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## EARTHLY ADVENTURES

**Grades:** 2-5 (K-1, with accommodations)

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

**Materials:** An appropriate outside area with access to trees, flowers, etc; a bag full of dirt; “trail” markers such as peanuts, birdseed, and sunflower seeds; clues written on slips (see below); envelopes

**Relevant Subjects:** Science and Language Arts

### Preparation:

1. Find a nearby appropriate outside area where you can take your students to learn about the natural world. (If you have no appropriate access at all, consider bringing potted flowers, trees, etc., to use.)
2. Create clues that will lead students to think critically and to learn about different aspects of the natural world. Think of items you could use to help mark trails (such as unshelled peanuts for squirrels, birdseed, sunflower seeds, etc.).
3. Write the clues down on slips of recycled paper. There are two sets: those that you keep with you to hand to students to read (Clues 1, 3, 5), and those that you place in envelopes in the appropriate locations (Clues 2, 4, 6). (See below for details.)

**Important note:** This activity uses specific clues, objects and elements of the earth, but you could easily modify it to fit your own situation.

1. Let students know that you’re all going on an Earthly Adventure to make some discoveries about the natural world. Remind students to use their special quiet voices while outside to show respect for each other and the natural world.
2. Lead the group outside. Hand the first clue to a volunteer to read aloud:

**Clue #1:** *Welcome fellow earthlings! The earth is such a cool place. Our first clue will lead us to a place that keeps us cool on a hot summer day. Can you guess where it is? It is also thought of as the "earth's lungs." Follow the birdseed path to this special place.*

Give students time to respond to the clue and guess the special place. Point them to the birdseed path if they have difficulty finding it.

3. Once students reach the tree, have students look for the envelope with the next clue inside. Invite a student to open the envelope and read Clue #2:

**Clue #2:** *Welcome to the "Giving Tree." Trees give us so many wonderful things. Can you name one thing a tree provides for us, the animals or the environment? If we didn't have trees we wouldn't be able to breathe.*

Give students an opportunity to share all the things that trees give us; offer them additional age-appropriate ideas and facts. Ask students to share their ideas about what we can do to help trees.

4. Hand a student the next clue to read aloud:

**Clue #3:** *Follow the peanuts to the paper bag. It is full of something almost all plants and trees need to survive. Do you know what it might be? Follow and see....*

Have students guess what the clue might mean. Invite them to follow the trail of peanuts to the paper bag with soil in it.

5. Once students reach the paper bag, have students look for the envelope nearby; have a volunteer open the envelope and read aloud Clue #4:

**Clue #4:** *Put your hand inside and take a handful of earth. Look closely at your dirt. Do you know how soil helps the earth?*

Give students an opportunity to talk about what soil and dirt are made of, what soil/earth do to help our planet, etc. You can also talk about microorganisms, nutrients, and other age-appropriate facts of interest. Invite students to put their handful of dirt back into the earth, so that it can be used to help plants grow.

6. Hand another student the next clue to read aloud:

**Clue #5:** *Now follow the sunflower seeds and stop and smell the part of the plant that makes seeds. What could it be? Follow and see....*

Invite students to guess the answer to the clue. Lead them along the sunflower seed trail to an area with flowers.

7. Once students reach the flowers, have students look for the envelope nearby; have a volunteer open the envelope and read aloud Clue #6:

**Clue #6:** *Stop and smell the flowers! Aren't they beautiful? How do flowers make seeds? Do you know how a bee helps a flower make more flowers?*

Give students time to smell the flowers and to respond to how flowers make seeds and how bees help. Use this time to invite students to share other information about flowers and bees that they know, and for you to share age-appropriate information of interest.

8. Invite students to close their eyes and to “stop and think about the earthly things we learned about and how they help us, animals and the planet.” (trees, soil, flowers, bees, etc.) “What would our world be like without them?”
9. Ask to students to help you clean up the envelopes and any other props. Ask them, “What about the nuts and seeds? Do we need to clean them up? Will someone else do it?” (Depending on your situation, you may be able to leave the nuts and seeds where they are for neighborhood wildlife to take advantage of, or you may need to ask students for help in cleaning them up.)

### Sample Clues:

**Clue #1:** *Welcome fellow earthlings! The earth is such a cool place. Our first clue will lead us to a place that keeps us cool on a hot summer day. Can you guess where it is? It is also thought of as the "earth's lungs." Follow the birdseed path to this special place.*

**Clue #2:** *Welcome to the "Giving Tree." Trees give us so many wonderful things. Can you name one thing a tree provides for us, the animals or the environment? If we didn't have trees we wouldn't be able to breathe.*

**Clue #3:** *Follow the peanuts to the paper bag. It is full of something almost all plants and trees need to survive. Do you know what it might be? Follow and see....*

**Clue #4:** *Put your hand inside and take a handful of earth. Look closely at your dirt. Do you know how soil helps the earth?*

**Clue #5:** *Now follow the sunflower seeds and stop and smell the part of the plant that makes seeds. What could it be? Following and see....*

**Clue #6:** *Stop and smell the flowers! Aren't they beautiful? How do flowers make seeds? Do you know how a bee helps a flower make more flowers?*

**Activity by: Caroline Crane (M.Ed. Student)**