

## **CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Objective:** *To stimulate thinking and action about our responsibility towards nature*

**Key Words:** *environment, bough, Celtic, creature, feather, heaven, mourn, France, shepherd, cottage, acorns, countryside*

### **QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK**

KEEP IN YOUR HEART A GREEN BOUGH AND GOD WILL SEND YOU A SINGING BIRD  
*Celtic saying*



NOT A CREATURE IS LOST, NOT A FEATHER IS TORN, BUT GOD IN HIS HEAVEN WILL SEE IT AND MOURN

Discuss what these two quotations mean.

### **SILENT SITTING**

Step 1 *(See page 40 of the introduction)*

Steps 3, 4, *(optional)*

Step 5: Imagine you are walking along a country path on a sunny day ...

It is very hot and you are beginning to feel a little tired ...

You come to a small wood. The trees are large and spread out.

The sunlight, shining through the branches, lights up the many colours of the leaves

It is cooler in the wood so choose a place to sit down on the soft grass ...

The tree under which you rest is very strong ...

Lean back and feel its trunk ... You feel very quiet and restful under the tree.

You feel grateful for the shade from the sun ...

Listen to the birds singing above you ...

And the rustle of the leaves in the gentle breeze ...

You begin to relax and enjoy the peace around you ...

Feel the life in the tree. The sap as it rises up the trunk taking food from the roots to every twig and leaf. The tree is alive, like you ...

Feel happy for the tree. Feel happy that we have trees to enjoy...

Trees which give us shelter and give us their fruits for food ...

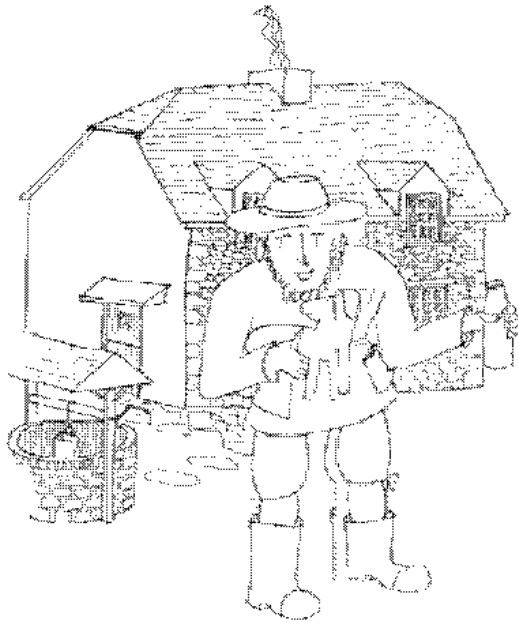
Step 6.

## STORY TELLING

### THE MAN WHO PLANTED HOPE AND GREW HAPPINESS

Once upon a time, a travelling man was walking through a very bare landscape where nothing much grew. The rivers had dried up and the wind blew hard over the ground.

He had walked many miles and found that he had run out of water, so he was desperate to find some! That was going to be difficult because all the land was dry. Suddenly he saw, way in the distance, a shepherd tending a few sheep. He was so relieved! Hurrying as fast as his tired legs would go, he soon reached the shepherd who gave him some water from his own small supply. Then the kindly shepherd took him home to his little stone cottage.



The cottage had a well with excellent water from deep down in the ground. Before going to bed that night the traveller watched the shepherd counting out the acorns. He was sorting the good ones from the bad ones. When he had a hundred good ones, he put them in a bag and went to bed. The traveller was puzzled.



Acorns are bitter and are no good for food, and he had seen no sign of a pig which might eat them. So what use were the acorns?

The next day, after soaking the acorns in a bucket of water, the shepherd took them and went off up the bare hillsides. He carried a long metal rod with which he made a hole in the ground for each acorn and planted them all.

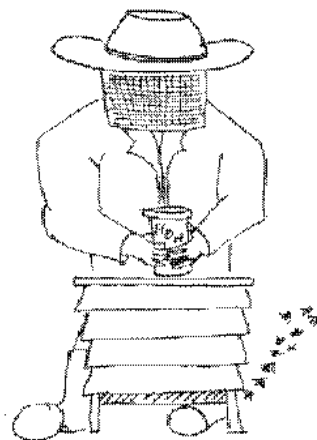


The traveller asked him, “How long have you been doing this?”

“Most days for the past three years,” the shepherd replied. “And I’ve planted 100,000 acorns in that time.”

Well, the traveller was amazed. And when he returned home, he always remembered the kind shepherd and wondered how he was.

So some years later, the traveller returned to the place again and found the shepherd again. He had sold his sheep and was now a bee-keeper.

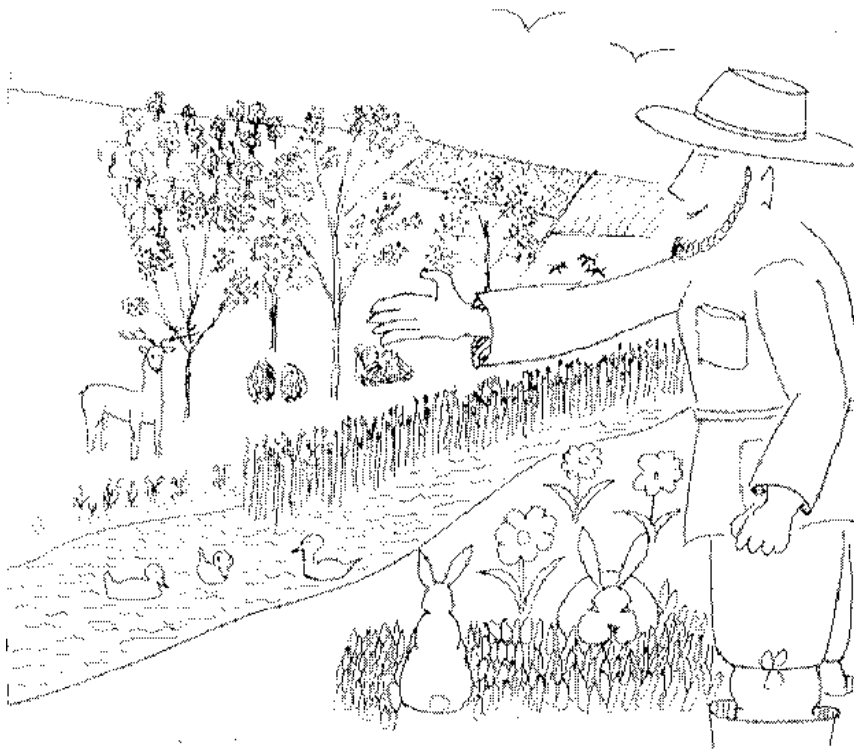


This had come about because the sheep had been eating the young trees. He was now the proud owner of a hundred bee hives. He had continued to plant acorns all the while and now his first acorns were slender oak trees. They walked through the new wood.

“Oh, how wonderful,” thought the traveller. Not only oak trees as tall as a man were growing, but beech trees and birch trees had also been planted. And the most wonderful thing was happening ... the little streams, which had long dried up, were running with water again and because of this, other plants were beginning to grow - wild flowers, grass, rushes and shrubs. It was a wonderful sight! And that was not all: birds and wild creatures were living there too. The shepherd had done all this by himself. He had created a new countryside just by planting trees.

People came to live in that area near the trees. They grew crops on the land which was now green and fertile.

And it was all thanks to the shepherd and Mother Nature, of course!



#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the shepherd sort out the good acorns from the bad ones?
2. Why did he put the good acorns in a bucket of water?
3. What did he then do with the good acorns?
4. Why did the shepherd sell his sheep and why become a bee-keeper?
5. What do bees do?
6. What had become of the bare landscape after some years?
7. What did you feel when you heard this story?
8. What does the title mean: The man who planted hope and grew happiness?
9. What can you do to show care of the environment? Mention several things.

## GROUP SINGING

### LOVING FAMILY

*(music and lyrics by Sara John  
and Stuart Jones)*

Oh the river is long. *Oh the river is long.*  
It's deep and wide. *It's deep and wide.*  
Oh the river flows on. *Oh the river flows on.*  
It's deep and wide. *It's deep and wide.*  
And we'll flow with her *And we'll flow with her*  
And we'll sing this song.  
For the ocean is waiting  
For a loving family.

Our land spreads out *Our land spreads out*  
Across the earth. *Across the earth.*  
It's a land of drought *It's a land of drought*  
Across the earth. *Across the earth.*  
So we'll plant more trees *So we'll plant more trees*  
So they'll bring more rain  
To a land that is waiting  
For a loving family.

Our people are poor. *Our people are poor.*  
We can help them now. *We can help them now.*  
Their hearts are sore *Their hearts are sore*  
We can help them now. *We can help them now.*  
If we give with love *If we give with love*  
If we ease their pain  
There'll be no more waiting  
For a loving family.

Oh the river is long. *Oh the river is long.*  
It's deep and wide. *It's deep and wide.*  
Oh the river flows on. *Oh the river flows on.*  
It's deep and wide. *It's deep and wide.*  
And we'll flow with her *And we'll flow with her*  
And we'll sing this song.  
For the ocean is waiting  
For a loving family.

For the ocean is waiting  
For a loving family.

*(Repeat x 2)*

## **GROUP ACTIVITY**

We cannot all plant a forest, although we may be able to plant a tree at some time.

We can be more conscious of the environment in our use of things at home.

So let's try the 'Close to Home' quiz from the 'The Green Activity Book' reproduced on the next two pages.

**Link up** : See 'Values and Visions' ISBN No. 0340 64412 5 section on Valuing the Earth, Activity 1 Heartbeat of a Tree.

### **Extension exercise/Links to Other Subjects:**

Class Project: The children can look for opportunities where they can make a difference by planting seeds of hope e.g. cleaning up and looking after a garden at an old people's home, or visiting some sick children in hospital.

## CLOSE TO HOME

You may feel that you don't usually have a lot of say in the running of your home. All the decisions are made by adults. But you can still have an influence. Get everyone in your household involved in answering the questions in this light hearted quiz. It may lead to some changes for the better.

### Cleaning

What do your family use to clean the sink, bath and toilet:

- A. *A full range of cleaners including bleach, scouring powder and water freshener*
- B. *Strong vinegar solution, a mixture of soda and soap in hot water and phosphate-free cleaners*
- C. *A quick wipe round with a cloth?*

How does your family dispose of dangerous chemicals, such as DIY cleaners, paint, car oil and battery acid:

- A. *Put them straight down the outside drain*
- B. *Ring the Council's waste disposal department and put them where they suggest*
- C. *Never do any DIY?*

What do your family keep in the bathroom:

- A. *Something for every single need i.e. shampoo, perfume, deodorant, bubble bath*
- B. *Only buy products with natural ingredients and try to use them sparingly*
- C. *Toothpaste and a bar of soap?*

### Food

Which would you rather your parents bought:

- A. *Perfect, mass-produced fruit and factory farmed eggs*
- B. *Organically grown fruit and free range eggs, even if they are a bit muddy and odd sizes*
- C. *A hamburger?*

When your family buys tinned fruit, do you:

- A. *Look for the biggest tin for the price?*
- B. *Check the country of origin and list of contents carefully?*
- C. *Grab the nearest?*

Which would you rather eat:

- A. *A pre-cooked, frozen steak pie and deep-fried chips*
- B. *A vegetarian lasagne you cooked yourself from fresh ingredients*
- C. *A takeaway hamburger?*

## **Waste disposal**

How do you get rid of your rubbish:

- A. *Put it all in plastic sacks by the back gate to be collected*
- B. *Sort everything and take most of it down to the recycling plant, leaving a small amount to be bagged for collection*
- C. *Throw it over the fence?*

## **The car**

When buying the car did your family:

- A. *Go for performance and looks*
- B. *Prefer safety, low-pollution and economy*
- C. *Buy it from a friend?*

## **Furnishings**

Would you rather have:

- A. *Smart mass-produced furniture using new materials*
- B. *Furniture, old or new, made with natural materials such as wood, cane and cotton*
- C. *Anything, as long as it's cheap?*

## **In the garden**

When planning the garden did your family:

- A. *Go for convenience with paving stones, potted plants, chemical fertilizers & pesticides*
- B. *Prefer a balanced chemical-free garden with room for wildlife*
- C. *Not get around to it?*

## **Health**

When you have a cold, do your parents:

- A. *Buy every cure on the market and hope something works*
- B. *Avoid drugs if possible, only taking them on prescription from a doctor. Go for prevention rather than cure*
- C. *Take Paracetamol and hope for the best?*

### **A Green Home? Take a look at your score to decide!**

*Give yourself 20 points for every B, 10 points for every A and 5 for each C.*

*If you scored 137 or over, well done! You obviously realise that caring for the environment begins at home.*

*Between 82 and 136? You could do better. You're still sticking to some wasteful ways of doing things. How about a re-think?*

*Less than 81? Come on now, talk to those adults about better ways before it's too late.*