

Pledge Tree Mentoring Activity

Extension Activity

Purpose

Students will use their classroom pledge tree as a mentoring tool to share knowledge of sustainable actions and inspire other classes at the school to add their own ecopledge.

Overview

Your pledge tree can be used in a mentoring capacity with another class to begin a conversation about their pledges to reduce their ecofootprint. The mentored students are given an opportunity to add their own pledges and/or actions as "fruit" to the tree.

Getting Organized

Level: Grade 2-8

Curriculum Connections:

Grade 2 - Air and Water in the Environment

Grade 4 - Habitats and Communities

Grade 5 - Conservation of Energy and Resources

Length: 45-60 minutes

Materials:

- Eco Adventure Guides* (Action Project Planning Pages)
- Pledge Tree kit with leaves or apple templates
- Scrap paper
- Pencils/markers etc.
- Tape,
- White board or chart paper

Teacher Background

The pledge tree is symbolic of the actions students will take to protect the environment. It blooms with their "pledges" and is a constant visual reminder of our collective goals. The pledges can serve as inspiration to adopt sustainable actions that make a difference in the community.

The pledge tree and ecopledge activity was completed at the outdoor centre and returned with you to display back at the school for all to see. As a mentoring tool, students can use the pledge tree to inform and inspire other classes to add their own pledges for the environment.

Students are encouraged to share some of their experiences from the outdoor centre, particularly as they relate to sustainable actions (e.g. ecobuddies, waste watch, etc.). Mentored students are encouraged to adopt their own sustainable actions, reflected as the tree 'bears new fruit', in the form of apples with actions written on them.

Activity

1. Students may divide this project into the following tasks:
 - Write invitations to one or more other classes, inviting them to use their pledge tree as a way to raise awareness about the environment and inspire action.
 - Determine time, place, participating classes and brief other teacher(s) about project.
 - Organize materials: tree, markers, apple templates, etc.
 - Cut enough apples for the class to be visited (2 per student - one for tree, one for home).

- Briefly introduce the purpose of the visit/project to the class.
 - Lead the brainstorming session.
 - Distribute scrap paper, pencils, markers, tape.
 - Help to edit and hang pledges onto the tree.
 - Share own pledges and eco-actions that they have adopted (helps to have a variety of actions shared by different leaders).
 - Distribute apples to students, help with action selection and editing if necessary.
 - Assist in 'hanging' apples on tree.
 - Tidy up / collect materials.
 - Thank class for participating, encourage students to take apples home (their copy) as a reminder to take action to help their environment.
 - Prepare eco-announcement to showcase the pledge tree with the apples to other classes in school.
2. Briefly introduce the purpose of the pledge tree activity - to raise awareness and hope about the environment, and to inspire sustainable actions.
 3. Brainstorm with mentored students regarding their concerns about their environment. Providing leading topic areas may help to stimulate discussion (i.e. water, garbage, air, wildlife, park space, transportation, etc).
 4. Students can share some of their pledges, as well as some of the sustainable actions they practiced at the outdoor centre (e.g. tap and light checks, waste watch at meals, etc.).
 5. Mentored students are invited to choose one action that they can begin themselves.
 6. Each student receives two apples and records their ecopledge on both. One apple can 'bloom' on the tree, the other can be taken home with them to serve as a reminder about their pledge (suggest hanging the apple on the fridge or other prominent spot at home). Students should visualize themselves helping the tree to 'bear fruit' through their pledged actions.
 7. Thank participating class; encourage them to lead by example with their eco-actions!

Extension

- To provide one measure on how successful your mentoring activity was, consider revisiting the same classes 1-2 months later and collecting data on how many students were still doing their chosen action (i.e. 12 out of 20 students continuing their action is a success rate of 60%!).
- Don't forget to ask the students if they have influenced anyone else to adopt an ecopledge through leading by example!

Online Resources

For more information about how to reduce your ecofootprint | <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/reduce-your-carbon-footprint/>

