Little GreenThumbs

My Climate Story

A tool-kit for working through the meaning of climate change with courage and compassion

8 lesson teaching guide

ECO ANXIOUS STORIES

The ***"My Climate Story Tool-Kit"*** was developed for Little Green Thumbs by Rachel Malena-Chan, Owner and Story Strategist, Eco-Anxious Stories, 2022.

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For more resources like this, visit Eco-Anxious Stories at

www.ecoanxious.ca

Bringing Lessons Together

My Climate Story was prepared as a companion to the ***Plants, People, and Climate Change*** lesson plans from Little Green Thumbs. They can also be used as stand-alone lessons.

Contents:

- Overview and approach
- Teacher reflection guide
- Teaching instructions and activities

My Climate Story Activities

1. Life is Linked
2. Healthy Homes
3. Choices make Change
4. Climate High-5 Sharing is Caring
5. Diving into the Deep
6. Climate Storytellers 1: Super Steward of the Soil
7. Climate Storytellers 2: Terrific Tree Planter, Protector of Water Ways, Friend to Food Systems
8. Climate Storytellers 3: School Strikers Telling My Climate Story

Overview: From Awareness to Action

Mobilizing Climate Stories

Climate change is a big, complex topic. By anticipating the anxiety that bubbles up around climate change, we can equip students (and educators) to sit with their uncomfortable feelings, to connect the dots between science and "real life", and to ***channel anxieties into meaningful action.***

Student Tool-Kit Overview

This tool-kit is set up to support teachers, parents, and educators to frame plant and plant science in a mobilizing way, ***connecting the dots*** to what already matters to students, to the choices they have, to the world they want to help create, and to the power they have to take part in meaningful solutions. The activities and lessons outlined here are designed to compliment the **"Plants, People, and Climate Change"** and bring science and story together.

Lesson 1-3

Focus on habitat, plants, and us, with activities that help set the stage for student climate stories.

Lesson 4-5

Cover climate change and plant adaptation, and engage in activities that support students to explore deep feelings.

Lesson 6-7

Connect climate to soil and food systems solutions, with a focus on storytellers making a difference.

Lesson 8

Get excited about solutions and action, with activities and projects to show how climate stories an inspire others.

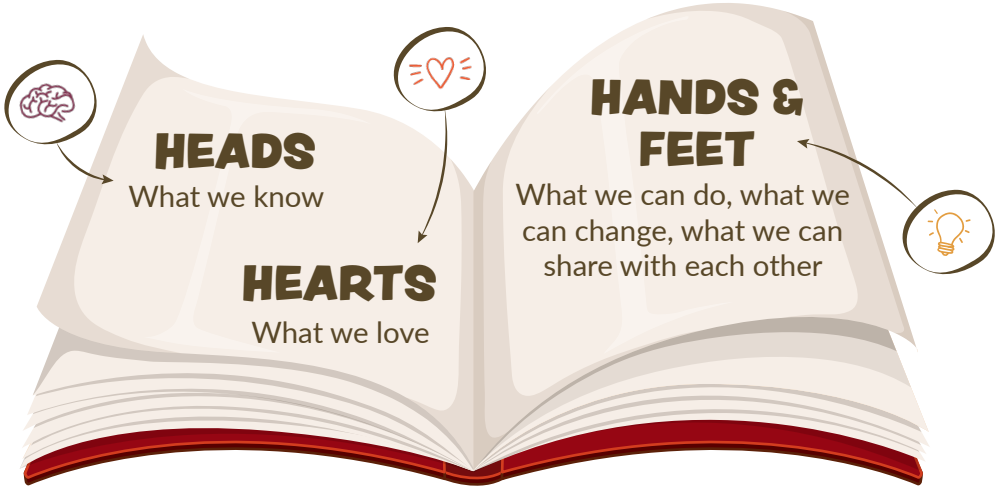
Approach: Engaging Through Story

Why Stories?

The science that links plants, people, and the planet is crucial to kids' understanding of the world around them. By including a **storytelling lens**, we hope to give educators a way to connect the dots between what we know from the science and **what it means to us**.

Interpreting the meaning, or "moral" of a story, requires us to engage with values, and values are expressed **emotionally**. While some emotions help to mobilize action, other feelings can have a paralyzing effect.[1] "My Climate Story" offers tools for teaching climate science in a way that makes space for uncomfortable emotions (anxiety, fear, uncertainty, powerlessness).

Climate stories are about using our



"My Climate Story" frames information about climate change through the lens of values, identity, and relationships. By casting them as key characters in the story about climate change, this tool-kit helps kids move from awareness to reflection and capacity for action.

Little Green Thumbs uses the lens of plant science to teach kids that "Plants, People, and Climate Change" are interconnected. Climate change is a story about us as people and our relationship to plants and planet. Humans play key roles in the health of the planet.

[1] For more about the foundations of the approach, see Marshall Ganz's work on public narrative.

Approach: Engaging Through Story

Little GreenThumbs

How can we make climate change engagement meaningful instead of paralyzing, polarizing, and overwhelming?

Nurture mobilizing climate stories rooted in the values of truth, courage, and compassion!

Climate Connection:

"This climate story is about you and me and the things that matter to us."

Climate Connection:

"Human beings are key characters in this story, making choices that are changing the climate."

Climate Connection:

"When we work together on climate solutions, we are capable of amazing things."

Climate Connection:

"We can care for each other, share our stories, and take meaningful action."

For more about a narrative-based framework for climate engagement, see Malena-Chan, R. 2019.

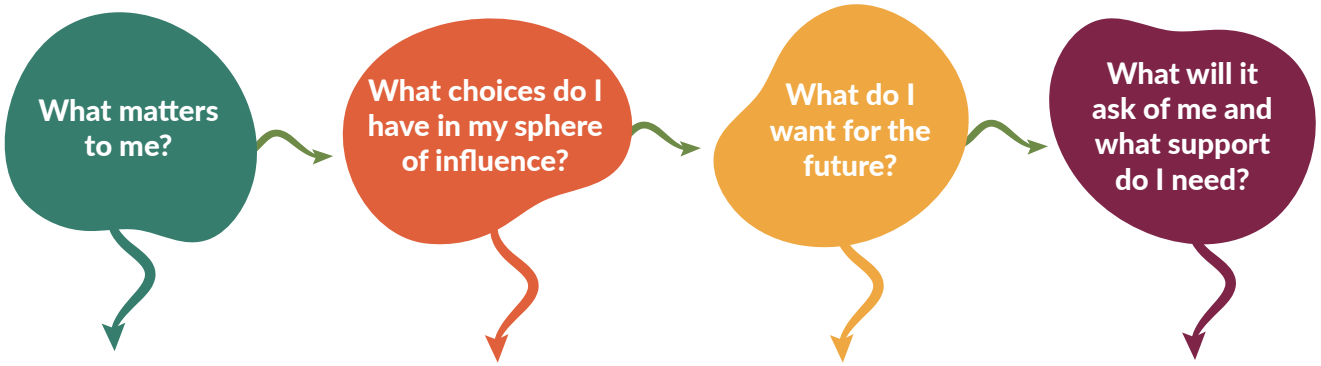
Teacher Tool-Kit: Reflection

Reflecting On Our Climate Stories

Prior to using this tool-kit with your students, we encourage you to take a few minutes to **reflect on your own climate story**. These reflection questions cast you as the "lead" in the narrative, highlighting how your values, experiences, context, and limitations come together to inform **your lens on climate change.**

This is a chance to get honest with yourself about **your anxieties and insecurities** related to introducing climate concepts in the classroom. It may illuminate areas where you need **support to dive into this adventure** with confidence, clarity, and curiosity.

Connect the dots of your own Climate Story



What gives you confidence about the science of climate change?

How do you connect the dots between the science of climate and your own life, your own values?

How do feelings of anxiety, worry, grief, or fear show up when you think about climate change?

How does climate change relate to your role as an educator?

When did you realize you had a responsibility to make the planet a healthier place for people and plants?

How do you make sense of your power as an individual when climate change is such a complicated thing?

When you think of the skills people will need to be healthy in the future, what comes to mind?

When you imagine the future you want for yourself, your students, and the planet we share, what do you see, hear, smell, feel?

How do you make sense of your choices today when the future is so uncertain?

What climate solutions are already in the works in your community, neighbourhood, in your professional circles, in your group of friends?

What does a meaningful response to climate change look like in your life?

What support do you need to feel confident sharing your climate story?

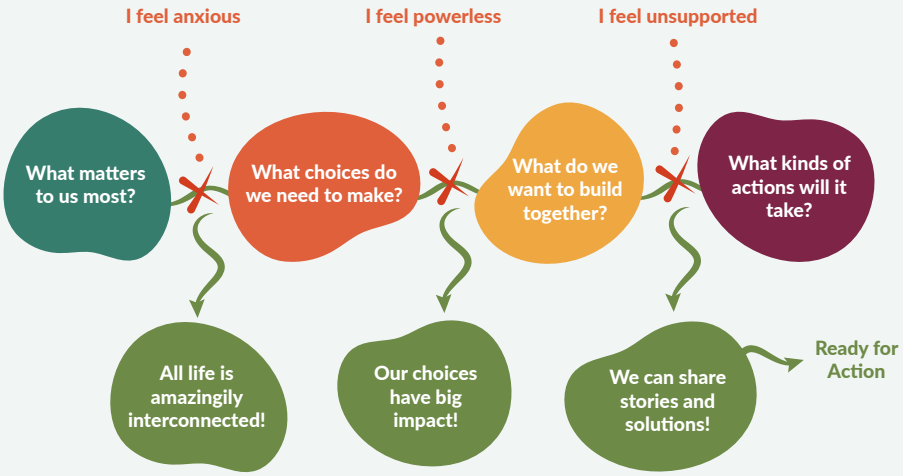
Eco-Anxiety and Engagement

Eco-Anxiety: What Is It?

Eco-anxiety is an umbrella term used to refer to feelings of worry or fear about climate change that manifest in mental, emotional, physical ways. Eco-anxiety isn't a dis-order in a clinical sense, but an "inevitable and even healthy response to the ecological threats we are facing" (check out Climate Psychology Alliance for more on **climate emotions**).

Whether you're a teacher, a parent, or a student, anxiety about climate change is normal! A 2021 survey looking at climate anxiety in 10,000 children and young people (aged 16-25) in 10 countries around the world found that 59% are very or extremely worried. We need to make space for these feelings in the classroom if we're going to move from awareness to action. Storytelling allows us to acknowledge complex feelings while also fostering emotions that mobilize us.

Hold space for immobilizing feelings...



Support the transition to mobilizing feelings!

For more about how to talk to kids about their eco-anxieties, see the work of Caroline Hickman.

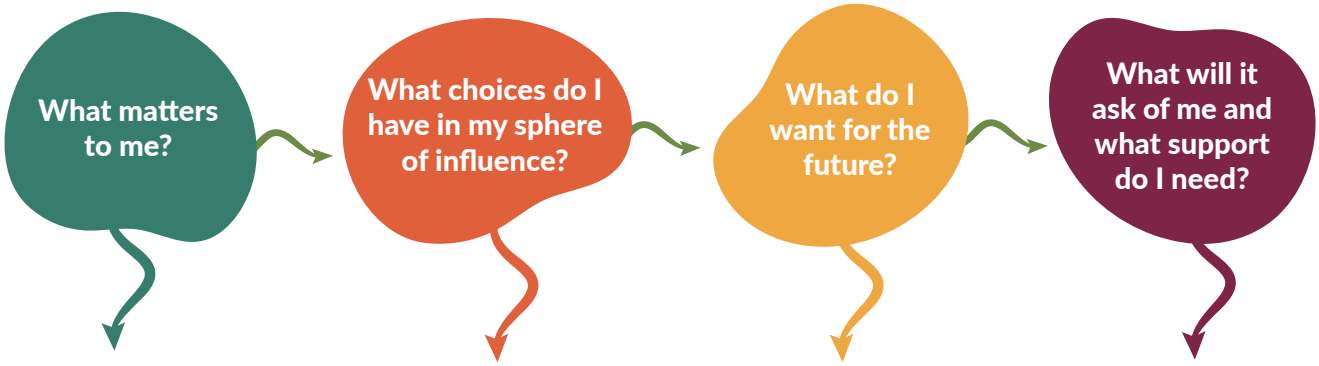
Teacher Tool-Kit: My Story

Story of Self Based on theory by Marshall Ganz

Now that you've done some thinking about the key elements of your climate story, consider what it would mean to share it with others. Take a second to tune into the feelings evoked by this story you find yourself in.

How would you frame this narrative for your students? Or for parents who might contact you with questions about this unit? What about discussing it with your your peers and administrators? What support do you need to share these narratives with confidence?

Practice Weaving Messages Together.



"I'm bringing this topic to our classroom because_____"

"I'm confident in the science behind our understanding of climate change because_____"

"Even as a teacher/grown-up, I feel scared, anxious, confused about climate change, and when I do, I _____."

"As a teacher, it's my job to_____"

"I came to realize that I have to make a choice when it comes to my responsibility to _____"

"Even though climate change is outside of my control, I can still respond with kindness and courage because _____"

"I know how important it is that people all around the world take action on climate change now, because without everyone working together, _____"

"I want to make sure my students leave my classroom with a better sense of _____ and stronger commitment to _____"

"Even though I might not see the whole impact of my choices, I know that bringing climate into the classroom creates space to _____"

"We're talking about some big ideas, but there are easy ways to join in on solutions, like _____"

"In my own life, responding meaningfully to climate change looks like _____"

"If I'm going to introduce my climate story and this climate change unit with confidence, I need_____ from _____"

My Climate Story: Life is Linked

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Lesson 1

Teaching Instructions

This first worksheet helps connect the dots between "Plants, People, and Climate Change" and students' lived experience by asking the question "What matters to me?" While information about interdependence might be new, the idea here is to bring science and story together. We start by exploring what your students already **KNOW about being alive** and what is already **MEANINGFUL** to them as human beings.

Say:

Climate change matters to us because all life is linked - it's "interdependent." Before we learn more about climate change and plants, let's remember that this is also a **story** about YOU and ME. As we learn more about plant health, remember, what impacts plants and soil also impacts YOU and YOUR STORY!

Do:

Invite students to fill the circle with a drawing or a list of what's important to them in their life. (Eg. friends, siblings, parents and grandparents, pets, favorite food, favorite book, their house/community).

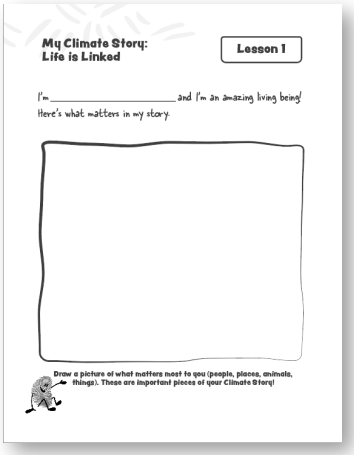
Option:

Share worksheets with a friend or discuss as a group.

Climate Stories are about using our...

This lesson can help students connect core climate concepts to their everyday lives.

Lesson 1 Worksheet



My Climate Story: Life is Linked

Lesson 1

I'm _____ and I'm an amazing living being!
Here's what matters in my story.

Draw a picture of what matters most to you (people, places, animals, things). These are important pieces of your Climate Story!

My Climate Story: Healthy Homes

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Lesson 2

Teaching Instructions

This activity helps students think about their relationship to plant needs by thinking the environment as the setting of our shared story. The idea is to apply the concept of a "healthy environment" to our everyday lives and help students relate to interdependence in a tangible way. By extending the idea of "needs" beyond the physical, students will start to reflect on the stakes of the story and all that is worth protecting.

Say:

Every story needs a SETTING, and your climate story starts right where you are! Just like plants, we all need a home environment that supports our life. Think about the things in your space that help you thrive.

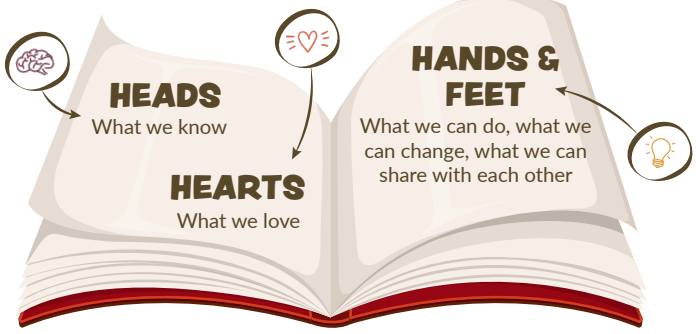
Do:

Ask students to draw a line to the best things about their environment, and encourage them to add their own ideas.

Option:

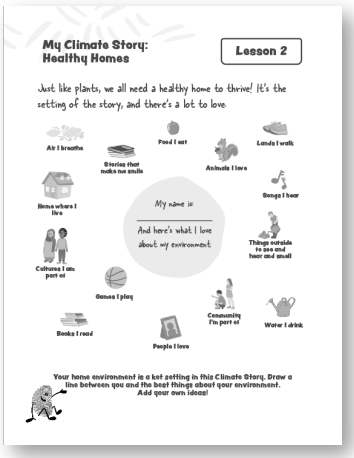
Share with a friend or discuss as a group.

Climate Stories are about using our...



This lesson starts to connect climate concepts with core values, bridging mental and emotional.

Lesson 2 Worksheet



My Climate Story: Healthy Homes

Lesson 2

Just like plants, we all need a healthy home to thrive! It's the setting of the story, and there's a lot to love.

Air I breathe

Stories that make me smile

Food I eat

Animals I love

Lands I walk

Home where I live

Songs I hear

My name is:

_____

And here's what I love about my environment

Things outside to see and hear and smell

Cultures I am part of

Games I play

Community I'm part of

Water I drink

Books I read

People I love

Your home environment is a ket setting in this Climate Story. Draw a line between you and the best things about your environment. Add your own ideas!

My Climate Story: Choices make Change

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Lesson 3

Teaching Instructions

The third worksheet helps students think about our relationship to "plant adaptations" and the ROLE that humans have played in the lives of plants over time. We're setting the foundation for students to learn about our collective responsibility to address climate change, but we want to avoid giving students the sense that all individuals are equally to blame for climate change. For now, we're focusing on the idea that OUR CHOICES MATTER when it comes to plant and planet health, and that we each have a sphere of influence.

Say:

Human beings like us are important CHARACTERS in the story about plants. Our choices - the things we do and don't do - have an impact on the things plants need to be healthy. We're change-makers. Our choices are a big deal!

Do:

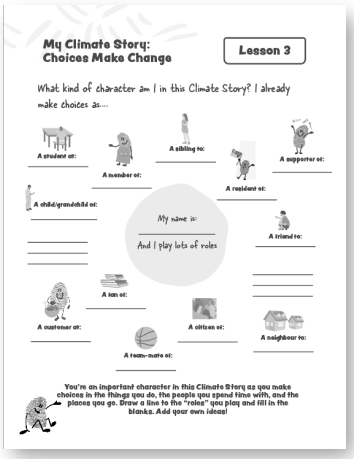
Ask students to fill in the blanks, identifying the roles they play in their everyday lives.

Option:

Ask students to pick a "character" they play and tell a friend about the kinds of choices they make in that role. For older grades, ask students to think about how people in the future might be impacted by the choices people make today. Reflect on how other people (past and present) make choices that have a big impact on our stories. We're connected.

This lesson starts to connect concepts and behaviours, mental to physical.

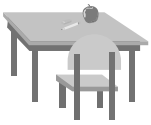
Lesson 3 Worksheet



My Climate Story: Choices Make Change

Lesson 3

What kind of character am I in this Climate Story? I already make choices as....



A student at:

_____

A member of:

_____

A sibling to:

_____

A resident of:

_____

A supporter of:

_____

A child/grandchild of:

_____

_____

_____

_____

My name is:

_____

And I play lots of roles

A friend to:

_____

_____

_____

_____

A fan of:

_____

A customer at:

_____

A citizen of:

_____

A neighbour to:

_____

A team-mate of:

_____

You're an important character in this Climate Story as you make choices in the things you do, the people you spend time with, and the places you go. Draw a line to the "roles" you play and fill in the blanks. Add your own ideas!

My Climate Story: Climate High-5

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Lesson 4

Teaching Instructions

The fourth worksheet aims to simplify the KEY MESSAGES from climate scientists in a way that is easy to remember and fun to communicate. Here, we're helping students connect the dots between:

- the greenhouse gas effect (it's warming)
- it's anthropogenic sources (it's people)
- the suffering it causes for many living things (it's bad)
- the science is settled about the need for action (we're sure)
- and how we must work together with courage and compassion if we want to make the world a better place for people, plants, and the planet (we can link up!).

Say:

Climate change is a big topic, but we don't have to be experts to tell our own climate stories. We just need to remember the climate high-five!

Do:

Ask students to trace their hand and use the worksheet to share key messages.

Option:

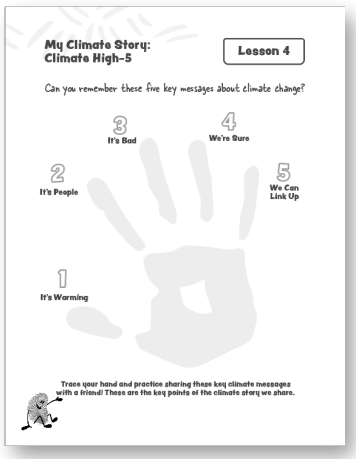
On the "pinky finger" point, emphasize that working together means promising (pinky promising) to be there for each other. Remind students that when we feel big feelings about climate change, we can always turn to a friend or a trusted adult to talk about how we feel.

On the other hand, ask your students to think of five climate solutions or actions.

Climate Stories are about using our...

This lesson brings concepts, values, and behaviours together in the context of climate change.

Lesson 4 Worksheet



My Climate Story: Climate High-5

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Lesson 4

What is a Climate High-5?

#	Key Message	Explanation	Hand Cue
1	**It's WARMING!** The planet is heating up, throwing it off balance.	Climate change is making the planet's temperature go up, kind of like when you're sick with a fever.	**Thumbs up = too hot** **Thumbs down = too cold** **Move your thumb back and forth to show how the temperature is out of balance**
2	**It's PEOPLE** Some human activities cause the planet to warm up.	Human-made systems are causing changes that impact the planet's environment, which people and plants depend on.	**Pointer finger = pointing to ourselves as humans, pointing at the things people could do to stop problems**
3	**It's BAD** Climate change is harmful for people, plants, and the planet.	These changes are bad - they make it harder for people, plants, and the planet to be healthy.	**Middle finger = not good!** **We don't point this finger because we don't want to hurt others**
4	**We're SURE** That it's time to take action.	Scientists all around the world are studying climate change. They tell us that we must take action now.	**Ring finger =** **You might give someone a ring if you're sure about how you want your future to look**
5	**We can LINK UP** And make a difference.	We might feel small, but when we link up together, we can make things better for everyone.	**Pinky finger =** **small and not very strong on its own but perfect for linking up to take care of each other!**

Linking up means making a promise to be there for each other.
Who do you turn to when you want to share how you feel about climate change? How do you care for yourself and others?

My Climate Story: Climate High-5

Lesson 4

Can you remember these five key messages about climate change?

3
It's Bad

4
We're Sure

2
It's People

5
We Can Link Up

1
It's Warming

Trace your hand and practice sharing these key climate messages with a friend! These are the key points of the climate story we share.

My Climate Story: Sharing is Caring

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Lesson 4

Climate Story Discussion Intro

This activity can be integrated with lessons 4-8 if teachers or parents are looking for a way to SUMMARIZE and SHARE climate stories. The goal here is to hold space for kids to work through their relationship to what they've learned so far and express any feelings or questions they might be wrestling with. Remind kids that it's good to connect around our shared feelings, even when those feelings are uncomfortable, Tell them that the lessons coming up are all about climate solutions and how we can help plants - and the planet - to be healthy.

Say:

We are INTERCONNECTED with plants and their environments. That means we are CHARACTERS in this story, and so are the plants and animals around us! The Earth is our shared home. It's our story's SETTING. Let's talk about what it feels like to be part of such a big and exciting story.

Do:

Ask the students to sit in a circle and start by recapping the climate high-5. Explain that everyone is going to get a chance to speak but if they don't want to share, they can pass. Remind students to listen if it's not their turn.

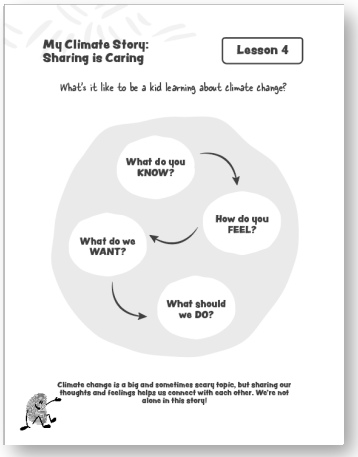
Option:

Tie this activity to lessons about Indigenous Peoples and cultural practices based on sharing stories to learn, grow, and care for the Earth.

Climate Stories are about using our...

This lesson brings concepts, values, and behaviours together in the context of climate change.

Lesson 4 Worksheet



My Climate Story: Sharing is Caring

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 4

How are we feeling about climate change?

We are INTERDEPENDENT with everything on this planet we share. That means we are all key CHARACTERS in this climate story. Let's talk about what it feels like to be part of such a big and exciting story.

Additional Prompts:

What do you KNOW?

Did you know that we are all part of nature?
What do you know about the interdependence of people, plants, and planet? What do you know about climate change? (e.g. our use of plants everyday, the boreal forest, or the concept of one ocean)

How do you FEEL?

How does talking about climate change make you feel?
The impacts of climate change on plants, planet, and people mean a lot to us and it's ok if you feel big feelings about it. (e.g. optimistic, sad, scared, anxious, angry, energized, motivated, determined)

What do we WANT?

If you could design the world differently, what changes would you make?
What climate solutions have you heard about that could make things better for plants, planet, and people? (e.g. green energy, zero-waste living, a vegetarian diet, or using public transit)

What should we DO?

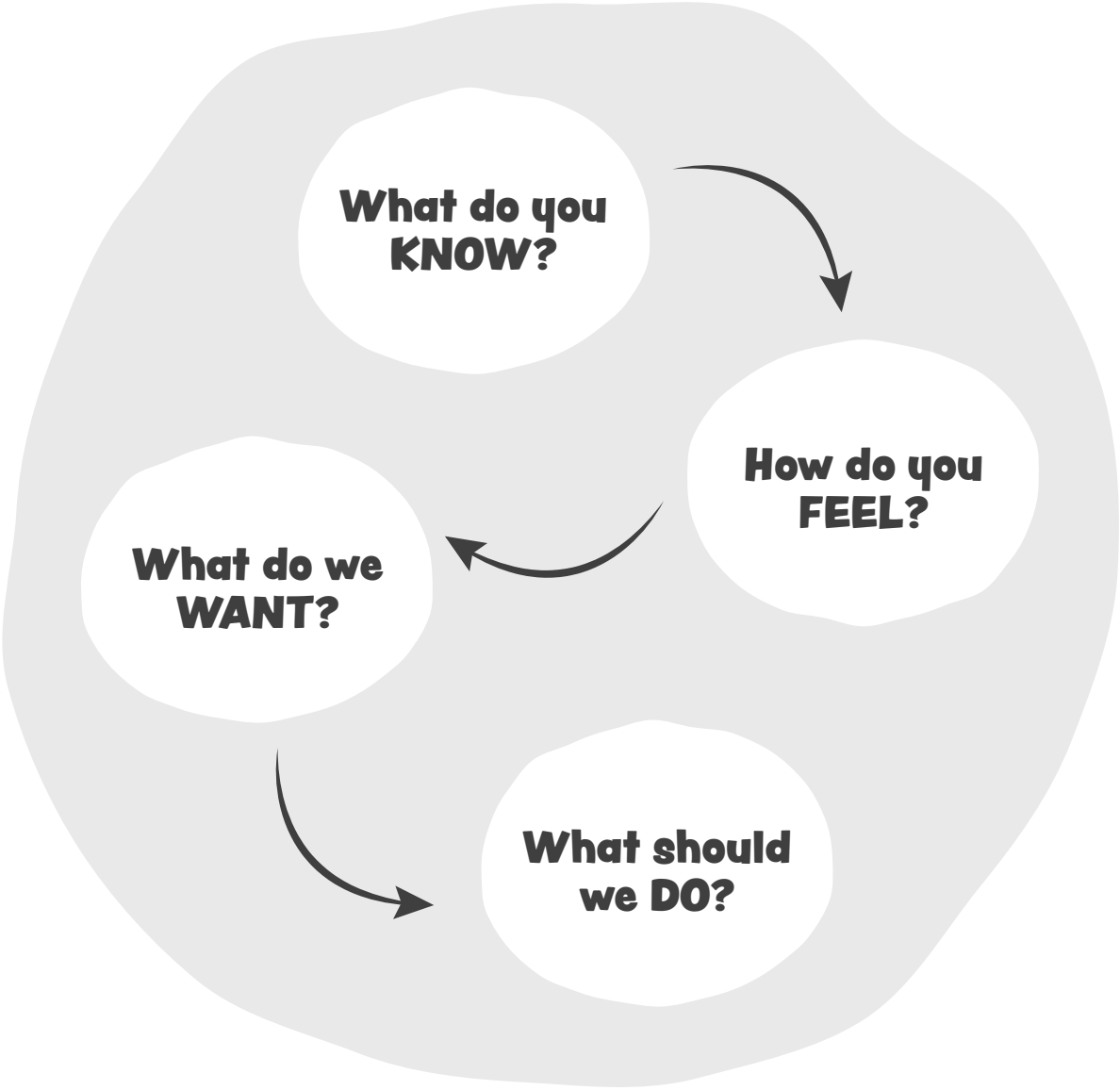
What do you think kids can do to take action on climate change?
When we work together we are powerful! Who can you join up with to make change happen? (e.g. your family, friends, classmates, community leaders)

Climate change is a big and sometimes scary topic, but sharing our thoughts and feelings helps us connect with each other. We're not alone in this story!

My Climate Story: Sharing is Caring

Lesson 4

What's it like to be a kid learning about climate change?



Climate change is a big and sometimes scary topic, but sharing our thoughts and feelings helps us connect with each other. We're not alone in this story!

My Climate Story: Diving into the Deep

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Lesson 5

Teaching Instructions

This activity aligns with lessons about the impacts of climate change on plants and people. The goal here is to prepare for the DEEP THOUGHTS and DARK FEELINGS that can arise when discussing the threat climate change poses to the planet's ecosystems. Remind students that when our hearts hurt about climate change, it's because we love the people, places, plants, and animals around us. And that's a wonderful thing! LOVE is the source of our COURAGE to act and our COMPASSION for each other. So let's dive in!

Say:

In order to move from AWARENESS of climate change to ACTION, we need to dive into some deep - and sometimes dark - feelings. Here are some questions to help you through.

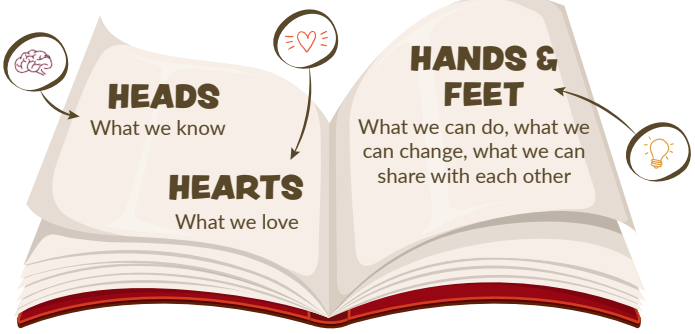
Do:

Ask the kids to think about how climate change makes them feel. Invite them to circle the emotions they feel (or have felt in the past). Use the Bubble Breathing exercise to model emotional regulation tools.

Option:

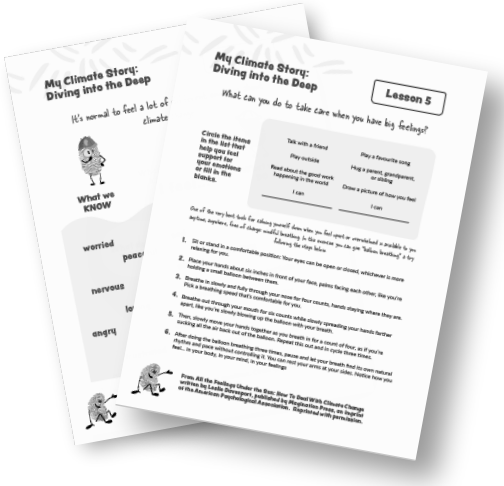
Use the prompts on the teacher worksheet to open up discussion about managing deep feelings. Tie this activity to a mindfulness practice, a yoga session, a walk in nature, or another quiet opportunity for reflection.

Climate Stories are about using our...



This lesson focuses in on values and emotions - heart stuff in the context of climate change.

Lesson 5 Worksheets



More on eco-anxiety from psychotherapist Caroline Hickman and researcher Renee Lertzman.

My Climate Story: Diving into the Deep

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 5

How do we get from climate awareness to climate action?

Does climate change make you feel...

Confused?
Scared?
Worried?
Uncertain?
Determined?

Big feelings about climate change are normal, and it's OK to feel a lot of different feelings at once. Emotions bubble up because you are linked to other people, and to plants and ecosystems. If you get stuck feeling a certain way, take a deep breath. Find a quiet place.

What do you hear your mind saying?

What do you feel your body telling you?

Try out some of these practices:

Smile.
Tune into your thoughts & feelings.
Turn to someone you trust.

As thoughts come into your mind, smile, say "thank you" to the thought bubble, and picture it floating away. Remember that there are people around you who love you, and who want to help you work through your thoughts and feelings.

Who can you reach out to for support?

It's good to sit with difficult feelings, but it can also feel good to turn feelings into actions! Connect with others and share your story.

It helps when you can channel your fears into action. This won't make your tangled feelings go away altogether, but it's a great way to connect with other people and make the world better than it would otherwise be. We each have a role to play!

Who can you join up with to take action?

What does helping mean to you?

Inspired by psychotherapist Caroline Hickman:
https://vimeo.com/361282173

My Climate Story: Diving into the Deep

Lesson 5

It's normal to feel a lot of different emotions about climate change.

What we KNOW

I feel...

What we DO

worried
sad
confused
peaceful
brave
curious
scared
nervous
uncertain
loving
motivated
OK
angry
alone
angry
frustrated
supported
loved

It's OK to dive deep into our emotions. Circle your climate feeling and add your own ideas.

My Climate Story: Diving into the Deep

Lesson 5

What can you do to take care when you have big feelings?

Circle the items in the list that help you feel support for your emotions or fill in the blanks.

Talk with a friend	Play a favourite song
Play outside	Hug a parent, grandparent, or sibling
Read about the good work happening in the world	Draw a picture of how you feel
I can _____	I can _____

One of the very best tools for calming yourself down when you feel upset or overwhelmed is available to you anytime, anywhere, free of charge: mindful breathing. In this exercise you can give "balloon breathing" a try following the steps below.

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position: Your eyes can be open or closed, whichever is more relaxing for you.
2. Place your hands about six inches in front of your face, palms facing each other, like you're holding a small balloon between them.
3. Breathe in slowly and fully through your nose for four counts, hands staying where they are. Pick a breathing speed that's comfortable for you.
4. Breathe out through your mouth for six counts while slowly spreading your hands farther apart, like you're slowly blowing up the balloon with your breath.
5. Then, slowly move your hands together as you breath in for a count of four, as if you're sucking all the air back out of the balloon. Repeat this out and in cycle three times.
6. After doing the balloon breathing three times, pause and let your breath find its own natural rhythm and pace without controlling it. You can rest your arms at your sides. Notice how you feel... in your body, in your mind, in your feelings.

From All the Feelings Under the Sun: How To Deal With Climate Change written by Leslie Davenport, published by Magination Press, an imprint of the American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

My Climate Story: Climate Storytellers

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 6/7

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Next, let's further explore how we can use our head, hands, heart and feed to steward healthy soil (Lesson 6) and support food and water systems (Lesson 7). This section looks at 'climate storytellers' who are focused on the health of people, plants, and the planet. These activities can be done as a class or in small groups. The stories demonstrate that anyone can take action. It's not about being a hero, it's about doing something that is meaningful based on who, what, where, when, and why we are! Each of the storytellers shows courage and compassion, using their stories that help other people.

Say:

When we share our climate stories with others, we help inspire other people to take ACTION. Let's tell our climate stories and work together, just like _____.

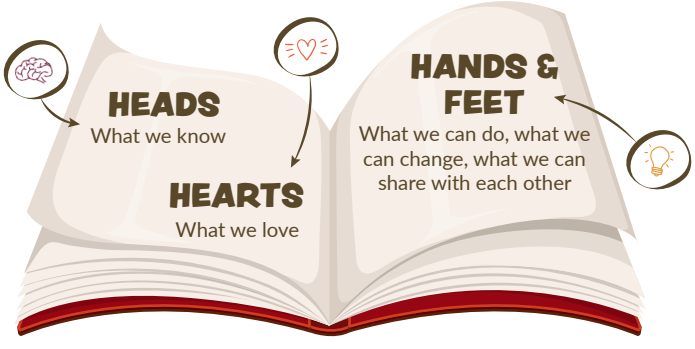
Do:

Ask the kids to read the story snapshot and/or look up a video or news article about the storyteller. Ask the students to use the template and write down or draw a 'snapshot' of this person's climate story.

Option:

Integrate this activity with a lesson on community or civic engagement. Ask kids to think about why this storyteller is choosing to share their story with a wide group of people they don't know. How is this a choice based in the values of courage and compassion?

Climate Stories are about using our...



This lesson focuses on behaviors - how we can use our hands and feet to join in on climate solutions to make plants and the planet healthier.

Lesson 6/7 Worksheets

My Climate Story: Super Steward of the Soil

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 6

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot: Elaine Ingham

Who: This is ELAINE INGHAM and she has a climate story. Elaine is a soil microbiologist. A soil microbiologist is someone who explores how soil works.

What: Elaine uses what she knows about soil to teach other people about the links between healthy soil, healthy plants, healthy people, and a healthy planet!

Why: Elaine has always loved microbiology, the study of tiny living things. She thinks people should be learning from plants!

How: Elaine teamed up with farmers and scientists to work together and learn about soil systems. She uses her voice to speak to groups about healthy soil.

Protecting soil is a solution for climate change!

My Climate Story: Terrific Tree Planter

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 6

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot:
Felix Finkbeiner

Who: This is FELIX FINKBEINER and he has a climate story. When he was 9 years old he began planting tree to help the climate.

What: Felix learned about climate change and decided to do something about it. He started planting trees because helps fight climate change!

Why: Felix believes that kids don't have to wait for adults to take action. He knows that kids will have to fix problems in the future if we don't do it now.

How: Felix was inspired by Wangari Maathai, who planted 30 million trees in Kenya. Felix started Plant-for-the-Planet, an organization that plants trees around the world.

We can use our stories to support fight climate change!

My Climate Story: Passionate Water Protector

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 7

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot: Autumn Peltier

Who: This is AUTUMN PELTIER and she has a climate story. Autumn is a water activist from Wiikwemkoong First Nation in Ontario.

What: Autumn uses her voice to tell others about a lack of clean water in many Indigenous communities in Canada. She knows how important water is to balanced ecosystems and everyday life.

Why: Autumn cares deeply about the health of her community and other Indigenous communities, and she knows that you can't be healthy without clean water.

How: Autumn travels to places where important decisions are made. She shares what she knows in her head and what she knows in her heart about water systems.

We can use our stories to support healthy food and water systems!

My Climate Story: Friend to Food Systems

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 7

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot: Tamarra Soma

Who: This is TAMMARA SOMA and she has a climate story. Tammara is from Toronto, Ontario and she researches solutions for food waste problems.

What: Tammara uses what she's learned about food waste from her family and from her studies to bring other people together and create solutions.

Why: Tammara believes that everyone should have enough food to eat, and she knows that if we waste food, it's harder to feed everyone.

How: Tamarra shows leaders how to put food first. With her research, she gets her hands dirty by sorting food waste and asking questions about it.

We can use our stories to support healthy food and water systems!

My Climate Story: Activating Our Stories

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 8

My role in the climate story: Let's take action!

This activity helps kids take what they've learned in the "Plants, People, and Climate Change" unit and the "My Climate Story" tool-kit and apply it to their own story and the stories of people around them. Using the same climate storyteller template from Lessons 5 & 6, this worksheet gives students kids a chance to interview someone about their climate story. They can also use it to tell their own climate story. The goal here is to highlight how just by talking about what matters to us, we can make a difference. There is also a climate action worksheet with ideas for connecting climate stories and solutions that engage head, heart, hands, and feet.

Say:

When we share our climate stories with others, we help inspire other people to take ACTION. No matter what your age, you can make a difference by sharing your climate story. What do you know, what do you feel, and what can you do to improve the health of people, plants, and the planet? Who do you see in the community taking action to address climate change? What motivates them to share their story?

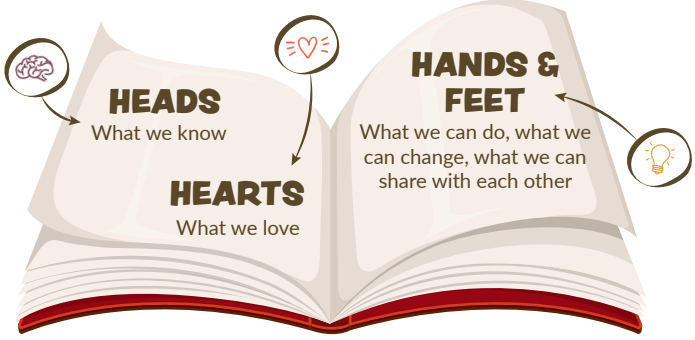
Do:

Use the climate storyteller examples as an introduction. Provide a blank template and ask students to use the prompts to interview someone about their climate story. Ask students to do a self-interview or have a friend ask them the questions. To accompany the story, ask students to draw a self-portrait or include a picture of the storyteller.

Option:

Try integrating this activity with a lesson on community or civic engagement. Ask a carepartner, classmate or parent to help you, and share with the rest of the school.

Climate Stories are about using our...



This lesson focuses in on behaviours - how we can use our hands and feet to join in on climate solutions to make plants and the planet healthier.

Lesson 8 Worksheets

My Climate Story: Climate Storyteller

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 8

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot: Vanessa Nakate

Who: This is Vanessa Nakate. She is a climate activist from Kampala, Uganda. She uses her story to push leaders around the world to act boldly and prevent climate harms.

What: Vanessa saw other kids around the world striking from school, and she decided to join in and draw attention to how climate change impacts her home continent of Africa.

Why: Vanessa cares about fairness and how the planet sustains our lives. She speaks up about how African people, lands, and agricultural systems are harmed by climate impacts.

How: Vanessa persisted in sharing her story, and she uses social media to spread the word. Now she works with other young people to push companies and governments to take action.

We can attract attention to our cause when we work together!

My Climate Story: Climate Storyteller

Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 8

Climate Storytellers: Stories in Action

Story Snapshot: Greta Thunberg

Who: This is Greta Thunberg and she has a climate story. Greta is a student from Stockholm, Sweden, in Europe.

What: Greta organized students to strike for their future, and that of the planet. This got the attention of adults too, and she continues to tell her story around the world.

Why: Greta was feeling sad about climate change and she wanted to do something. She decided that she's not too small to make a difference.

How: Greta turned to her family and friends to support her in telling her story to the whole world. She had to be brave but she wasn't alone, and now many other kids feel brave too!

We can attract attention to our cause when we work together!

My Climate Story: Interview Guide

Lesson 8

Choose a good quote from your storyteller and put it here.

Draw a picture of your storyteller here

Story Snapshot: Name of the Climate Storyteller goes here!

Who: What is your storytellers name? What other important information should we know about them? Their age? Where they live? What they do with their time? Their job?

What: What matters to your storyteller? What kind of planet-friendly activities do they like to do? Who are the people they care most about?

Why: Who or what does your storyteller love most in the world? Why is climate change important to this storyteller?

How: Who does your storyteller link up with to make the world a healthier place for plants, people, and the planet? Who do they turn to for support when they get discouraged?

Write a message of support for your climate storyteller here!

My Climate Story: Interview Guide

Lesson 8

Story Snapshot:

Who:

Name:
Age:
Location:
Other:

What:

The most important things to me are _____.
What kind of planet-friendly activities I like to do are _____.

Why:

What I love most is_____.
Climate change is important to me because _____.

How:

To make the world a healthier place for plants, people, and the planet, I link up with _____. When I need support, I turn to _____.

My Climate Story: Interview Guide

Lesson 8

Story Snapshot:

Who:

What:

Why:

How:

My Climate Story: Reflection Time

Lesson 8

Story Snapshot:

What are the most impactful actions I can take to contribute to a hopeful climate story in my community?

My Climate Story: Activating Our Stories

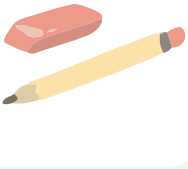
Little GreenThumbs

Lesson 8

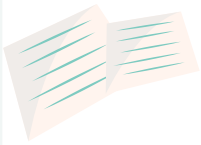
What's the moral of this climate story? Action!

Need some more ideas to help inspire your climate story? Try out some of the approaches below.

Here are some different ways to help others and put your climate story into action!



Draw a picture, write a story, or make up a skit about kids in the future who live in a world with lots and lots of super stewards of the soil, friends of food and water systems, and courageous climate storytellers. Share it with a friend, or sibling, or your teacher or parent or grandparent.



Team up with a friend and make a list of your questions about climate change. Ask your teacher or a parent to help you contact an expert who can answer your questions. Share the answers with your class-mates or your family.

Pick a local action group already creating climate solutions.
Draw a picture or write a thank you card for their team. Tell them what it means to you!

Choose three things that you can do every week to move your climate story forward. Include activities for learning, for mental health, and for connecting into change-making.

We each have an important role in climate solutions.

Appendix: My Climate Story

By Rachel Malena-Chan, Eco-Anxious Stories
For Little Green Thumbs

Climate Change Education Supporting Resources

Council of All Beings for Students
Nurturing a deep sense of connection and kinship.

Natural Curiosity
Indigenous pedagogies for environmental inquiry.

Learning for a Sustainable Future
Collections of lessons and resources related to sustainability education.

The Institute for Humane Education – Solutionary Guidebook
A guide for taking action on pressing issues.

Green Teacher Climate Change Education Hub
Diverse resources for climate change education.

Subject to Climate Resources
Collection of resource to support teaching about climate change.

Climate Science Hub
Includes animations on climate science

National Geographic Courses
Courses to support teachers in becoming confident in teaching about climate change.

Reports, Databases, Digital Resources & Books

Svoboda, M. (2018, August 31). **Children's Books About Climate Change.** Yale Climate Connections.

NASA Climate Kids – A NASA website designed to educate children about climate science.

Kids Guide to Climate – NY Times – An illustrated guide to understanding climate change for children.

Appendix: My Climate Story

Compiled by Rachel Malena-Chan, Eco-Anxious Stories
For Little Green Thumbs

Articles and Books about how to talk to children about climate change

Don't say "It'll be all right" and other tips for talking to children about the climate crisis, by Frida Berry Eklund, Co-founder and Senior Adviser at Our Kids' Climate

A guide for parents about the climate crisis, Australian Psychological Society

How to Talk to Your Kids About Climate Change: Turning Angst into Action, by Harriet Shugarman

Resources for Children and Youth, Climate and Mind

Talk Climate - This website is for everyone (young people, caregivers, and professionals) who want to learn how to have productive, courageous, and empowering conversations about climate change.

Young People and Climate Change, Climate Psychology Alliance

Climate Anxiety in Children and Young People, Panel Event Recording, Climate Psychology Alliance

Children's books on climate change

Climate Change and How We'll Fix It, by Alice Harman

Coco's Fire: Changing Climate Anxiety into Climate Action, by Jeremy D. Wortzel & Lena K. Champlin

All The Feelings Under The Sun, by Leslie Davenport

Our World Out of Balance: Understanding Climate Change and What We Can Do, by Andrea Minoglio

Appendix: My Climate Story

Compiled by Rachel Malena-Chan, Eco-Anxious Stories
For Little Green Thumbs

Videos and Interactive Tools

Young Voices For the Planet - Film series documenting youth speaking out, creating solutions and leading the change on climate change.

Youth Climate Report - interactive database of documentary films using a platform of a Geographic Information System (GIS) map showcasing almost 500 videos of climate research produced by youth from around the world.

Saving My Tomorrow - 2014-15 HBO documentary series. From the children who will inherit the planet, comes a collection of songs, activism, and heartfelt tips for protecting the earth. Kids share their thoughts on subjects ranging from endangered animals and pollution to climate change.

Climate Change and the Role of Young People - interview and photo series with Kaluki Paul of Operation Climate based in Uganda. June 2021.

Climate Atlas Canada - combines climate science, mapping and storytelling to bring the global issue of climate change closer to home for Canadians. It is designed to inspire local, regional, and national action that will let us move from risk to resilience.

Other Eco-Anxiety Resources

Eco-Anxious Stories - Story-based creative resources that normalize eco-anxiety and provide frameworks and tools for translating anxiety into action

Gen Dread - Newsletter from author and researcher Britt Wray on climate emotions

Good Grief Network - 10-Step Program to help individuals and communities build resilience by creating spaces where people can lean into their painful feelings about the state of the world and reorient their lives toward meaningful action

Emotional Resiliency in the Era of Climate Change, Leslie Davenport. Helpful for teachers who want a more in-depth understanding.

Thank you to Maria Vamvalis and Leslie Davenport for their support in preparing this appendix, as well as work from Gen Dread and Climate and Mind. If you have a resource to add to this list, please contact info@ecoanxious.ca

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STORIES