DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Safeguarding Our Planet: Conservation and Stewardship



WWW.LITTLEPATRIOTSLEARNING.COM

Table of Contents

3	Themes & Values
	Learning Objectives
4	Key Terms
5	Introduction
7	Lesson
11	Activity: Nature's Helpers
13	Assessment: Tracing Activity
14	Resources
15	Images
21	Notes



Key Themes

- Conservation
- Stewardship

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- List two ways to protect the Earth.
- Describe the role John Muir played in conservation.

Key Terms

- 0 1 avalanche: a large amount of snow that quickly moves down a slope.
- 0 2 **preserve:** to keep safe from harm or to protect.
- 0 3 **sawmill:** a facility for cutting logs.

Introduction

TELL Students

Close your eyes for a little bit and imagine the prettiest place you have ever seen.

ASK Students

What do you see when you close your eyes?

TELL Students

Is it the sky turning all sorts of colors as the sun goes down at the beach? Or big mountains covered in snow and green trees? Or maybe a field full of grass that dances when the wind blows? [Reference Scenic Landscape Image. Images.] Our world is filled with so many beautiful sights! And guess what? We have a very important job.

ASK Students

What important job do you think I am talking about?

TELL Students

God made this wonderful world, and He wants us to look after it and all its treasures. Today we are going to learn ways to take care of God's creation, the Earth you live on. We are also going to learn about a man named John Muir who loved nature a lot. [Reference John Muir Image.] People call him "The Father of Our National Parks" because he worked really hard to protect beautiful places for everyone to enjoy. He showed us that even if you are not a president or a mayor, you can still do important things to help the Earth.

ASK Students

Who is "The Father of Our National Parks?"

TELL Students

Yes, John Muir! John Muir loved nature and worked hard to protect it. He believed that every living thing, big or small, is special because God created it. John Muir helped make important changes in America, showing us that when you care a lot about something, you can make a difference.

Introduction

ASK Students

What are some ways that you can make a difference in our classroom?

TELL Students

That is right! By taking care of your things, respecting others, and helping your friends, you make a difference every day. Today, we are going to learn about the important changes John Muir helped make in America. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more!

WATCH O

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 34: National Parks





TELL Students

John Muir was born a long time ago, in 1838, in a place called Dunbar, in Scotland. Even when he was a little boy, he loved being outdoors. [Reference Young John Muir.] He used to go on exciting walks in the countryside with his grandfather, which he loved. In 1849, John's family moved to Wisconsin. When John was not helping on the farm, he and his younger brother would go on adventures, exploring the fields and forests around their home.

ASK Students

Do you like to explore outdoors? What are some things you like to do outside?

TELL Students 🚳

John Muir loved to explore but he also loved reading. He was pretty good at making things too. **[Reference John Muir Image.]** Once, he made a special bed that would make sure you got up early by tipping you out of it! In 1860, he went to the University of Wisconsin because he wanted to learn more about plants, animals, and rocks. But John felt that nature was the best place to learn, so he left school in 1863 to learn through exploration.

ASK Students

How did reading help John Muir improve his exploring skills?

TELL Students 🚳

That is right! Reading helps everyone learn more and become better at what they do. John went on a big adventure walking through different states and even Canada. He worked many different jobs to earn money. [Reference John Muir's Journey Image.] One day, while working in a shop, John got hurt and could not see for a whole month. When he got his eyesight back, he wanted to see every beautiful place he could. And that is just what he did!

ASK Students

How do you think John felt when he lost his eyesight? How do you think he felt when he regained his eyesight?

TELL Students

John decided to travel to Cuba, Panama, and then all the way to San Francisco in California. When he got there, he asked someone how to get away from the busy city. [Reference Busy City Image.] He wanted to find somewhere wild to explore. That person asked him, "Where do you want to go?" And John said, "Anywhere that is wild." So, he walked through valleys until he found a beautiful place called Yosemite in the mountains of California. [Reference Yosemite Image.] He thought it was the most beautiful place with bright, shining mountains. John Muir loved it so much that he called it his home and said it was like a place full of light.

ASK Students

How would you describe our town? Do we live in a busy city, in the mountains, by a desert, or by the beach?

TELL Students

In November 1869, John Muir made a special house for himself next to Yosemite Creek. He helped a hotel owner by making a sawmill, leading guests on fun walks, and chopping down trees for the hotel to use. A **sawmill** is a facility for cutting logs. [**Reference Sawmill Image.**] His cozy house was made of pine and cedar wood. Imagine a house where a little creek flows right under the floor and plants grow inside! John even had a special writing desk with ferns growing around it and slept on soft cedar branches with sheepskin blankets. [**Reference Muir Home Image.**]

ASK Students

Do you have plants in your home? Do we have plants in our classroom?

TELL Students @ P

John also built a special study spot high up in the sawmill that he could only get to by climbing a ladder. He called it his "hang-nest." [Reference Hang-Nest Image.] In Yosemite, John felt very happy and peaceful. He wrote to his friend that it was like feasting in a beautiful mountain house made by God. John did not just enjoy the beauty of Yosemite; he learned a lot from it too. He collected plants, wrote about them in his journals, and studied the rocks, plants, and animals he found. John had some exciting adventures in Yosemite, like getting wet from waterfalls, exploring glaciers with a rope, and even sliding down a canyon with an avalanche!

TELL Students (continued)

An avalanche is a large amount of snow that quickly moves down a slope.

ASK Students

What did John do to learn about nature?

TELL Students

John Muir wrote a lot of stories and books—more than 300 stories and 10 books! He wrote about all the wonderful things he saw and did in nature. He wanted everyone, from presidents to kids who love adventures, to know how peaceful and happy nature can make us feel.

ASK Students

How do you feel when you are outside playing?

TELL Students 🚳

John Muir said that many people who were very busy and tired were starting to see how important it was to go to the mountains because it felt like going home. He thought that wild places were not just useful for things like wood or water but were important for making us feel alive and happy. [Reference People People Enjoying the Outdoors Image.] In our Star-Spangled Adventures episode, you saw President Theodore Roosevelt. He read John Muir's book and thought it was really important. Even though some people told him that America's wild places were too big to ever run out, Roosevelt started to worry about America's natural resources and what would happen if all the trees were cut down and if we used up all our oil and coal. So, in 1903, he wrote a letter to John Muir saying he wanted to go camping with him in Yosemite to learn more about nature.

ASK Students

How would you feel if the President of the United States wanted to go camping with you? Have you ever been camping?

TELL Students

John Muir was excited to show the president the beauty and importance of nature.

TELL Students (continued)

They went on a special camping trip where they slept under giant trees and even saw a lot of snow. John told President Roosevelt about the big trees, animals, and why we need to preserve places like Yosemite. **Preserve** means to keep safe from harm or to protect. **[Reference Muir and Roosevelt Camping Image.]** After their talks, President Roosevelt worked hard to protect a lot of nature in America. He helped save Yosemite Valley and the big trees there by making a new law. He said, "Yosemite and the giant trees are some of the most beautiful things in the world, and we need to make sure they are kept safe forever."

ASK Students

What did President Roosevelt do to preserve Yosemite?

TELL Students

Because of this camping trip and their talks, President Roosevelt helped protect a lot of land for parks and forests so that everyone, even kids and grandkids in the future, could enjoy them. He made new parks, saved land, and made sure there were places for birds and animals to live safely. So, next time you visit a park or see a big tree, remember to think of John Muir and President Roosevelt. They worked very hard so we could all enjoy the beautiful nature around us.

ASK Students

What are some ways that you can take care of the beautiful Earth we live on?

TELL Students

That is right! By taking care of your things, putting your trash in trash cans, recycling, and planting flowers, you can help take care of the Earth that God created.



Objectives

- Identify and collect natural objects found in their environment, demonstrating an appreciation for nature.
- Sort recyclable materials into appropriate categories, showcasing an awareness of waste reduction and recycling practices.
- Engage in planting and watering activities, illustrating an understanding of nurturing living things and contributing to environmental stewardship.
- Create nature-inspired artwork using found materials, expressing their connection to and respect for the natural world.
- Match pictures or symbols representing environmental actions with their corresponding actions, demonstrating comprehension of basic stewardship concepts.

In this interactive activity, kindergarten students will engage in hands-on exploration and play to learn about stewardship and conservation. Through sensory experiences and interactive games, children will discover ways to care for the environment and become stewards of nature.

Materials Needed

- Various natural objects (e.g., leaves, rocks, pinecones)
- Recyclable materials (e.g., paper, cardboard, plastic bottles)
- Water and small buckets
- Gardening tools (e.g., small shovels, watering cans)
- Art supplies (e.g., crayons, markers, glue)
- Pictures or symbols representing environmental actions (e.g., recycling, planting trees)
- Bins (for sorting items)
- Optional: Nature-themed music or sounds

Nature Scavenger Hunt

Begin the activity by taking students on a nature scavenger hunt in a designated outdoor area, such as a school garden or a nearby park. Provide each child with a small basket or bag and encourage them to find and collect natural objects like leaves, rocks, and sticks. As they explore, prompt them to notice and appreciate the beauty of nature.





Sorting and Recycling Game

After the scavenger hunt, gather students in a circle and introduce a sorting and recycling game. Place recyclable materials in a central area and demonstrate how to sort them into different categories (e.g., paper, plastic, cardboard). Encourage students to take turns sorting items and placing them in the appropriate bins, promoting awareness of recycling and waste reduction.

Watering and Planting Activity

Transition to a gardening activity where students can actively participate in caring for plants. Provide small pots or containers with soil and seedlings, and distribute watering cans or small buckets filled with water. Guide students in gently watering the plants and planting new seeds, emphasizing the importance of nurturing and growing living things.

Nature Art Creation

Set up a nature art station with art supplies and natural materials collected during the scavenger hunt. Invite students to use their creativity to make artwork inspired by nature. They can create collages, nature sculptures, or drawings using leaves, rocks, and other found objects. Encourage them to express their appreciation for the environment through their artwork.

Reflection and Discussion

Gather students together for a brief reflection and discussion. Ask open-ended questions to encourage them to share their experiences and observations from the activities. Guide the conversation to reinforce key concepts of stewardship and conservation, such as caring for nature, reducing waste, and helping the environment.

Kindergarten Tracing Activity

NAME:	DATE:
Instructions: Trace the words for each picture.	

Resources

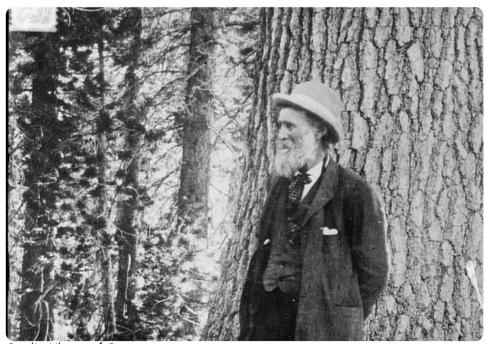
- https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/about/default.aspx
- https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/mans_place_in_the_universe.aspx
- https://www.nps.gov/jomu/learn/historyculture/people.htm
- https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/life/muir_biography.aspx
- https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/john-muirs-yosemite-10737/
- Ibid.
- https://www.nps.gov/yose/learn/historyculture/muir.htm
- https://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings/favorite_quotations.aspx
- https://blogs.loc.gov/inside_adams/2016/08/roosevelt-muir-and-the-camping-trip/
- https://www.nps.gov/thro/learn/historyculture/theodore-roosevelt-and-conservation.htm
- https://blogs.loc.gov/inside_adams/2016/08/roosevelt-muir-and-the-camping-trip/
- https://www.nps.gov/jomu/learn/historyculture/people.htm

Scenic Landscape



Credit: Canva Pro.

John Muir



Credit: Library of Congress.

Young John Muir



Credit: Canva Pro.

John Muir's Journey



Credit: JMT Wilderness Conservatory.

Busy City



Credit: Canva Pro.

Yosemite



Credit: Canva Pro

Sawmill



Credit: Canva Pro.

Muir Home



Credit: National Park Service

Hang-Nest



Credit: Canva Pro.

People Enjoying the Outdoors



Credit: Canva Pro

Muir and Roosevelt Camping



Credit: National Park Service.

Notes
