

Chapter Two, Lesson One:

"Here Today, Still Here Tomorrow"

Concepts and Skills Addressed:

History
Interpersonal communication and
expression
Theater Arts



Materials Needed:

A cleared area for the performance, about 10' x 20'

Some simple props

- "Before Treasure Existed" - a stick for mixing, a trash can for a cook pot, some rulers and yardsticks for bones, a stuffed toy or substitute for a fish, a coat to drape over the old woman's shoulders.
- "One Maid's Trash is a Princess' Treasure" - two chairs to serve as horses, a trash can for the wash bucket, a broom to make the guard look official, a stone to serve as a spearhead, a chair or desk for Brenda to stand on.
- "Treasures Under the Tree House" - A shovel, a cap for Justin, a pillow for Dad's stomach, a stone to serve as a spearhead.

Materials Provided:

Script for "Here Today, Still Here Tomorrow"

Students will have the opportunity to dramatize the evolution of waste and waste disposal. They will see how waste continues to exist through time. They will also have some fun.

A. Procedure

1. Explain to the students that each short play illustrates something about waste disposal and the environment and to watch for these messages.
2. Choose a narrator to set the scene for each part and cast the characters a day or two in advance of the dramatization.
3. You may elect to have the students memorize their parts. This is not necessary, but helpful for other students to better understand the lesson.
4. Rehearse the sections briefly as you see fit.
5. Perform each part and go through the discussion questions between each dramatic section to make the point that there are ideas here beyond dramatic expression.



"Here Today, Still Here Tomorrow"

Part 1: "Before Treasure Existed"

Cast:

Narrator: A reader to set the scene

Thor: The provider for the cave

Mim: Keeper of the cave and Thor's wife

Junior: The couple's 12-year-old son

Pedra: The old woman who lives in the
cave next door



Narrator: We're somewhere in England and more than ten thousand years ago. It's summer; the weather is cool and cloudy. Thor and his son Junior are returning to the family cave. Thor's wife, Mim, and Pedra, the old woman who lives in the cave next door, are stretched out on a bear skin rug.

Mim: I'll tell ya, Pedra, things have been tough ever since Junior lost our hunting spear in that antelope.

Pedra: They didn't find it, huh?

Mim: No, and it was a good hit, too. They tracked that antelope even after it got dark, and some the next morning. But no antelope and no spear.

Pedra: An antelope would have been good, huh? All that meat to eat, and meat to dry for later, and the hide for a new coat and moccasins for everyone, maybe, and the bones...

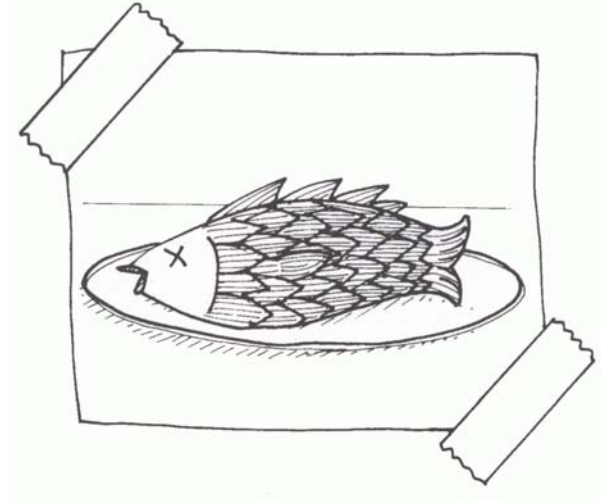
Mim: To lose the antelope and the spearhead...Poor Junior, he feels terrible. Thor's been working hard trying to make a new spearhead, but it's slow work. A chip here, a chip there. Then the stone breaks and he has to start all over again.

Pedra: I know what you mean. I remember the time my Gibb, may he rest in peace, lost our spear. It was winter. He had his chipping stone, but he had to dig in the snow to find his stash of spearhead rocks. We didn't eat for four days. The streams were frozen. Every animal was in its den. I told him, Gibb, make more spears, have some ready in case you lose one.

Mim: What a good idea. You don't have just one, you have ten.

Pedra: Yeah, but would Gibb listen? He'd wave that big meaty hand of his at me and say, "My father said, 'waste not want not.' And that's good enough for me."

Mim: Still, it's a good idea. I'll talk to Thor. Here they come. I can smell them. Maybe they've trapped something. A rabbit. Maybe a grouse. Wouldn't a nice tender grouse taste good?"



(Thor comes marching into the cave with Junior at his heels carrying a huge fish.)

Thor: Here we are. Hello, Pedra.

Junior: Here's dinner, Mom! (He slaps the fish into her lap.) And I picked these berries for dessert!

Mim: That's just great, Junior. Look at that fish. And I needed some fine needles for sewing. Now go out to the wood pile and get me some logs for the fire.

(Junior goes off.)

Thor, would you get me the cutting rock? Pedra, you'll stay for dinner?

(Pedra nods.)

Narrator: (With the family in the background eating.) Mim and her family used and saved everything they had. People made everything from nature, including their clothing, foot coverings, knives, spearheads, needles, thread. You name it, it came from animal or rock, tree, bush or grass. The loss of an important tool could mean hardship, starvation, even death. But as you'll see, nothing is ever lost forever.

Discussion Questions

What does this tell us about how people once lived?

They lived very simply in caves and ate what they could catch and kill.

What did they throw away?

Very little. They used almost everything they had and left the scraps for wild animals.

How did they use the items they had?

They used bones and stones for tools; they used wood for cooking and heating their cave.

What materials didn't the play mention that they probably used regularly?

Leaves, grass, teeth, bark, insects, reeds, flowers, herbs, intestines for bow strings, hemp for rope, logs for boats.

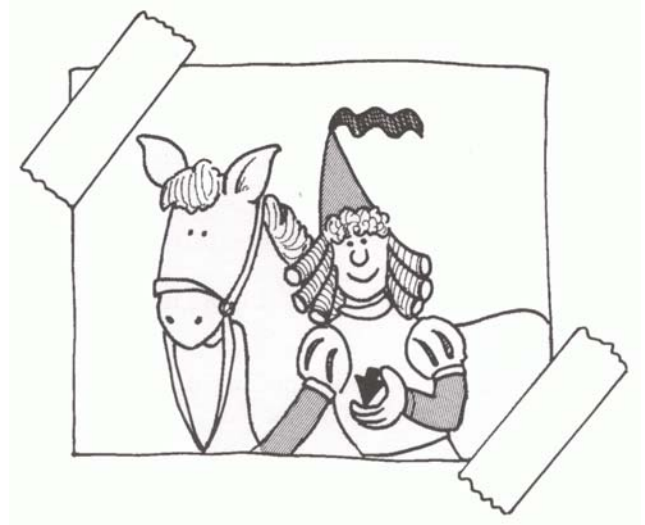
What makes it hard for us to use our resources in the same way?

In many cases, we have found other materials that last longer than the materials people used years ago.

Now, let's go on to the next part of the play. We'll see how people in cities hundreds of years ago threw away their garbage.

"Here Today, Still Here Tomorrow"

Part Two: "One Maid's Trash is a Princess' Treasure"



Cast:

Narrator: A reader to set the scene

Marie: A princess who lives in a palace

Felix: Commanding Officer of the army

Joe: The palace guard

Brenda: The palace chamber maid (cleaning person)

Narrator: It is Medieval times. The year A.D. 1350. There is no electricity, no plumbing, and no garbage collector. On this sunny, hot day, Princess Marie is going horseback riding with Sir Felix, Commanding Officer of the army. Joe, the palace guard, is letting the couple out by lowering the drawbridge over the castle's moat. As they cross the drawbridge, Brenda, the chamber maid, throws a buck of slop and dirt out of the second story window. The slop hits Joe on the head and the dirt sprays over Commander Felix and Princess Marie.

Joe: (Shouting.) Brenda, why don't you watch where you're throwing your garbage!

Brenda: (Yelling from the window.) Where else should I throw it? We always throw it out the window.

Joe: Well, you hit the Princess. You could hurt someone.

Brenda: Oh, my goodness. Princess Marie, I'm so sorry. I didn't know.

(Felix and Marie jump down from their horses.)

Marie: That's OK, Brenda. What else can you do with that stuff? (Picking up a long flat stone.) Say, what's this? It looks like a knife made of stone.

Felix: I think it's a spearhead. It's maybe a thousand years old.

Marie: Really? How did it get here?

Felix: I don't know. Maybe it was left here long ago. Or maybe it got lost. Some hunter lost it killing a wolf. Maybe Brenda cleaned it up and didn't notice it.

Marie: Whatever. I really like it. I'm going to keep it. Something this old that lasts this long is valuable.

Narrator: Marie and Felix are right. The stone is part of a tool - a spearhead - that has been around for a very long time. Materials like stone and metals are very durable. They last a long time.

(Another bucketful of slop and dirt flies out the window.)

Joe: Brenda!

Marie: Maybe this isn't the best way to get rid of this stuff...



Discussion Questions

Where did the spearhead come from?

It's probably the one Junior lost in part one of our story.

What would happen if we all threw our trash out the window?

If everyone threw their trash out the window, our cities and towns would look like garbage dumps.

Is it healthful to throw trash out the window? Why?

No, it's unhealthy and it's ugly. Trash contains decomposing food scraps, broken bottles, and rusty cans that are harmful to our health. Trash must be handled carefully and sent to a landfill, incinerator, compost pile, or recycling center.

Let's see what happens when we don't dispose of our trash properly.

"Here Today, Still Here Tomorrow"

Part 3: "Treasure Under the Tree House"

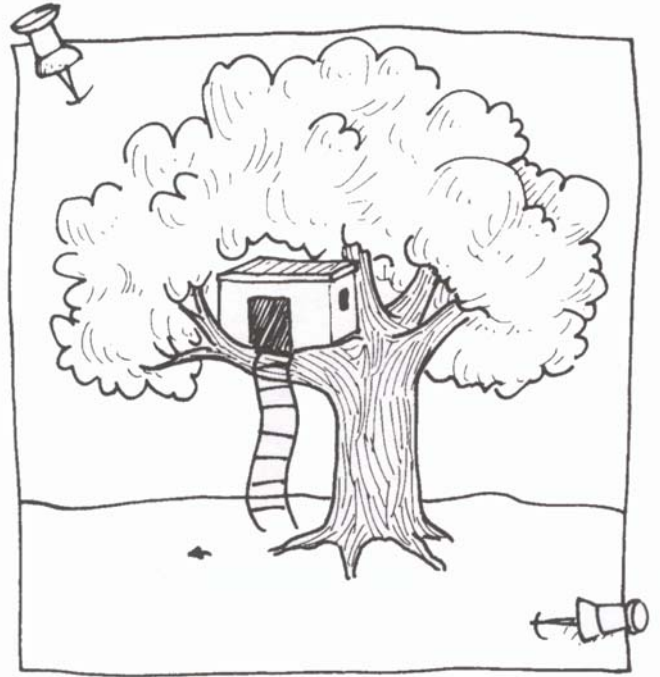
Cast:

Narrator: A reader to set the scene

Dad: A handyman with two children

Justin: Dad's 10-year-old son

Sarah: Dad's 12-year-old daughter



Narrator: Dad and his wife, Judy, live in the country. Dad's children, Justin and Sarah, have been begging him to help them build a tree house in a big old oak tree near the house.

(Dad and Justin enter the scene talking.)

Justin: Here, Dad, this is the tree. It's got a great view and you can see people coming from all directions.

Dad: It looks good, Justin. We'll have to clear away some of the bushes first, so that you can get up into it.

Sarah: (Lagging behind because she's carrying a shovel.) Phew, can I stop now? I'm pooped.

Justin: Sarah, Dad says this will work just fine! I get dibs on sleeping out here my first night!

Sarah: Give it up, Justin, this was my idea...

Dad: Hey, we're not building anything unless you're willing to share.

Justin: Okay.

Sarah: Okay.

Dad: Give me that shovel, Sarah. I need to dig up some of the brush.

Justin: Hey, look at this. (Digging in the dirt with his hands, he pulls out a spearhead.)



Sarah: What is it?

Dad: It looks like a spearhead. (He shows it to Sarah.) I think it is. It's probably pretty old. It was chipping out with a chipping stone. Look at the workmanship. It probably took some guy a long time to make this.

Justin: Maybe there's more here. (He digs in the bushes at the base of the tree.) Ouch! Something cut me!

Dad: Come here. I've got a bandana to wrap it in.

Justin: What cut me?

Sarah: Looks like a bottle or can. There's lots of 'em here.

Dad: Somebody used this area as a dump. Probably the farmer who owned this place before we bought it. He most likely just dug a pit and tossed in everything he couldn't use.

Sarah: You're right, Dad. There's bottles here, old tin cans, old milking buckets, rusty springs...

Dad: C'mon, Sarah, let's take care of Justin's hand. We'll come out later and clean this mess up. I'll bet we can take the cans and bottles to the recycling center.

Discussion Questions

Where did the spearhead come from?

We know that it is Junior's lost spearhead.

What does this tell us about our world?

Our planet is alive, growing and changing. It continues to use its resources repeatedly to make new leaves, new grass, new trees, new rivers. Some trash decomposes into dirt or humus, but that takes time. Some things take hundreds of years to break down. We need to take a new look at what we use and how we use it to preserve our earth.

Why would someone throw trash under the tree like that?

Our attitudes toward trash and garbage have changed repeatedly over the centuries. Farmers commonly wasted very little and because they had a lot of land, they often used a small portion of it for an open dump to dispose of their own trash.

What should we do with our trash?

Recyclables can be separated out and taken to a recycling center. Paint cans, chemicals, old medicines and many cleaning supplies are called household hazardous wastes and should be disposed of separately from the rest of our garbage. Some community governments sponsor household hazardous waste days to collect these wastes for proper treatment and disposal. In Chapter Three, we'll talk about how each of us creates trash every day.

Social Studies/ Art Activity

Mural, Mural on the Wall...

Objective

Students will understand the importance of protecting the environment by constructing a mural, or collage, to identify and illustrate the environment as it is today and the environment as it will appear in the future if we take care to preserve it.



Time Needed for Activity

1 to 2 hours

Materials Needed

- Magazines and newspapers that can be cut apart.
- A divided bulletin board with each side labeled to represent the world environment today and the environment of the future.
- Scissors
- Stapler or thumb tacks

Procedure

1. Bring in, or ask your students to bring in, old newspapers and magazines that can be dismantled and cut apart during the exercise.
2. Design and assemble a bulletin board with two halves marked and labeled to correspond to the areas outlined in the objective above. Title the halves: World Environment Today and the Environment of the Future.

3. Explain to and discuss with the students the differences between these areas before the exercise begins.
4. Set aside a time for students to go through the materials collected and put them in the appropriate place on the board.
5. When the collage is done, ask the students which pictures or words best describe how they feel about the environment, taking care to let them know that they don't have to choose the item they put on the board.