

Becoming a Star Thrower

GRADE LEVEL
K-5

SUBJECTS
Language Arts

ESTIMATED TIME
1 50-minute session

In a pool of sand and silt a starfish had thrust its arm up stiffly and was holding its body away from the stifling mud.

*"It's still alive," I ventured."
-The Star Thrower, p. 100*

OVERVIEW:

This activity seeks to expose students to the idea of stewardship of life on earth and is based on "The Star Thrower," one of Loren Eiseley's best known essays. In the essay, Eiseley sees an elderly gentleman from afar who is walking on land just vacated by an outflowing tide and notices that he is bending over as he walks. As Eiseley approaches closer, he notices that the man is flicking something as he bends over. It turns out to be a starfish that is being cast into the ocean. He is trying to save as many stranded starfish as he possibly can.

In this exercise for K-5 grade levels, students will make a starfish from paper plates or fold an origami starfish. Once this is completed, students will throw their starfish back into the "ocean" and become star throwers.

NEBRASKA STANDARDS

To be determined

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- Copies of *The Loren Eiseley Reader* for all students in the class, if necessary
- Computer access to the Internet
- Materials: if using paper plates: small paper plates; crayons, paints or magic markers; and scissors. If doing origami activity, colored or white sheets of paper.

- Blue paper maché, carpet, blue sheet or similarly colored fabric
- Reference book: *The Edge of the Sea* by Rachel Carson
- Origami star fish pattern:

http://www.swimming.org/assets/uploads/library/How_to_make_an_Origami_Starfish.pdf

You Tube origami star fish instructions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Sr3qjKOjCY>

- Google search using the terms: intertidal zone diagram for kids
<https://www.google.com/search?q=intertidal+zone&biw=1601&bih=875&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiW2evYjNXJAhUHoYMKHdOBAeAQsAQIRQ#tbm=isch&q=intertidal+zone+diagram+for+kids>

- Starfish declines on west coast from PBS (story and video)

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/scientists-solve-mystery-of-west-coast-starfish-deaths/>

PREPARATION

1. Acquire enough small paper plates for each student.
2. Have crayons, paints or magic markers and scissors available for the students, or square sheets of paper (colored or white) for origami starfish making activity.
3. Make a blue sea from something blue (colored paper, blue sheet, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

In this series of lessons, students will

- Learn about the word “stewardship”
- Understand that each of us can make a difference in preserving life
- Learn about life forms along seashores and their importance as a food source to early humans

SESSION ONE

1. Learn about life along a seashore, the delicate balance of nature and declining seashores and starfish populations. The teacher can engage students by asking what forms of plant and animal life can be found at a seashore in the water and near the water’s edge.

For older students, what family and order do starfish belong to? What is the meaning of the old man’s action of tossing the star fish back into the sea? Should more people become star throwers? Why is saving other life forms important? A discussion of starfish populations being in decline can be included.

2. Read or explain excerpts from “The Star Thrower” essay.

3. Make a starfish from paper plates or use an origami star fish pattern. If a paper plate is used, an outline can be first drawn and then filled in with coloring or painting. The starfish shape is then cut out with a pair of scissors.
4. Have the students each cast their starfish into the sea and become symbolic star throwers like the old man in the essay.

ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION

1. Does the student understand the importance of being a part of conservation and preservation of life activities?
2. Does the student understand the actions of the star thrower? Can this be extended to other things such as plants and animals in one's own neighborhood, city or state?