



Peace and love starts right here right now.

This is a project that supports the Earth Pledge of Allegiance. Please visit <http://www.peaceandloveforall.com> to find more activities, projects that support the Earth and her inhabitants. And if you've got an idea to share, send it to us. As we work together, we support our One Planet, indivisible, with safe air, water and soil, economic justice, equal rights and peace and love for all.

## Monkeys in the Rainforest

Adapted from An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan, submitted by Adam Mohr

### Objective

This lesson gives students an awareness of why it is important to preserve natural habitats for all animals.

### Materials Needed

Pictures of several different species of monkeys, bananas, blanket, grooming brush, five to seven chairs, rainforest music, one soft towel per child.

Show the children pictures of several different species of monkeys and discuss their need for food, shelter, grooming, etc. Mimic different facial expressions and gestures, such as eating, grooming, and sleeping. Inform the children of the monkeys' struggles to survive in a world where their dwelling places are shrinking. After this initial discussion, arrange a cluster of five to seven chairs in the middle of the movement room to represent the trees where the monkeys dwell. The monkeys begin their day with a search for food. Movement qualities are explored as children reach and leap. They leap out as if leaping from branch to branch and scuttle along the ground to gather food from below. All this is accompanied by music from the rainforest cultures around the world. The cue for returning to treetop homes is when the music stops. The entire group of children (10-14) must find space on or under the chairs.

As the scenario progresses, the teacher removes more chairs as nearby villagers need the trees for building homes, clearing for fields, and fuel. Each time the monkeys return home, conditions become more crowded. Finally, they are down to two chairs for the entire group of "monkeys". This presents a great challenge for cooperation and developing strategies to cope. Many times, the children want to add to the scenario by finding ways to scare the people away who take their trees.

After this initial structured activity, children are invited to create their own scenarios based on what they've learned and observed in movement class. Each child is given a chair and a soft towel to use to create a habitat. Children are given the choice to live alone or in a group.

The variety of groupings and dwellings that will evolve from the children's imaginations should be very rich and inventive. Music is the cue to rouse monkeys from sleep and begin their day of foraging, playing, and interacting with one another. As the music fades, the monkeys return to their homes for grooming or sharing food.

Children often share their scenarios with the rest of the group and frequently request this activity. They have great satisfaction in working out what they know about monkeys through their own bodies. Reinterpreting and reinventing knowledge and ideas through imagination gives children the opportunity to experience learning in a personalized and expressive way.

### Conclusion

At the conclusion of this creative movement lesson, have students identify the needs and behaviors of monkeys. Ask students what they can do to help preserve natural habitats for monkeys and other animals.