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World Water Day
March 22

Global Themes
- Interdependence
- Sustainable Action

Overview and Purpose
This lesson is designed to teach children about World Water Day and the specific right of children highlighted by this UN Day; their right to safe water to drink (CRC Article 24).

Background Information for Teachers
World Water Day (March 22)
unwater.org/worldwaterday/index.html
Environment Canada—Water
ec.gc.ca/eau-water/default.asp?lang=En&n=24F409D1-1
The Council of Canadians
canadians.org/water/issues/World_Water_Day/resources.html

Grades
K – 3

Materials
Book entitled *A Cool Drink of Water* by Barbara Kerley
World map
1-litre bottle
Water Bucket template (printable copy attached)
Water Conservation checklist (printable copy attached)

Activity One

- Ask the students to brainstorm ways they can save a bucket or more of water to bring awareness to the need for clean and safe water worldwide. Have students complete the water bucket handout.
- Graph how many buckets of water the class could save in one day by conserving water. Now, graph for a month, a year, a lifetime.

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Activity Two (suitable for older primary, early intermediate students)

Before reading the story of Solange ask the students these three questions:

A. On a scale of 1-5, how easy is it to get your drinking water in Canada?
B. On a scale of 1-5, how safe is your drinking water in Canada?
C. On a scale of 1-5, how often do you think about not having enough water in Canada?

- Locate Rwanda on the map. Then read the story of a Rwandan girl named Solange: unicef.ca/en/the-unicef-water-project.

Now repeat the three questions:

A. On a scale of 1-5, how easy is it for Solange to get drinking water?
B. On a scale of 1-5, how safe is Solange's drinking water? Do we know this answer? Is there a fact from the story to prove how safe the drinking water is? Be careful not to make assumptions.
C. On a scale of 1-5, how often did Solange think about not having enough safe drinking water?

Some children are not able to get clean drinking water just because of where they live in the world. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has been written to make sure all children, everywhere in the world, have clean, safe drinking water as well as all their other rights met. One way UNICEF works to make sure this happens is to support the local communities through building wells. UNICEF knows how important it is for the people in their own country to learn the skills needed to look after themselves. This is why UNICEF Canada works with the local community to train people to build and repair the wells themselves so they will have the well for a very long time to come. Watch this clip of how UNICEF is helping children around the world to have their right to water met: youtube.com/watch?v=dAz-XuE-U9c.

Activity Three

- People all over the world find clever ways to carry water. If you had to walk long distances every day to get water, how would you carry it? Here is an example of one innovative way to move water long distances: youtube.com/watch?v=HPCTscerVvI.
- Now it's our turn. Design, build and evaluate the effectiveness of your new way to carry water long distances.

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Discussion
Why do we have to think of our community, our country, and the global village when we make decisions about the use of water? What would happen if we only considered our own perspective?

Today we discussed ways to conserve water. How can we make our actions sustainable? For example, which of these water conservation methods can you continue to use for a long, long time?

Extensions
Discover how the author highlighted certain words in the book; some are in italic print, some are in bold print and some are in regular print. Why do you think the author chose this way to express her thoughts? Are there similarities in the words that are in italic? Are their similarities in the words that are in bold? As a class, in a small group or as an individual, write a poem about water using a similar style.

Have the students bring the water conservation checklist home. Ask them to check off all the ways they are able to save water with their families to bring awareness to the need for clean and safe water worldwide.

Measure rainfall and compare it to rainfall in other countries. Graph the results.
Purchase a rain barrel for your school and use the water for watering the school garden. Many municipal governments offer rain barrels for purchase. Or better yet, have the students design, create and evaluate the effectiveness of the rain barrels they create. More information can be found here: harvesth2o.com/rainbarrel101.shtml.

Additional Resources
In the Water for Life kids' section, you will find different resources (games, videos, tales, etc.) that help kids to learn more about water, and inspire them and those around them to take action.
un.org/waterforlifedecade/kids.html

Book entitled *One Well* by Rochelle Strauss
Activities for the book *One Well* are available here: kidscanpress.com/Assets/Books/w_OneWell_1854/PDFs/OneWell_1854_teaching.pdf.

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STUDENT HANDOUT

This is how I will save a bucket or more of water to celebrate World Water Day...

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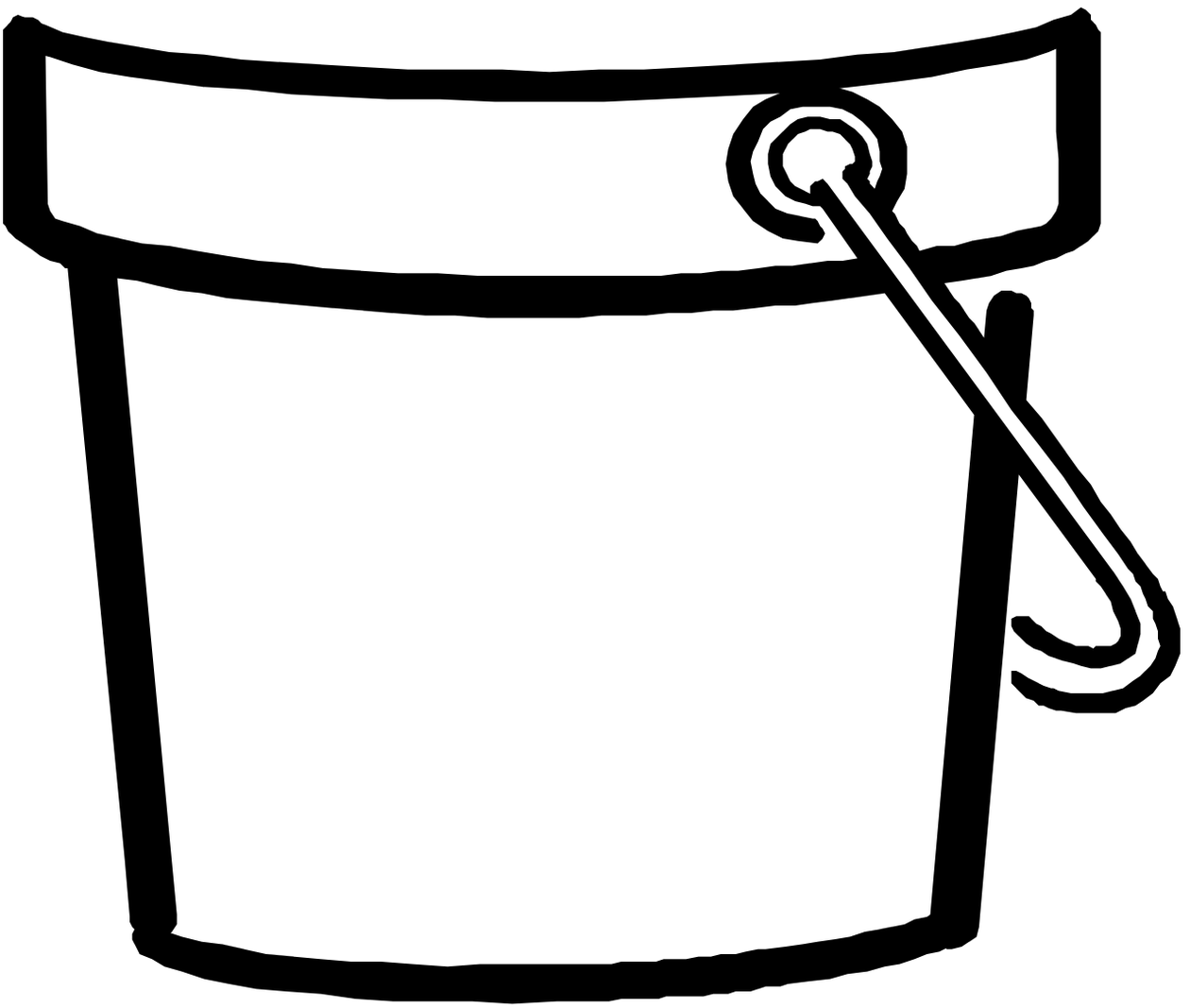

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Water Conservation Checklist

Celebrate World Water Day by saving as many buckets of water as you can at home with these simple tips:


Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator rather than running tap water until it is cool enough to drink.


Designate one glass for your drinking water each day, or refill a water bottle. This will cut down on the number of glasses to wash.


When washing dishes by hand with two sinks, partially fill one with soapy water and the other with rinse water. If you have one sink, gather washed dishes in a dish rack and rinse them with a spray device or in a pan full of hot water.


Use a spatula to remove food from dishes instead of pre-rinsing them in water before placing them in the dishwasher.


Only wash full loads in the dishwasher, and always use the energy saver or shortest cycle.


Soak pots and pans instead of letting the water run while you scrape them clean.


Wash fruits and vegetables in a pan of water. Reuse it to water your house plants.


Steam vegetables instead of boiling them in water to use less water and conserve more nutrients. When boiling vegetables, use only enough water to cover them, and use a tight-fitting lid.


Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety instead of using running water to thaw food.


Dispose of garbage properly especially cooking fat and greases, household cleaners, paints, solvents, pesticides and other chemicals. If these substances go down the sink drain or are flushed down the toilet, they can harm the environment and piping system.


Install an aerator attachment on your sink faucets and reduce water use by 25 to 50%.


Wash only full loads of laundry, and use the shortest cycle possible.


Use the “suds-saver” feature if your washing machine has it. If your washer has an adjustable water-level indicator, set the dial to use only as much water as is really necessary.

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STUDENT HANDOUT

- Use only cleaning products that will not harm the environment. Buy phosphate-free biodegradable detergents.
- Check faucets, toilets, pipes, taps, hoses and the fittings of your washing machine for leaks, and repair them immediately.
- Always turn your taps off tightly but gently so they don't drip.
- Use a water-saving device in your toilet—a large yogurt container or plastic bottle filled with water or sand—to displace water in your tank and save water every time you flush.
- If possible, replace your old toilet with a new, efficient 6-litre ultra low-flush toilet and save 50 to 70% per flush.
- Only flush the toilet when necessary.
- Take a short five-minute shower whenever possible. If your shower is equipped with a shut-off valve, turn off the water while you are soaping and shampooing, then rinse off quickly.
- Fill the tub only one-quarter full when bathing.
- Replace your showerhead with a new low-flow model with a flow rate of 9.5 litres per minute.
- Turn the water off when washing, brushing your teeth or shaving. Fill a glass with water for mouth rinsing while brushing your teeth.
- Rinse your razor by filling the bottom of the sink with only a few centimetres of warm water.
- Wash your cars less frequently.
- When washing your car, use a bucket and sponge, and then rinse it quickly using a trigger nozzle on your hose.
- Go to a carwash that recycles water.
- Clean your driveway or sidewalk with a broom instead of a hose.
- When cleaning out fish tanks, give the nutrient-rich water to your plants.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn, not sidewalks and driveways.

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STUDENT HANDOUT

Put a large container out to collect rainwater off your roof. Use this water as an alternative to turning on the hose for newly transplanted material, window boxes, flower pots and container gardens. Rainwater is actually better for your plants as it does not contain any chlorine and is at an ambient temperature.

Soak your lawn weekly to strengthen grass roots and promote a healthy lawn. Use a sprinkler that delivers large flat droplets.

When you cut your lawn, leave it at least six centimetres long to provide shade for the roots. This will allow the soil to remain moist and require less watering.

Water your lawn in the early morning for best results. Two to three centimetres of rain or water once a week is plenty. Place empty tuna cans in various locations on your lawn while using the sprinkler to judge the amount of water being used.

Consider replacing your grass with drought-resistant plants and ground cover. You'll save water and time spent on upkeep. Ask your local gardener about drought-resistant plants that thrive in your area.

For hanging baskets, planters and pots, place ice cubes under the moss or dirt to give your plants a cool drink of water and help eliminate water overflow.

If you accidentally drop ice cubes when filling your glass from the freezer, drop them in a house plant instead.

Fill your pool 15 to 20 cm from the top to cut down on water loss from splashing. A swimming pool cover will prevent evaporation, keep debris out and keep heat in.

Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water. When kids want to cool off in the summer, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.

Have young children bathe together.

Wash your pets outdoors in an area of your lawn that needs water.

Use rechargeable alkaline batteries instead of throwing away so many batteries. The mercury in old batteries will eventually leak out and poison the water it runs into.

Adapted from *Wise Use of Water,* Environment Canada, WaterUseitWisely.com