

Cambodia - Caring for the Forest assembly: KS1, KS2

Drama for a primary school assembly focusing on forest conservation in Cambodia.

Instructions:

1. Print out, enlarge and copy for pupils.
2. Use highlighter pens to mark each child's part.

Curriculum Links:

* RE: Here I Am: "Treasures".
* Citizenship: KS1 & 2: 5g. Consider social and moral dilemmas in everyday life, eg simple environmental issues.
* Geography: KS1: 1c. Express their own views about people, places and environments; 5b. Recognise how the environment may be improved and sustained; KS2: 3d. Explain why places are like they are; 5a. Recognise how people can improve the environment.

Based on: Primary Fairground 21

The scene: A pond on the edge of a forest in Cambodia. Millie the Millennium Mouse has flown here with two journalists.

Their mission is to find out how, with the support of CAFOD, replanting a forest can help people to rebuild their lives after years of destruction.

Millie: Hello! Millie Mouse here again. Meet my two journalist friends, Natalie News and Sarah Scoop. They're on a fact-finding mission.

Natalie and Sarah: (Waving to the children) Hello!

Millie: You'll never guess where we are - CAMBODIA! Can you find it on the map? Sarah, you show everyone where it is. (Sarah holds up a map and points to Cambodia.)

Sarah: Here it is. It's a long, long way away.

Millie: (Turning to the children) I wonder if you know anything about Cambodia. Until recently, it had been at war for more than 30 years. Even though the fighting's finished, people still live with the effects of war.

Natalie: What do you mean? How can a war affect you if it's over?

Millie: In all sorts of ways. Wait a minute. Let me introduce you to two of my Cambodian friends, Sok Chorn and Khun Rany. They're from Trarpang Plong village, just down the road. It's a special place. They'll be able to explain better than I can. (She calls across the pond to where Chorn and Rany are fishing with rods.)

Chorn, Rany, can we come and talk to you? My friends Sarah Scoop and Natalie News want to find out about life in Trarpang Plong.

Chorn: Yes, come over, but don't shout too loudly or you'll frighten the fish away. (Millie, Natalie News and Sarah Scoop walk around the pond and greet Chorn and Rany.)

Millie: (Turning to Chorn and Rany) Sarah and Natalie want to know how the war has changed Trarpang Plong. Will you tell us?

Chorn: Years ago, long before we were born, this whole area for miles around was forest. (He makes a sweeping gesture with his hand.) All the local families lived off the forest. It provided our grandparents with everything they needed. Work, food, shelter, fish, firewood, even medicines. Now most of the forests have disappeared and our way of life has changed.

Sarah: What happened to the forest? How can a war make trees disappear? I don't understand.

Rany: Many forests were destroyed by the bombs which were dropped. Remaining trees were chopped down to build houses. Everyone was hungry - and cold. People sold wood to buy food to eat. And they chopped down more trees for firewood, so they could cook and keep warm. (In the background, children dressed in rags pick up sticks and huddle round a fire.)

Natalie: That sounds really bad.

Rany: Yes. Along with the trees, we lost the animals and fish that lived in the forests.

(In the background, children wearing hard hats pretend to chop down trees.)

Chorn: Everyone was better off when the land was full of forests.

Millie: But it's not all bad news, is it?

Chorn: No. In our village we are learning all over again what our ancestors knew. We are learning how to nurture the land, so that it can nurture us.

Natalie: How do you mean? Are you saying that if you look after the land, the land will take care of you?

Chorn: Yes. Let me explain how. With the support of CAFOD, we've begun replanting our forests again. We're growing tree seedlings and planting them in barren land. Already, the trees are growing and life is returning to the forest. Animals and birds that we thought had disappeared have come back to live here. Pools that had dried out are re-filling with water - and fish. All this means that the forest is once again providing us with food to eat and sell.

(Children in the background pretend to plant seedlings.)

Rany: We often go fishing. Sometimes we pick mushrooms from the forest, too. They're delicious.

Chorn: The forest is great. We get our medicines from there, as well.

Sarah: Oh! I didn't know there was a chemist in the forest.

Rany: Hmm. He didn't mean that! You see, we can make all sorts of traditional medicines and herbal remedies from plants found in the forest.

(Children in the background hold up jars and bottles.)

Millie: So, as well as providing food to keep you well, the forest also provides medicines for when you're sick.

Rany: Yes, and it helps us to build a sense of community, too. Our people pull together because of the forest. We protect it and make sure that we don't take from it more than we need.

Millie: You see, children, the forest is a special place. It really does look after you, if you look after it.