

TURNING THE TIDE ON TRASH

A LEARNING GUIDE ON MARINE DEBRIS



LESSON TWO

All Tangled Up



Entangled green sea turtle

Grade Level:
Grades 1 – 4

Subjects:
Language Arts, Science

Overview:
Students perform an experiment in which they wrap a rubber band around their fingers and across the back of their hand and try to disentangle themselves. As a class, students discuss their thoughts and reactions and relate to real animals. Older students will write a short story about an entangled animal.

Objective:
To learn about wildlife entanglement by experiencing what it might be like to be a marine animal trapped in debris.

Vocabulary:
abandoned net, entanglement

Materials:
• A small- to medium-sized (thin) rubber

band for each student

- One copy of the “Animal Entanglement” Handout

Learning Skills:
Analyzing, Experimenting, Visualizing, Writing

Duration:
20 minutes

Activity

1. Discuss how animals need a healthy environment in which to live, just like we do. This includes a habitat that is free from pollution. Litter that becomes marine debris can harm the animals that live in or near the ocean.

2. Distribute the rubber bands to students and have them follow the procedure below. (Note: As an alternative, you may want to have one or two students come up to the front of the room to perform the exercise with rubber bands as a demonstration; then include the entire class in the discussion.)

- Hold your hands up in front of your face, with the back of your hands towards your face.
- Hold the rubber band in your right hand and hook one end of it over the little finger of your left hand.
- Hook the other end of the rubber band over the left-hand thumb. The rubber band should be taut and resting across the bottom knuckles on the back of your left hand (see photo above).
- Place your right hand on the bottom of your left elbow, and keep it there.

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- Try to free your hand of the rubber band without using your right hand, teeth, face or other body parts.

3. While students are struggling, ask the class to imagine that they are seagulls that have gotten pieces of fishing line, abandoned net or other debris wrapped around their beaks or necks. Tell them the birds are unable to eat until they are free from the debris. Ask the students the following questions:

- How would you feel after struggling like this all morning?
- How would you feel after missing breakfast?
- What would happen if you continued to miss meals and spent all of your strength fighting to get free?
- What would happen if a predator were chasing you?

Encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings about being entangled.

Remind them that their experience is

similar to that of a bird or other marine animal that becomes entangled in debris.

4. For Grades 3 and 4: Post the “Animal Entanglement” handout at the front of the class. Ask students to select one of the animals pictured and write a paragraph from that animal’s point of view telling how it feels to be entangled in marine debris. Students should include as many details from the illustration as possible in describing their experience. Encourage students to use a range of senses and feelings in their descriptions, and to be as imaginative as possible.

EXTENSIONS

Have a volunteer come up to the front of the room and experiment with entangling his or her hands or arms in a six-pack ring. This activity should be carefully guided by the teacher. Have the student remove the six-pack ring, or help him or her to do so. Then cut the loops of each ring with a scissors. Have another volunteer experiment with becoming entangled in the cut ring. Have students compare the two experiences. Then discuss why cutting six-pack rings is a good practice.

Have students discuss how balloons and balloon ribbons can present problems to fish, birds, turtles and seals. Using the Internet, older students can investigate whether your state has a law against the mass release of balloons. Students can make posters, or write letters to the editors of newspapers to help increase knowledge about the need to keep balloons and balloon ribbons from becoming marine debris.

Animal Entanglement

