

## Celebrate Earth Day

Below is a list of some of our favorite books that are associated with Earth Day. Some books tell about people and the work that they've done to help the Earth. Other books share stories to appreciate our beautiful Earth. Each entry has been chosen because it has a link to the book being read aloud. Some of the stories are better performed than others. We have provided a short description of each entry. We hope you enjoy these books as you celebrate this special day. Sparkling Still Working Group of FGC. A. Collins, S. Farneth, S. Hopkins, E. Mittag.

**On Meadowview Street** written and illustrated by Henry Cole. Ages 4-8 (full lesson in Sparkling Still)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VJaY3MOIUc>

Published by Greenwillow Books; c. 2007

Caroline moves to Meadowview Street, but where's the meadow or the view? There's nothing growing in her front yard except grass. Then she spots a flower and a butterfly and a bird. Soon Caroline realizes that with her help, maybe Meadowview Street can be a meadow after all.

**Once There was a Tree** by Natalia Romanova, Gennady Spirin (Illustrator) Ages 4-7 (pictures not clear)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77yfwPz2DSY>

Published by Puffin c. 1992

A woodsman cuts down a broken **tree**, soon several creatures make the stump **their** home. Over time a new tree grows, and it too becomes the home for several creatures.

**The Raft** by Jim LaMarche, Ages 4-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WLnX4dWxKE>

Published by Harper Collins c. 2002

Based on the life of the author, the story tells of the wonders of life along the river. A really magical story about how a young boy and his grandmother create relationship as they both love the river, its creatures, and the paintings of all.

**Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt** by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal, Ages 5-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3F6N92SPVY>

Published by Chronicle Books c. 2015

Explore the hidden world and many lives of a garden through the course of a year! Up in the garden, the world is full of green—leaves and sprouts, growing vegetables, ripening fruit. But down in the dirt exists a busy world—earthworms dig, snakes hunt, skunks burrow—populated by all the animals that make a garden their home.

**Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted Millions of Trees** by [Franck Prévot](#) and illustrated by, [Aurélia Fronty](#) Ages 6- 9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiV0rnMc2MU>

Published by Charlesbridge 2015

Wangari Maathai said, "Trees are living symbols of peace and hope." The trees that she and her Green Belt Movement planted are more than symbols, they are the result of the hard work of the women she enlisted to replant Kenya's forests, replenish the wildlife, and instill democracy among the people.

**One Plastic Bag:** Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia  
by Miranda Paul and illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon. Ages 5-9

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_B6p04Zph04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_B6p04Zph04)

Published by Millbrook Press, 2015 "One Plastic Bag" is a picture book about Isatou Ceesay that tells the story of how she recycled the plastic trash bags that were littering the village in which she lived in The Gambia. She and her friends turn the trash into something that helps change the life of all the people in the village.

**The Red Bicycle: The Extraordinary Story of One Ordinary Bicycle** by Jude Isabella, Simone Shin, illustrator Ages 8-12.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdQSK0GZCFM>

Published by Kids Can Press, 2015

In this unique nonfiction picture book, the main character is a bicycle that starts its life like so many bicycles in North America, being owned and ridden by a young boy. The boy, Leo, treasures his bicycle so much he gives it a name -- Big Red. But eventually Leo outgrows Big Red, and this is where the bicycle's story takes a turn from the everyday, because Leo decides to donate it to an organization that ships bicycles to Africa. Big Red is sent to Burkina Faso, in West Africa, where it finds a home with Alisetta, who uses it to gain quicker access to her family's sorghum field and to the market. Then, over time, it finds its way to a young woman named Haridata, who has a new purpose for the bicycle -- renamed Le Grand Rouge -- delivering medications and bringing sick people to the hospital. (Good Reads)

**"Miss Rumphius"** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxh8ZPU\\_HfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxh8ZPU_HfY)

a picture book for children written and illustrated by Barbara Cooney, Ages 5-8

Publisher: Viking Books c. 1982. It features the life story of fictional *Miss Alice Rumphius*, a woman who sought a way to make the world more beautiful and found it in planting lupines in the wild.

**"A River Ran Wild"** by Lynne Cherry ages 5-8 (2 versions for reading)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFgYs63V0xI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nRkrwJSVi1o&t=35s>

Publisher HMH Books for Young Readers; c.2002

The author tells us this is a True Story of the History, the Polluting and the Clean-up of the Nashua River. In this book one of the last remaining native Americans has a dream. In this dream, the first Indian to see the Nashua river, when it was clean & beautiful, comes back. He sees the polluted Nashua and he cries.

**“Letting Swift River Go”** by Jane Yolen and Barbara Cooney, illustrator, Ages 5-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6xuQThv4t8>

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers c.1995.

A true story that relates the main character’s experience of changing times in rural America, as she lives through the drowning of the Swift River towns in western Massachusetts to form the Quabbin Reservoir.

**“Over and Under the Pond”** by Kate Messner and Christopher S. Neal, illustrator

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FwW69AgRGLI&t=36s>

Publisher: Chronicle Books LLC c. 2017

The reader will discover the plants and animals that make up the rich, interconnected ecosystem of a mountain pond. Under the pond is a hidden world of minnows darting, beavers diving, tadpoles growing. These and many other secrets are waiting to be discovered...over and under the pond.

**“The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever”**

by H. Joseph Hopkins and Illustrator Jill McElmurry Ages 5-11

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvkbztXug10>

Publisher: Beach Lane Books c. 2013

Unearth the true story of green-thumbed pioneer and activist Kate Sessions, who helped San Diego grow from a dry desert town into a lush, leafy city known for its gorgeous parks and gardens.

**“Flute’s Journey: The Life of a Wood Thrush”**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvEUA2x900I>

written and illustrated by Lynne Cherry, Ages 4-8.

Publisher: Harcourt Children’s Books; c.1997.

The story of one wood thrush’s first year and his arduous first migration--across thousands of miles--from his nesting ground in the Belt Woods in Maryland to his winter home in Costa Rica, and back again.

Listen to a Wood Thrush singing its flute-like song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcR6XrnD7Yc>

**Wondering Questions:** Wondering Questions give children an opportunity to reflect on the story, make it their own, and use their creative thinking. Wondering Questions do not have right and wrong answers; they encourage imagination and deep reflection.

I wonder what part of the story you like best?

I wonder where you would put yourself in the story?

I wonder what suggestions this story has for you and/or our family?

**Activities:** Choose from the following to enhance your reading experience.

**Activities for indoors or outdoors** – "More At-Home Activities for Young Learners," Shelburne Farms, April 6, 2020. Used with permission." ([shelburnefarms.org](http://shelburnefarms.org))

**Color search:** How many colors can you find outside? Use paint chips or crayons in a variety of colors and hand one out to each person. Have everyone try to find something from nature that matches their assigned color. If outdoor space is limited or restricted, this activity can be done from a window or porch. Some colors are more challenging than others. Where can you find something bright red? What about light green?

- **Sit spots:** Choose a comfortable spot outside or any space with a view of nature, like a window or porch. Sit quietly for a few minutes. You can write, draw, or relax and observe your surroundings. Visit this spot regularly and notice how it changes.
- **Fistful of sounds:** There's a lot to look at in nature, but what can you learn from your other senses? Choose a spot to explore quietly and raise one finger every time you hear a new sound. With spring arriving and life returning to the world all around us, you can even try this from your front door. Keep listening until all five fingers on one hand are raised, then ask everyone to share one thing they heard.

### **Activities for outdoors**

- **Meet a tree:** Family members can pair up for this exploration activity. In an area with trees, have one partner close their eyes, while the other guides them to a tree. Ask the partner with closed eyes to explore the tree with their other senses. How big is the trunk? What does the bark feel like? Can they feel any branches? How does the tree smell? Once they've had a chance to get to know the tree, return to where you started. Can they find their tree again with their eyes open?
- **Camouflage:** The ultimate game of forest hide-and-seek. Can you sneak around the woods without being spotted? This game is typically played with a group of students, but you could play it with a family group. One person is the fox, and the other players are rabbits. The fox closes its eyes and counts to thirty, while the rabbits find places to hide in the forest. Remember: the rabbits must be able to see the fox at all times! After

thirty seconds, the fox opens its eyes and searches for the rabbits. The fox has to stand still while it searches. When it sees a rabbit, it points with two hands. Once a rabbit has been spotted, it must reveal itself and sit near the fox. The last rabbit found is the winner!

- **Life under a log:** All sorts of creatures make their homes underneath logs. What sorts of creatures will you discover? Explore beneath these humble homes and discover an unseen world. Treat these critters nicely, and make sure you roll the log back gently.
- **Seed hunt and sort:** Seeds come in lots of shapes and sizes. What strange and amazing seeds will you find? Check out the [seed scavenger hunt sheet](#) and see how many different types of seeds you can gather. You can also start a seed collection using an empty egg carton. Try to find different ways to organize the seeds (from small to large, by color, by texture).