**Second Grade**

**Key Concept 7:**

**Our Environment: Caring for Our Earth**

**Overview:**

Students will learn the story of Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist, activist, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Wangari worked tirelessly to ensure Kenya’s landscape was covered with trees after being deforested to make room for businesses. The lesson will lead students to think about how they can also become good stewards for the earth and help improve their communities.

**For the Teacher:**

This lesson ties in language arts and social studies standards through a read aloud. After reading, students will make a class book to display how they will help the environment. There are also three optional activities at the end to extend student learning.

**Materials:**

* Books: *Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter
* Copies: “We Will be Hummingbirds” class book (attached)
* Optional: Read Aloud of *Wangari’s Trees of Peace* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jK1NndEf6f0>

**Objectives:**

C.3.2.2 Examine successful and unsuccessful attempts to improve communities

C.3.2.3 Describe way communities work to accomplish common tasks and establish responsibilities

E.4.2.2 Explain a decision in terms of costs and benefits

G.9.2.1 Interpret effects of human activities on the local environment

G.9.2.3 Explain ways weather, climate, and other environmental characteristics affect people’s lives in a place or region

**Instructions:**

1. Ask students what good citizens need to do to take care of the environment.
2. Next, ask students how they would feel if they saw their environment wasn’t taken care of.
3. Introduce the story of Wangari Maathai, a woman in Kenya who worked to make a difference in her community by planting trees, which had been cut down to make room for buildings. She enlisted the help of women in her village, and eventually gave women all over Kenya jobs planting trees. Wangari’s worked showed her community and government that a small group of people can make a big difference.
4. Read *Wangari’s Trees of Peace.* Pause to highlight ways Wangari and the women of Kenya worked together to improve their community.
5. After reading *Trees of Peace,* discuss with your class how one person was able to get her entire community to help their environment. Then, revisit the question from the beginning about how they can help their environment.
6. Tell the class that Wangari calls people who want to make a change hummingbirds. Show the video of Wangari telling the story of the hummingbird. Discuss how they can be hummingbirds in their community.
   * <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/get-involved/be-a-hummingbird>
7. Create a class book to show how each student will be a hummingbird to make change. Print one cover for your class, and enough pages for each student. Keep the class book for students to refer to throughout the year.

**Extension Activities:**

* Show students the importance of trees for the environment and community by planting a tree seedling with your class.
* Allow students to use their green thumbs by helping them grow something green in the classroom, like bean sprouts or grass.
* Create a “class tree” out of butcher paper or construction paper. Design a trunk and add leaves every time a student acts like a hummingbird to make change or displays a kind act. Continue to build the tree throughout the year.

We Will Be Hummingbirds!

We will be hummingbirds like Wangari Maathai and make a difference!

By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I will be a hummingbird by

