Introduction to Love & Respect

Respecting Nature

Objectives/Aims
The students will learn to distinguish between behaviors that show respect for nature and those that do not show respect for nature.

Materials
none

Illustration
Wow! The boy is taking time to throw away the wrapper. He must care a lot about the...

Background
To quote Albert Schweitzer, “Anyone who has accustomed himself to regard the life of any living creature as worthless is in danger of arriving also at the idea of worthless human lives.” It has been shown that when children do not respect animals (nature), they tend to not respect themselves or others. Conversely, when children become attuned to nature, they grow both in self-acceptance and in reaching outside of themselves to others; they even become aware that there is something greater than themselves.

Group Activity
1. Tell the students that you are going to go around the classroom and do some things that show respect for nature and some things that do not show respect for nature. Whenever they see you doing something that is harmful to nature, they need to hold up their hands with their index fingers crossed. This makes an X showing that this is a destructive behavior that needs to be stopped. If they see you doing something beneficial to nature, they need to give the ‘thumbs up’ sign. After each vote, call on a student to explain why this behavior is either constructive or destructive for nature.

2. Here are some possible examples to either pantomime or actually do:
   a. Throw rocks at a duck.
   b. Throw litter on the ground.
   c. Shoot songbirds with a BB gun.
   d. Pour water in a birdbath.
   e. Plant a tree.
   f. Poach an animal taking only the head and leaving the rest of the carcass to rot.
   g. Fill in a marsh.
   h. Build a birdhouse.
   i. Throw junk into a creek.
   j. Use an insecticide, such as DDT, that harms wildlife.
   k. Constantly throw things out, and then buy brand new things.
Variations/Extensions
1. Ask if there are some students that would like to take your place and demonstrate either constructive or destructive behavior towards the environment.

2. You can also extend this activity into the ‘man-made environment’ because the things people make are created from resources found in nature. It is also showing respect for others and their work.

Conclusion
Say, “Astronauts that have viewed Earth from space comment that it is not only beautiful, but it also seems so very small, unique and fragile. As far as we know, Earth is the only planet in our solar system that supports life. We need to take very good care of it, because it is our one and only home.”

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