (4:12)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4Bxb1bxXCE>

**9.13:** *Church of the Earth* by Peter Mayer (5:00)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SDiFxcLmDs>

**9.14:** *The Garden* by Peter Mayer (3:46)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iKXFAGRc1w>

**9.15:** *Running with the Buffalo* by Peter Mayer (4:30)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7r0gc715Uq4>

**9.16:** *O Sun* by Peter Mayer (3:20)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6U1yhpN7hE>

**9.17:** *Ocean Mary* by Peter Mayer (4:08)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVny6DpdGuw>

**9.18:** *Winter Woods* by Peter Mayer (5:00)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nowLqfjOrVk>

**9.19:** *Coming Home* by Peter Mayer (3:48)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0JEjtl-U1w>

**9.20:** *Earth Town Square* by Peter Mayer (4:15)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YeMrVQ9xHHA>

**9.21:** *Like a Mountain* by Peter Mayer (4:40)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbuyweye1gU>

**9.22:** *Fall* by Peter Mayer (3:01)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rQMMDpwjCs>

**9.23:** *Africa* by Peter Mayer (6:23)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-01F9XWqt4>

**9.24:** *World of Dreams* by Peter Mayer (4:23)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feSvUWtqof8>

**9.25:** *Camping by the Sun* by Peter Mayer (4:34)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y7WTfQo4DoU>

**9.26:** *The String* by Peter Mayer (4:37)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Pn7nZ3zX-8>

**9.27:** *Hawk and Whale* by Peter Mayer (5:08)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpbpN6kCXKA>

**9.28:** *The Rainbow* by Peter Mayer (3:58)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HX7qwoMX-4>

**9.29:** *After the Gold Rush* (Live at Farm Aid 1998) by Neil Young (4:02)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOMaqe0LOmo>

**9.30:** *Mother Nature’s Son* (Remastered 2009) by The Beatles (2:48)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMMiXjwhODU>

**9.31:** *Saltwater* by Julian Lennon (1991) (4:08)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ql1EnjVYrZM>

**9.32:** *Song for a Dying Planet* by Joe Walsh (1:54)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRcqkHwuqaM>

**9.33:** *Mercy, Mercy Me* (The Ecology) by Marvin Gaye (3:17)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtlV0j0uGaA>

**9.34:** *Big Yellow Taxi* by Counting Crows with Vanessa Carlton (3:46)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvtJPs8IDgU>

**9.35:** *Coming Down* (with Peter Gabriel “Down to Earth”) by The Soweto Gospel Choir (4:43)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVfp--syPX8>

**9.36:** *Seventh Sunrise* by Michael Card (4:18)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhlXLzmKgYY>

**9.37:** *Creation* by Burning Spear (2:12)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UaFB_m9X2A>

**9.38:** *Never Turn Your Back On Mother Earth* by the Sparks (2:09)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haf5s0b--zw>

**9.39:** *Last Great American Whale* by Lou Reed (3:46)

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTlsSXNT2bg>

**9.40:** *Be the Rain* by Neil Young & Crazy Horse (10:32)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzSr0GpUeEk>

**9.41:** *S.O.S. (Mother Nature)* by Will.I.Am (5:55)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMdQBRjDOD0>

**9.42:** *Out in the Country* by Three Dog Night (3:19)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3gGn6t8Bog>

**9.43:** *Earth Song* by Sara Noxx & Project Pitchfork (6:56)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5v5p4RAh-s>

**9.44:** *Wake Up America* by Miley Cyrus (2:43)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNEZp8BWGEU>

**9.45:** *Homeward Through The Haze* by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young (1974) (4:22)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY5uZPVKves>

**9.46:** *Hungry Planet* by The Byrds (5:01)

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEK5a08T8Gs>

**10.0: Videos, Short Films, Movie Clips,** **Audio Recordings & Photography**

**10.1:** *Earth* by OneHome (5:17)

Today, the word “Earth” is our common intention while watching the Earth from our home. Earth is our “one” home, the home of all living creatures. For millions of years, humans have lived with the impression that our planet was infinite. With the beginning of the space age, we all visually discovered that the Earth is finite and what planetary boundaries meant. We also discovered the incredible beauty of our planet and how lucky we all are to be here. To preserve life on Earth, we now need to adapt our individual and collective behavior. Time has come to become a planetary species.

This video is made from real pictures of our planet taken on April 5th 2020 by a NASA satellite located one million miles away. HD OneHome video available on [onehome.org](http://www.onehome.org/).

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/404718428>

**10.2:** *Earth* by Alfred Estcourt (2:16)

Carl Sagan speaking about the pale blue dot.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/233693167>

**10.3:** *Amazing Planet Earth - beautiful earth* by Paris Anderson (6:00)

Beautifully edited piece from the BBC series "Planet Earth" presented by AllsiteCafe.com, [allsitecafe.com](http://www.allsitecafe.com/)

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/84555436>

**10.4:** *Earth* by Rio 2020 (1:26)

Beautiful footage involving water with music.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/318502085>

**10.5:** *Creation* by Micah Dudash (3:19)

Combines time-lapses and scenery filmed in Montana, Idaho, Alberta (Kootenay National Park, Yoho National Park, Banff National Park), and Vermont. Birth footage is from the birth of the filmmaker’s son, Aron Leif, on November 21, 2013.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/118715607>

**10.6:** *The Human Impact on this Earth* by Wave of Change (5:34)

Just as a disclaimer, I made this video when I was 13. When I talked about Mother Earth being mad, I more so meant that part metaphorically. I didn't mean that disasters are a cause of human activity, I meant beyond that, of how we are treating our earth, and the limited time we will have left if we continue to do so - our own self destruction. But looking back, this video is also a bit sadder than I had hoped - I wanted it to be factual through imagery, then inspiring at the end, as I think uplifting people is much more important. Anyways, thank you everyone for all the great responses to this video (: I can't tell you how honored I felt when I heard this was playing in classes at schools and colleges around the nation! Keep spreading the awareness. We all live in such a beautiful world, and humans really are beautiful souls with such great potential, we just have to reawaken to who we are, ridding ourselves of ignorance. The more truth we see, the more we can do to change our ways into more productive habits. And it really all does begin with caring. First about ourselves, then other people, then the world. Even though we cannot take on the responsibility of the entire earth, we can take personal responsibility; pledge to our Earth, and everything on it. LOVE, LIGHT, LIFE. HOPE AND HAPPINESS TO ALL! Music: Mad World (feat. Gary Jules) by Michael Andrews and Sigh No More (BBC Live Session) by Mumford & Sons

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zyizEz9XUs>

**10.7:** *Creation Shortfilm* by Mariano Gila (3:16)

Contrasts the power and beauty of creation with human destructiveness*.*

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/19878789>

**10.8:** *Illustrated Sequence: Creation* by Cody Sorgenfrey (0:20)

Sequence of still images related to creation.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/320307392>

**10.9:** *Creation* by Robert Drozdz (1:27)

Beyond time, in the infinite void there was a stick. The stick manifested inner potential. As it was drifting through vacuum, it was gathering power. When the time came, stick gained enough power. Then, the stick decided to adopt a new form. With the help of the vibration of light and forces of the void, the shape of the creature was taken. When the creature became aware of itself, it took the name, “Woody.”

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/110233938>

**10.10:** *Creation* by Camille Van Zadelhoff (1:37)

This second IB art project is an abstract video on the creation of life. I would like to thank Caribbean Filmcom for helping me with this project. Music: Time by Hans Zimmer.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/83028300>

**10.11:** *Creation* by Jens Blank (1:14)

Tells the story of the creation by means of an evolving symbol.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/1448225>

**10.12:** *Creation Speaks* by Danny Whatley (4:28)

A song suggesting a relationship with creation.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/81299321>

# 10.13: *Earth* by Johannes Gerard (3:42)

Earth is a collaborated work between dancer Hsin-Ying Tsai (Taiwan) and artist Johannes Gérard (Germany/Netherlands). The dance performance in Earth is part of the project Silent Crossing Boundaries. Earth is about the closeness of the place where we are from and influenced our identity. The place we call home. But the desire to leave this place for new pastures. Then, when we reach the new shores, it may happen after a while that the longing for the place where we came again arise. But earth also means at the same time is an important element of life, giving as well steadiness, but nevertheless it also displays our borders and transience.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/116013143>

# 10.14: *Katie Paterson: Earth-Moon-Earth* by Jupiter Artland (2:51)

# Earth-Moon-Earth (E.M.E) is a form of radio transmission whereby messages are sent in morse code from Earth, reflected from the surface of the moon, and then received back on Earth. The moon reflects only part of the information back - some is absorbed in the shadows or lost amongst the surface of the moon. The resulting score is played on a pianola and repeats the subtle flaws and changes absorbed in the transmission.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/104617947>

**10.15:** *Earth* by Jochem Drost (1:01)

A short video of the earth revolving in space.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/11239915>

**10.16:** *Earth to Earth—Aurora Borealis* by Adam Buick (1:55)

This is the final section of the Earth to Earth project capturing the aurora borealis. Shot on 24th October 2011. Location: Carn Treliwyd, Pembrokeshire, Wales - 51° 54 N 5° 16 W. Aspect: Looking North East towards Strumble Head along the North Pembrokeshire coast.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/35736375>

**10.17:** *Earth* by Tyler Mansmith (3:48)

Experimental short/music video for "Earth" by Stormchaser. Get the album "Ozymandias" for free: [stormchaserchicago.bandcamp.com/album/ozymandias](https://stormchaserchicago.bandcamp.com/album/ozymandias)

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/143372434>

**10.18:** *Save the World* | Short Film Showcase by National Geographic (4:23)

As the human population continues to grow, so does our impact on the environment. In fact, recent research has shown that three-quarters of Earth’s land surface is under pressure from human activity. In this short film, spoken word artist Prince Ea makes a powerful case for protecting the planet and challenges the human race to create a sustainable future. Winner of the Film4Climate competition organized by the Connect4Climate Program of the World Bank

Video Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-nEYsyRlYo>

***Ted Talks***

**10.19:** *Let’s Make the World Wide Again* by Kristine Tompkins (15:53)

Earth, humanity and nature are inextricably interconnected. To restore us all back to health, we need to "rewild" the world, says environmental activist Kristine Tompkins. Tracing her life from Patagonia CEO to passionate conservationist, she shares how she has helped to establish national parks across millions of acres of land (and sea) in South America -- and discusses the critical role we all have to play to heal the planet. "We have a common destiny," she says. "We can flourish or we can suffer, but we're going to be doing it together."

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/kristine_tompkins_let_s_make_the_world_wild_again>

**10.20:** *A Brief Tour of the Last Four Billion Years* (dinosaurs not included) by Lauren Sallan (6:24)

In this hilarious, whirlwind tour of the last four billion years of evolution, paleontologist and TED Fellow Lauren Sallan introduces us to some of the wildly diverse animals that roamed the prehistoric planet (from sharks with wings to galloping crocodiles and long-necked rhinos) and shows why paleontology is about way more than dinosaurs.

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/lauren_sallan_a_brief_tour_of_the_last_4_billion_years_dinosaurs_not_included#t-111668>

**10.21:** *Nature is Everywhere—We Just Need to Learn to See It* by Emma Marris (15:13)

How do you define "nature?" If we define it as that which is untouched by humans, then we won't have any left, says environmental writer Emma Marris. She urges us to consider a new definition of nature -- one that includes not only pristine wilderness but also the untended patches of plants growing in urban spaces -- and encourages us to bring our children out to touch and tinker with it, so that one day they might love and protect it.

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/emma_marris_nature_is_everywhere_we_just_need_to_learn_to_see_it?language=en>

**10.22:** *The Story of Life in Photographs* by Frans Lanting (16:05)

In this stunning slideshow, celebrated nature photographer Frans Lanting presents The LIFE Project, a poetic collection of photographs that tell the story of our planet, from its eruptive beginnings to its present diversity. Soundtrack by Philip Glass.

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/frans_lanting_the_story_of_life_in_photographs?language=en>

**10.23:** *A Wide-Angle View of Fragile Earth* by Yann Arthus-Bertrand (14:27)

In this image-filled talk, Yann Arthus-Bertrand displays his three most recent projects on humanity and our habitat -- stunning aerial photographs in his series "The Earth From Above," personal interviews from around the globe featured in his web project "6 billion Others," and his soon-to-be-released movie, "Home," which documents human impact on the environment through breathtaking video.

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/talks/yann_arthus_bertrand_a_wide_angle_view_of_fragile_earth?language=en>

**10.24:** *TED-Talk Playlist: Earth Appreciated* (12 Talks)

Our planet is a wonder, a perfectly improbable incubator for life. It’s also in danger because of our indifference. Reflections on both those truths.

Video Link: <https://www.ted.com/playlists/151/earth_appreciated>