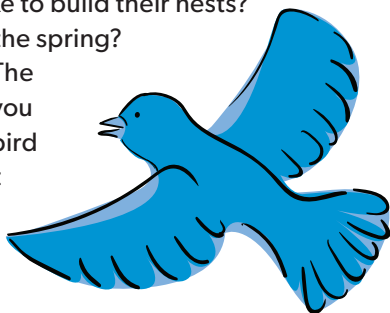


# Ready, Set, Re-Connect

## Alphabet

**A Away:** Where is away? When we throw things away, where do they go? Build a model landfill and/or look at all the things we throw away. Write a story or perform a skit based on the people or creatures who live in the land of away, and the things that keep appearing in their neighbourhoods. How can we reduce the amount of things we throw away?

**B Birds:** We sometimes forget that birds live everywhere, through all kinds of weather conditions. What birds did your class see yesterday? Where were they? Where do they like to build their nests? What birds live here in the spring? The summer? The fall? The winter? What birds do you see migrating? Build a bird feeder, or put one up at school so others can see the birds that live on this planet with us.



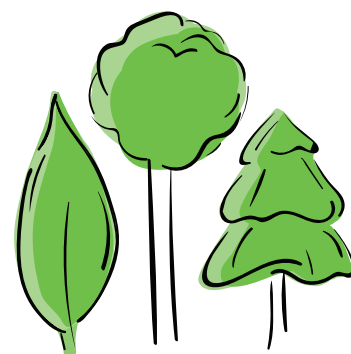
**C Compost:** Nature is the greatest recycler of all, recycling old plant material into food for new plants. Feel the difference between soil and compost, plant seeds in each and see how they grow. Build a mini-composter in an empty 2 litre bottle and watch how materials break down.

**D Durable vs Disposable:** What are 10 things we use once and then throw away? Are there durable substitutes? Durable means no garbage. Think about the difference between a paper towel and a cloth napkin. What's the difference between using flip chart paper and a whiteboard? What other durable options can you think of?



**E Earth:** The earth is our home, but sometimes we treat it as if we were just visiting. What are some things we do that are not kind to the earth? What are some things we can do that are kind to the earth? How about making reminder labels or posters to put beside garbage cans, recycling containers and water taps to help others remember to be kind to the earth as well.

**F Forest:** Are there any forests or woods close to your school? Can you read a book about forests? What kinds of plants do you find in a forest? What kind of insects, birds and animals? Draw pictures showing some of the things and creatures in the forest, or role-play what life is like in the forest. Have students choose to be one creature or thing in the forest, and then using a ball of yarn, have students create their own web of life, as they pass the yarn from one to another talking about how their creature is connected to the other plants, creatures, or things in the forest.

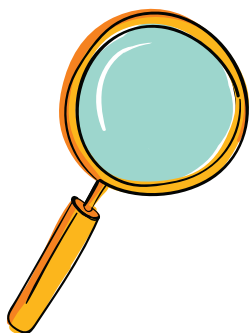


**G Garbage:** It's everywhere! For one day, hide the garbage can and have each student place all classroom and lunch/snack garbage in a plastic bag by their desk. How much garbage did the class create? Were there any things in the garbage that could have been re-used or recycled? What ideas does the class have to make less garbage for the rest of the school year?



**H Homes and Houses:** What are all the different houses and homes that students can name? What are they made from? What sorts of houses and homes do other living things use? What are some ways of being kind to the houses and homes of other creatures?

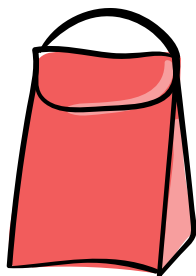
**I Investigate:** Become a super-sleuth. Investigate one way we affect the earth. What happens to things which are recycled? Where does our water come from? How do you make new paper out of old paper?



**J Joy of Junk:** One person's junk is another person's joy. What can you make from "junk" like boxes, cardboard tubes, plastic bottles and containers, etc?

**K Keep It Clean!:** Go on a garbage walk (with gloves) and clean up an area in the neighbourhood, or even the school yard. Litter is not only ugly, but materials like straws can be quite dangerous for animals as animals may actually try to eat the straws!

**L Litterless Lunch:** We all know what lunch is, and most of us know what litter is. But what is a litterless lunch? It is a lunch that avoids a lot of plastic wrap, foil wrappers and other garbage. Have the class collect empty pudding, meal in a bowl, single serving, plastic wrap/foil wrappers from things you might have in a lunch. Can the groups decide how to have the same types of healthy foods without creating as much garbage?

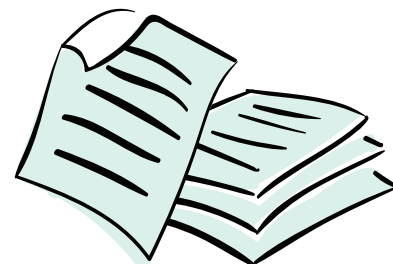


**M Migration:** Birds migrate to find a friendlier climate and the kinds of food they need. What types of birds migrate in your area? Older students may want to explore some of the other types of creatures that migrate.

**N Nature:** Nature is all around us, inside and outside the classroom. And we are the most important part of nature because people have the greatest effect on nature. Ask the class as individuals or groups to list 10 things in the classroom that came from nature, or 10 things they eat that come from nature, or 10 things in their homes that come from nature or... you get the idea.

**O Oxygen:** Breathe deeply. Without oxygen, we could not breath. Discuss where oxygen comes from. What are ways that people can be kind to trees and other green plants? Are there plants in your room or school? Who cares for them and how?

**P Paper:** Manitobans use 6 million trees worth of paper every year. It's hard to believe that a stack of newsprint 1 metre high equals the paper from one tree, or that a stack of fine bond (read smooth paper, like paper in textbooks, scribblers, looseleaf and computer printers) that is two thirds of a metre high also equals one tree. Does your class recycle paper? Is there a scrap paper box to reduce wasting paper? Do students use both sides of the paper? Are there other ideas to reduce wasting paper?

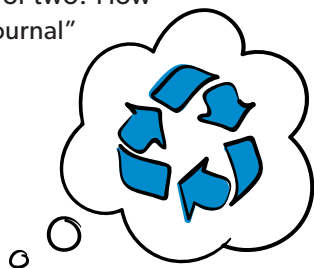


**Q Question:** The only way to discover information is to ask good questions. What questions would the class like to ask about ways of being kind to the earth? There are many questions we could ask. Why do we do things in this way? What sort of garbage/pollution do we make when we do things this way? How does that garbage affect our air? Our water? Our soil? How does is affect the birds and animals? What changes can we make? What changes will I make?



**R Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Rethink:**

These are the classic ways to be kind to the earth. Can students name a way they have used one of the R words in the last day or two? How about keeping a "Green Journal" and listing these acts of kindness? Entries can be made daily or weekly and can even be used as a response when taking attendance, daily or after weekends.



**S Solar Energy:** When we discuss solar energy, people often think of solar cars, or building a solar oven or water cleaner. But since solar means "from the sun" anytime we use our own energy, that's solar energy as well. How many students use solar energy to get to school? Do they walk, bike, roller-blade? Do they use solar energy to get to any other places?

**T Trees:** Trees provide pulp for paper, but they also give us so much more. Discuss and/or have students research some of the things we get from trees. Draw a giant tree and draw or cut out pictures of all the things that trees give us to make a giant class collage.

**U Unexpected and Unusual:** What is the most unusual or unexpected piece of information you have learned about nature and our earth? Have the class share their findings.

**V Vermi-Composting:** What do you call a bunch of red wiggler worms living in a plastic tub turning raw plant leftovers into compost? A vermicomposter! Investigate starting a vermi-composter in your classroom and/or in your school. Worms are cheap, never interrupt, and are very well behaved! In addition, they will eat cores and peels from class lunches reducing the amount of materials thrown away, as well as making rich compost for the class to use in their soils/plant projects.



**W Water:** Water is essential to life, but do we ever waste water? Try keeping a daily water log. A 10 minute shower is 230 litres, a full bathtub is about 200 litres of water, a tap running at a trickle for teeth brushing uses 2 litres of water a minute and a running hose, for watering the lawn or washing the car uses 35 litres of water a minute. Check the logs for a day or a week, tally the totals and discuss ways of avoiding water wastage. (Timers for showers, low-flow shower heads, turning taps on and off for tooth brushing, using a bucket for washing the car, etc.)



**X Xeriscape:** It's just a big word that means we focus on plants in our yards and gardens that are used to our dry climate and don't need a lot of extra water. Examine your schoolyard. What plants do you see growing between the sidewalk blocks? Underneath the school steps? What "weeds" can you find? All of these plants live without being watered by people. What plants do you have in your own yard that grow without extra water?

**Y You:** You are one of the most important parts of nature. You can choose what actions you want to take to be kind to the earth. What will you do today? What will you do tomorrow? Next week?

**Z Zoom in!:** Take a closer look at the world around us. Gaze in awe and wonder at the world round you. Marvel at its complexity and its simplicity. This is home for you and millions of other living creatures. Name three insects, birds or animals that you have seen this week and remember that they share this planet earth with you.



# If the Earth were...

If the earth were only a few feet in diameter, floating a few feet above a field somewhere, people would come from everywhere to marvel at it. People would walk around it marveling at its big pools of water, its little pools and the water flowing between the pools. People would marvel at the bumps on it, and the holes in it, and they would marvel at the very thin layer of gas surrounding it and the water suspended in the gas. The people would marvel at all the creatures walking around the surface of the ball, and in the water. The people would declare it precious because it was the only one and they would protect it so that it would not be hurt. The ball would be the greatest wonder known, and people would come to behold it, to be healed, to gain knowledge, to know beauty and wonder how it could be. People would love it, and defend it with their lives, because they would somehow know that their lives, their own roundness, could be nothing without it.

If the earth were only a few feet in diameter.

Written by Joe Miller

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