

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children

By Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac. Fulcrum Publishers, new reissue, 1999. Paperback, 240 pages

This is an absolutely wonderful curriculum that can be easily modified for use with youth from the very young to teenage. Whether you read the stories to the children or use the audiocassette tape (which includes authentic flute and drum), the lessons are unforgettable. We in Dayton Monthly Meeting found that the stories and their meanings stayed with the children for a long time as evidenced by their ability to retell stories they had heard years earlier. The textbook provides clearly drawn black and white pictures and photographs to tell of the lives of the North American tribes and their relationship to the earth. The Teacher's Guide offers additional material, pictures, queries and practical hands-on activity suggestions that give the children personal experiences that reinforce the values we try to instill in them. The activities lend themselves easily to creativity. We made masks and puppets, and acted out the stories. We used the material to cover a variety of branch-off lessons: race relations, family, animals, the environment, changing seasons, growing plants and unity with nature. We also used the stories to practice visualization techniques that the children can use to learn to center in Meeting for Worship.

Reviewed by Barbara Robinson, Dayton Monthly Meeting, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

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