



Stewardship: The Responsibility for Taking Good Care of the Resources Entrusted to Us

Students will gain an understanding of what stewardship is and how stewardship affects farming. They will learn that farmers take care of the land, water, air, and animals.



One
45 minute
Class

Outcome:

RW 4.1 Analyze the strategies Saskatchewan people have developed to meet the challenges presented by the natural environment.

Indicator:

RW4.1 a. List the challenges and opportunities climate presents for residents of Saskatchewan.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

1. What is stewardship?
2. Why is stewardship important?

Teacher Background

Stewardship is different ways people care for the land and animals with future generations in mind. It is the careful and responsible management of something under one's care. Farmers practise stewardship in many ways that have changed over time.

Information on First Nations Stewardship

The original peoples of what we now call North America were the First Nations people. These people depended on the land for life-supporting activities ranging from hunting and gathering to agriculture. Each nation's system of governance and occupancy was directly linked to its particular relationship to land and resources. It was believed the richness of the earth had been provided by their Creator to share and preserve amongst each other. Aboriginal peoples assumed a role of stewardship and pursued their activities guided by principles of respect and responsibility to the land and its resources. An example was the use of tobacco. Tobacco served as a means of giving thanks. Before and after killing an animal, a hunter would often say a prayer while holding the tobacco in his left hand, the one closest to his heart. The hunter was giving thanks to the Creator and to the animal who gave his life so that the hunter could feed his family. Many aboriginal people in Saskatchewan today are still well acquainted with the traditional knowledge received from their predecessors.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- * apple
- * knife
- * cutting board
- * Student Handout

17.1



The winter 2011 Green and White publication has as its theme, sustainability. It would be a useful background resource for the next few lessons. See www.usask.ca/greenandwhite/issues/2011/winter2011/departments/editor.php.

See <http://foodmiles.saskorganic.com/sites/foodmiles.saskorganic.com/resources/introduction.pdf> for an article entitled "Sustainable Development and Local, Organic Food".

This lesson suggests using webbing as an instructional strategy. For information on webbing, see <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/>

Before Activity

Perform the apple demonstration:

1. Hold up an apple so all students can see it. Have students pretend that the apple is our planet Earth - round, beautiful, and full of good things. Draw student attention to its skin, hugging and protecting the surface.
2. Explain that water covers approximately 75% of the earth's surface. Demonstrate that by cutting the apple in quarters and then putting three quarters out of sight.
3. Point out that the three quarters just removed represents how much of the earth is covered with water - oceans, lakes, rivers, streams.
4. Hold up the quarter left and indicate that this quarter of our earth is our total land area. Tell them that half of this piece is either too dry (a desert?) or too hot (the equator?) or too high (the Rocky Mountains?) or too cold (the Arctic?) to grow anything. Cut that piece in half and put one of the two parts out of sight.
5. Display the piece you have left as the part where people can live.
6. Point at the section of apple in your hand telling your students that in this section there are places where the soil is too rocky to grow crops. There are places where it is too wet to grow crops. There are places where we have buildings on the land already so we cannot grow crops. Almost half of this section being held up cannot support food production. Cut just less than half away and put the cut segment out of sight.
7. Carefully peel the skin from the remaining sliver. This small bit of apple peel represents all the soil on earth. It represents where we can produce the food for the world's people. Indicate there is often a struggle over this remaining fragment. This fragment competes with all other needs such as housing, cities, schools, hospitals, shopping centres, landfills, or golf courses.
8. Conclude with pointing out that there only is one apple; we don't get to start out with another apple (world) tomorrow. Stewardship is looking after what we have in a responsible way

This activity can also be done by giving each student a Christmas orange!

Note: This activity was adapted from www.aitc.sk.ca/pdf/environment/Earths_Food_Growing.pdf. The site has a pie chart which could be used with the apple demonstration.



During Activity

Activity One

As a class discuss what stewardship means in general. Place one of the following proverbs on the board, “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors but borrow it from our children” or the Cree prophecy “Only when the last tree is cut; only when the last river is polluted; only when the last fish is caught; only then will you find that money cannot be eaten”. Have students do a think/pair/share as to the meaning of the saying.

- Individually, students write down a completion to the stem, I think this means....
- Pairs discuss what each has written down.
- As a class, some of the stem completions are shared.

Activity Two

Share the following passage with students (or one similar to it).

My grandpa was the original recycler. He grew up during the Great Depression in the 1930s when stuff was limited and nothing went to waste. That attitude stayed with him his entire life. He did not have to rescue every bicycle or lawnmower from the town dump (or nuisance ground as he called it), but he did. Parts were often swapped to make sure there was at least one—but usually more—working mowers around to tame the grass.

In our modern world, this way of behaving is called sustainability. Sustainability is the understanding that the world in which we live is not disposable. It is making sure that our actions reflect that understanding. We need to look after our world because we cannot replace it.

Our earth is a gift. Like any gift, we should use it. But we should not cross the line into abusing our gift; we need to be responsible stewards of what we have been given. There is no planetary nuisance ground where we can dig around for spare parts.

Adapted from www.usask.ca/greenandwhite/issues/2011/winter2011/departments/editor.php

The passage has the line, “We need to be responsible stewards of what we have been given”. Invite students to create a web with what they do in the classroom, school, playground, home, and community that promotes stewardship in general. What actions do they take to make sure the planet is healthy? There will be common practices such as: recycling, reusing, reducing water consumption, turning of the lights, and composting. See more about webbing at <http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/>.



After Activity

After the class discussion/webbing, students reflect on the questions found in Student Handout 17.1

1. What is the most important way you practise good stewardship in your school? Why is it so important?
2. What is the most important way you practise good stewardship at home? Why is it so important?
3. What else might you do to promote good stewardship? In what way would that make a positive difference?
4. What would happen if no one practiced good stewardship?

Students submit this sheet.

Assessment

Teacher Checklist

- ✓ Do the student responses to the questions on Handout 17.1 indicate understanding of the concept of sustainability through the practice of good stewardship?

The journal rubric may be adapted for this assessment.

Cross-Curricular Connections

Science

This lesson also addresses the following Science outcome: HC4.3. Assess the effects of natural and human activities on habitats and communities, and propose actions to maintain or restore habitats.



Reflection on Stewardship Questions

1. What is the most important way you practise good stewardship in your school? Why is this method so important?

2. What is the most important way you practise good stewardship at home? Why is this method so important?



3. What else might you do to promote good stewardship? In what way would that make a positive difference?

4. What would happen if no one practised stewardship?



Classroom vermicomposting is a fun project!



Learning how to grow plants