

Inspiring 'Keepers of the Earth': Literacy Resources

Book One: Keepers of the Earth

Keepers of the Earth Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children Written by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac, Foreword by N. Scott Momaday, Illustrations by John Kashionhes Fadden and Carol Wood		
Age Recommendation: All ages	Genre Classification: Multigenere Non-fiction Informational Folk Stories Poetry	Key Words: Story Native American oral tradition Myths
Mentor Text - Reading Strategies: Questioning, Visualizing, and Determining Importance		Mentor Text - Writer's Craft: Ideas; the message and its meaning
Students partake into an enduring understanding of the Earth rooted in respect and understanding for the environment surrounding them solely taught from Indigenous traditions. An educator's instructional guide, the book includes indigenous stories, guides, activities, suggestions for discussions, and information on Indigenous culture, both historical and contemporary.		
https://www.fulcrumbooks.com/product-page/keepers-of-the-earth		

Book Two: *The Day the River Caught Fire*

The Day the River Caught Fire by Barry Wittenstein illustrated by Jessie Hartland		
Age Recommendation: K-3rd	Genre Classification: Narrative Nonfiction Historical Picture Book	Key Words: Cuyahoga River Indigenous peoples Factories Concoction "Ho Hum"
Mentor Text - Reading Strategies: Questioning, Drawing Inferences		Mentor Text - Writer's Craft: Voice
The focus of the book is situated in telling the story of how Earth Day awareness and celebration came to be by focusing on the burning of the Cuyahoga River in Ohio. Taking us through a telling of the pivotal historical event in 1969, the author engages us in a narrative of descriptive and enticing language that jumps off the page as we learn about what caused the fire, what the river was once like when Indigenous peoples took care of it, and the consequential events that sparked worldwide awareness of the human impact on our environment. As we are taken through the story, the author also prompts readers to question the situation "Why can't we have progress <i>and</i> a clean environment?" (pg. 14) and gives space for drawing inferences about what bigger forces are causing environmental degradation (<i>such as capitalism</i>). Finally the narrator leaves children to think about ways they can get involved and what happens when we take change.		
https://www.onedogwoof.com/		

Book Three: Planting the Trees of Kenya

<i>Planting the Trees of Kenya</i> Written and Illustrated by Claire A. Nivola		
Age Recommendation: K-3rd	Genre Classification: Biography Storytelling Picture Book	Key Words: Kenya Fig trees Sacred Nuns Plantations Topsoil
Mentor Text - Reading Strategies: Determine Importance		Mentor Text - Writer's Craft: Ideas
In this biographical picture book, we follow the story of Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental and women's rights activist, on her journey of founding the Green Belt Movement; which would later plant over 40 million trees in Kenya and become one of the most influential grassroots non-governmental organizations fighting deforestation. "As Wangari Maathai tells it" we are first introduced to Kenya as "clothed in its dress of green"(pg 1). The readers are given a profound sense of regard for the trees as Wangari tells us about the sacredness and beauty of the land. She sets off to Kansas where she will spend five years studying biology and be inspired to make the world beyond herself, a better place. When she returns to Kenya, the landscape has changed; crops and deforestation have overrun the land. Wangari inspires the women around her to see that we are the problem and we can also be the solution. She teaches them how to plant and take care of the land, forming a community of women who will not wait for the government or education to create change. The readers are left with a powerful image depicting the vast number of people and trees that have left Kenya greener.		
https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374399184/plantingthetreesofkenya		

Book Four: Kids Fight Plastic

<i>Kids Fight Plastic</i> Written by martin, Illustrated by Tim Wesson		
Age Recommendation: 3rd-6th	Genre Classification: Informational Text Graphic Novel	Key Words: Plastic Biodegradable Waste Recycle
Mentor Text - Reading Strategies: Visualizing, Taking Action		Mentor Text - Writer's Craft: Presentation
Inspired from the #2minutebeachclean campaign, this graphic novel engages readers to 'become a superhero'. A plastic fighting superhero that is! Readers are given context as to why fighting plastic is important including the history and its effects on various parts of the earth and are then encouraged to take on missions! Each mission earns you points and is jam packed with instructions for reducing plastic waste in accessible ways. Missions include fighting plastics in your backpack, closet, toilet, kitchen, the supermarket, backpack.		
https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/653753/kids-fight-plastic-how-to-be-a-2minutesuperhero-by-martin-dorey-illustrated-by-tim-wesson/		

Book Five: The Planet We Call Home

<i>The Planet We Call Home</i> Written by Aimee Isaac, Illustrated by Jaime Kim.		
Age Recommendation: K-2	Genre Classification: Picture Book	Key Words: Swells Meandering Stream
Mentor Text - Reading Strategies: Making Connections, Questioning		Mentor Text - Writer's Craft: Sentence Fluency
The author opens the text by introducing the Earth, "the planet we call home" setting a tone for care for the Earth. With intentional care for rhythm and flow, the book describes all parts of the earth, including the mountains, streams, and sun in a song-like text; this lends the text to be particularly engaging and accessible for early elementary grades. Children are explicitly present throughout the illustrations enjoying the Earth's wonders through farming, swimming, hiking, and seashell searching. As the story moves along, the author situates children in an active role of peoples who cherish the Earth, study the ocean, speak in the town, and splash in the stream.		
https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/670569/the-planet-we-call-home-by-aimee-isaac-illustrated-by-jaime-kim/		