

Environmental Care



SPHE STRANDS:

Myself – Making decisions

**Myself and the Wider World
– Developing citizenship –
Environmental care**

The Power of One

Greta Thunberg was born in Sweden in 2003. She first heard about climate change when she was eight years old and couldn't understand why so little was being done about it. At age eleven she became really upset about it. Finally in 2018, when she was fifteen, she decided to take action. She made a sign which read 'School Strike For Climate' and sat outside the Swedish parliament. She wanted the world to take notice and to act to stop global warming.

Soon the word spread and thousands and thousands of student from all over the world joined her #FridayforFuture strikes by skipping school on Fridays to protest against climate change. In 2019 the first Global Strike for Climate was organised with over 1.6 million people taking part.

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Greta Thunberg

Since beginning her action, Greta has given speeches to international leaders, to the EU parliament, the United Nations Climate Action Summit, to large groups of protestors and much more.

In 2015, Pope Francis wrote *Laudato Si'*, a very important document 'to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home' inviting every person to cooperate as 'instruments of God for the care of creation'.

Greta Thunberg and Pope Francis met in 2019. They discovered that they had a lot in common.

Greta is just one person. She could have said, 'What difference can I make? There's no point.' Instead she became an example and an inspiration to the whole world and the difference she has made will be felt for generations to come.

When you have read about Greta Thunberg ask questions such as:

- What age was Greta when she first heard about climate change?
- When did her campaigning begin?
- How did she decide to protest?
- Do you think this was a good idea? Why/why not?
- Do you think we have a relationship with the planet? What does that mean?
- Do you think the world would be as aware of climate change if it were not for Greta? Why or why not?
- Do you find this story interesting/inspirational? In what way?
- As a class, what could you do in the fight against climate change? Go to trocaire.org for ideas.

Small Decisions Art Activity

Invite the children to draw their kitchen at home and to colour everything that uses energy in red. If they ever charge their mobile phone on the kitchen counter, encourage them to include that too.

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- Now invite discussion on what uses energy and how we might save energy, e.g. filling the kettle less, turning off lights, turning off the cooker switch so that the pilot light is off, not leaving the fridge door open, only turning on the oven for minimum time, etc.
- Now chat about the school – how could we save energy at school? Plugging out/switching off computers, lights, walking to school, using less heat, reducing the temperature on the thermostat, etc.
- Encourage the children to see that small decisions add up and that we can all show the 'power of one' by making positive decisions in relation to climate change.

Acrostic Poem

Invite the children, as a class to write an acrostic poem on climate change. Write the letters downwards on the board and encourage suggestions beginning with each letter. Try to reach consensus before writing it up.

Sample:

Climate Change

Can we join together

Like activists

In

Making

A

Tremendous

Effort?

Can we

Help to

Alter the way we live

Now like

Greta

Encouraged us to do?

If you wish, the poem could be drawn and illustrated by members of the class and displayed on the wall.

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Reflection:

Invite the children to close their eyes and read the following reflection:

Just as we have a relationship with each other, with our families and friends, we also have a relationship with the planet. We need to look after relationships or they go badly. For some time we have not been looking after our relationship with the earth. We have been treating it as something which we can use for our own benefit, without giving anything back.

Greta Thunberg has inspired a generation of young people to see that we need to care for the earth. We need to nurture it. We cannot continue to ignore the signs that are telling us the earth needs our help.

Think of the people in countries that are experiencing floods and forest fires and other climate catastrophes. We have a relationship with those people too. We all share the same planet. What small decisions will you make this week which will help our planet. Think of two things now that you will do. We have seen the 'power of one' in Greta. We don't all need to be leaders; we can all make private decisions that will help. We ask God to help us as we try to save and look after the wonderful world he created. Amen.