



I'm a nature custodian!

Curriculum Idea: It is important to have respect for the environment all around us. This includes caring for plants and animals, conserving water and energy, and recycling.

Related Episodes: Down in the Dumps, World Tree Day

Ages: 4-6

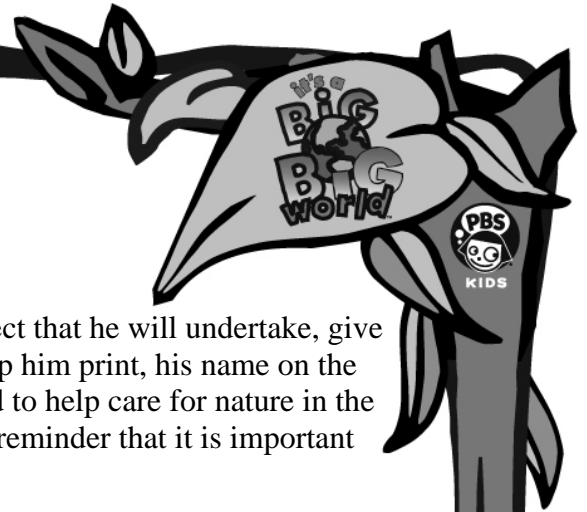
Subject: Ecology

Skills: Art, Categorization, Communication, Comparison, Critical thinking, Observation, Planning

Materials: Copy of Nature Custodian certificate (below), crayons/markers/pencils (additional materials depend on activity selected)

Directions: Tell your child that he can be a custodian of nature just like the animals in the World Tree! Discuss what the word custodian means in terms of someone who cares for something. (He may associate that word with another name for a janitor. Explain that a school or church custodian takes care of that building just like a nature custodian cares for the environment.)

Then, take a walk through your neighborhood and talk about how it is important to care for our environment. Point out things that you see that are examples of people being good custodians of nature (such as a recycling bin) or not being good custodians of nature (such as flowers that have been trampled on or litter). Together, look for something that your child can do to become a custodian of nature. With your help, he could plant flowers or a tree and care for them, pick up litter in your neighborhood or in the forest, water or prune grass or plants that need it, gather leaves or dead branches that have fallen, or set-up and maintain a bird feeder. There are things that he could do at home as well. For example, he could help clean and sort materials to be recycled, become responsible for carrying cloth bags when you go to the supermarket instead of using paper or plastic, conserve water by always turning off the faucet when brushing his teeth, save electricity by turning off the lights when not using them, or save paper by using the backside of scrap paper for writing and drawing.



After your child has completed the activity or decided on a project that he will undertake, give him the copy of the “Nature Custodian” certificate. Print, or help him print, his name on the line and then draw a picture or write a description of what he did to help care for nature in the box. Finally, hang it somewhere everyone can see to serve as a reminder that it is important to care for nature every day.

Talk About It: Part of being a good custodian of nature is learning about nature and understanding what kinds of things will help us to keep our environment healthy. When humans don’t act as good custodians of nature, there can be serious consequences. Talk with your child about why it is important to care for the environment around us. Ask him what would happen if everyone littered or if no one recycled? Talk about how litter causes pollution that makes the environment dirty and unhealthy for plants, animals, and us! Discuss why it is important to care for the plants that live around us. Explain that their roots help keep the soil in place, preventing erosion. They also help keep the air around us clean for us to breath. Ask him if he why he thinks is important to turn off lights or electronic equipment he is not using. Together, talk about what conservation means and the different ways he can help conserve water and electricity.

Take It Further: Visit a local park, national forest, or nature preserve to learn more about the environment around you. Let your child talk to the people who work there about their career in being a nature custodian and ask them what he can do to help. Join a conservation or environmental group in your area that has a children’s program.



Official World Tree Certificate

_____ (name)

is a Nature Custodian!

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw or write a description of their activity.

Draw or write a description of your activity in the box above.

pbskids.org/bigbigworld