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PEDRO COMES FOR A VISIT

Grades: K through 4

Time: 45 minutes to several days

Materials: A parrot puppet; age-appropriate facts, statistics and information about rainforests and rainforest use (see our Resources section); examples of sustainably- and unsustainably-made rainforest products (use photos if you cannot acquire actual examples)

Relevant Subjects: Science, Social Studies, Geography, Language Arts, and, with modifications, Mathematics

Preparation: In order to build up excitement and curiosity, about a week before Pedro's visit, begin telling students each day that Pedro, who is from Central America, is coming to talk to their class, and that he is anxious to tell his story. Tell them nothing more.

1. Before school on the day of Pedro's visit, place him on a low branch in a tree by the school. (If there is no tree available, find an appropriate perching spot where he won't be disturbed until you're able to retrieve him.)
2. Take the students out to meet Pedro. (Slide your hand into the puppet to bring him alive.) Ask him if he'd like to come into the classroom and meet the children. He answers: "Sí, Señor(a)." Take Pedro out of the tree and lead him and the children back to the classroom. During the walk back, have Pedro ask lots of questions, such as whether there'll be delicious fruits and nuts in the school, whether the children will help him, whether they have ever seen such a magnificent bird as he.
3. Back in the classroom have Pedro tell his story:

Have him describe the beautiful rainforest where he is from, painting a vivid picture of the lush, life-filled world that is home to parrots and so many other species. Have him describe the complexity of interdependent life in the forests and share important information about the rainforest and its inhabitants.

When the image is complete, have him tell the children what is happening to the rainforests (deforestation for cattle grazing, making furniture, drilling for oil, etc.).

Then have Pedro say, “But that’s not all! It’s bad enough that our homes are being ruined, but we parrots are scared of something else, too.” Have Pedro explain about the capture of young parrots for the illegal pet trade.

“That is why I’m here today, to tell you about what is happening to parrots and to rainforests, so that you can help me and my friends.”

4. Invite the children to ask Pedro questions. When someone asks what they can do to help Pedro and the forest, have Pedro give them many positive choices, and explain his reasons for those choices.

5. Have Pedro ask you to bring out a box of items to show the children – some of which come at the expense of rainforests (like carvings made from rare woods or conventional coffee beans) and some of which come about only through sustainable practices (like buttons made from tagua nuts, shade grown coffee beans, and certain medicines). (Show photos if you don’t have actual objects.)

6. Have Pedro thank the children for talking to him and for caring about the rainforests and parrots like him. Have him remind them that their choices matter, that how they live their own lives makes a difference for others, and have him ask them to think about other ways in which they can help rainforests and parrots. Have him tell them that there is hope for the rainforests and for parrots, which is why he is visiting children and talking to them. “Tell your friends and your parents!” Pedro squawks, as he says, “Adiós. Muchas gracias.”

Alternative: Instead of having Pedro tell the children all they can do to help, you could have the children conduct their own research (or share information from rainforest books with them) and create a list (or poster, chart, etc.) of ways people can help rainforests and parrots. Their efforts could then be shared with others.

Extension: Invite the children to think of a project that they as a class can engage in to help rainforests, and then help them carry out that project.

Activity from *The Power and Promise of Humane Education*