



## ACTIVITY WITH DISCUSSION: Plant Power



Plants and trees help to hold the soil in place. When plants and trees are gone, water can wash away the soil (like what can happen during rainy season with lots of flooding). CBM trains farmers to start their own tree nurseries (growing tree seedlings) as well as use practices that improve the health and moisture of the soil so that it stays in place and grows more nutritious food (such as using manure from farm animals and composting, for healthy soil; and dry grass, leaves, scraps of left over crops, to lay over the fields to provide cover from harsh sun, keep in moisture).

Lay out 6 containers in a row.

- In tray #1 put approximately 1/8th of a sponge in the container.
- In tray #2 put approximately half of a sponge in the container.
- In tray #3 put one full sponge in the container.
- In tray #4 cover approximately half of the container with sponges.
- In tray #5 cover approximately three quarters of the container with sponges.
- In tray #6 cover the bottom of the container with sponges.
- Put equal amounts of soil over all the trays.
- Pour equal amounts of water into each tray. Use enough water to make the soil completely wet.
- Wait several minutes and see which tray absorbs the most water.
- Which tray has the “soupiest” soil?
- What happens when you tip each container?
- Does the soil move in all of them equally or not?
- Which is the most stable and which is the least stable? The sponges in our experiment act as vegetation, plants and trees that absorb the water and keep the soil in place.
- What happens to soil when there is little or no vegetation (container #1)?
- What is the difference when there is a lot of vegetation?

Source: Feeding 5000 (Heifer.org)



## PRAYER: Thank you Jesus



Thank you Jesus for plants, trees, and all of creation. We pray for those in our world who experience disasters and hardships caused by our lack of care for the environment. We know that you care for them very much. Help us to be responsible with what you have given us, and to find ways to respond, with your love, to any injustices that we see.



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Canadian Baptist Ministries  
7185 Millcreek Drive  
Mississauga ON L5N 5R4

**PHONE:** 905.821.3533

**FAX:** 905.826.3441

**EMAIL:** [communications@cbmin.org](mailto:communications@cbmin.org)

[cbmin.org](http://cbmin.org)

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# Hey! It's Not Fair!



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## LESSON 4 Crazy Climate

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: God wants us to take care of his creation

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Isaiah 58:10, 1:17, 58:6



BIBLE VERSE:  
**Isaiah 58:10**

**Your Light will Shine out from Darkness**



#### BACKGROUND:

Deforestation rates in Africa are twice the average for the rest of the world. Kenya and Zambia only have about 1-5% of their primary forests remaining, threatening the very environment that people rely on. In the Northeastern region of Kenya, there are additional challenges, with conflict, historical grievances based on land ownership, tribal and faith differences (especially between Christians and Muslims), incoming refugees fleeing conflict in their own countries, and violence from extremist groups. Compounding the suffering is marginalization at the hands of government, with lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, health facilities, clean drinking water, etc.

A CBM food security project in the area began with providing emergency food and water during a time of extreme food shortage and famine. This was followed by training in conservation agriculture that promotes organic methods, use of mulching and other methods to improve the soil, distribution of seeds, tools, water pumps. Demonstration farms encouraged farmers to try and grow a variety of crops, including fruit and vegetables. Projects in other areas of Kenya also encourage farmers to start tree nurseries (to grow, sell and plant more trees). The project is also helping to build good community relations among different tribal groups and faiths (especially between Christian and Muslim).



INTRODUCTION:  
**Caring for our World**



(Show children a lump of charcoal) Who likes to BBQ? Some BBQs use charcoal like this as a fuel. Did you know that charcoal burning is a very common practice across Kenya and other developing countries. From cities slums to rural villages, people use charcoal as a fuel for their jiko stoves (a small, often portable stove) and small fires to cook their food and boil their water.

In Northeastern Kenya, it is common to see families chopping down trees and saplings to put into smoldering earthen mounds to make charcoal. On the roadsides, you see stands selling tall sacks bulging with the charred wood made by desperate families trying to earn enough money to buy food.

This practice is part of what has led to mass deforestation (lack of trees) and soil erosion (good soil washed away) throughout Kenya. So too has growing cities (which take away farmland and forests) as well as big, industrial farms (companies that buy up the land/cut down forests) that grow food to export and sell to other countries. The poor farmers who struggle to grow enough just to survive are the ones most impacted. *Hey, it's not fair!*

Deforestation also has a serious global impact on the environment. Trees absorb carbon dioxide from the air through their leaves (photosynthesis), a very important part of having a healthy planet. However, when trees are cut down and burned, the carbon they were storing is released, contributing to a lot of crazy weather and natural disasters that we are starting to see more of (climate change). People everywhere are being impacted. Let's see how we can respond.



SNACK:  
**Popcorn**



A staple food in Kenya is corn (maize). Just like the trees in our story (where we learn that they store carbon), kernels of corn can store something. Water! If a kernel of corn is dried, but some water stays inside, once the kernel is heated, the water expands inside and the kernel pops open. That's how we make popcorn. It can be a healthy and delicious snack!



MISSION  
ADVENTURE  
STORY:

**Meet Odha**



Meet Odha. He lives all the way over in Kenya. Do you remember where that is? [Have a child put another sticker on Kenya on your world map.] Odha is very proud of his farm, but he didn't always feel that way. Let's hear his story.

*My wife and I are farmers in an area that is hot and dry. We work hard to try and feed our children. The weather has been getting crazy. Some years we don't get enough rain and other times too much and the river floods over, destroying all of our crops. It is hard to know what to do. I get so discouraged that I don't feel like farming anymore. But I don't know what else to do to provide for my family. I ended up working on a farm owned by someone else to try and provide food for my family. It was not enough. I was sad to see that my children could not go to school. We cut down shrubs to burn and make charcoal so that my wife could go and sell it in the town farther away. We grew desperate to survive. Many times we only had one meal a day. We were so happy to see some church people come and help us. We were a bit surprised because we are a different faith (Muslim) and didn't expect that they would want to help us. But they said that the only thing that matters is that God loves all people and they want to help us.*

*First they gave us food because we were near starvation. Then they showed me some techniques to try on my farm to grow food that was more nutritious, and would also give me a bigger crop, enough to feed my family and also to sell at market to earn money. They gave me seeds to grow a variety of food, such as fruit and vegetables. They even helped our village to build a small centre where my children can go for classes. Big changes have happened in our family and in our whole village. Most importantly for me, the difficult challenge of looking to find work on someone*



*else's farm is over. I now work in my own farm and grow my own food and can provide for my family. We have two meals a day and eat a variety of food for health. May God bless the people who have helped us!*

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the problem in the story? How does it make people feel?
2. What is helping Odha to break the chains caused by a changing climate?
3. How does the story make you feel?
4. What can we do to help?



EXTRA ACTIVITY:  
**Carbon Footprint**



Make a footprint mural. Have each child put their foot in a tray of black paint (or brush their foot lightly with a safe, washable kind of paint.) Ask each child to step on a large sheet of paper. Have a cloth and water to wash with afterward.

Introduce the concept of carbon footprint (see this source for more info and a fun test your class can take: [www.terrapass.com/consume-care-environmental-facts-myths-consumption](http://www.terrapass.com/consume-care-environmental-facts-myths-consumption)).

Have children sit around the mural and discuss how our lifestyle might be impacting the environment in a negative way (using disposable plastic; too many cars versus carpooling, buying food that comes from a long distance away, etc.)

Note that some countries or communities are using new sources of renewable energy, like solar power, for cooking, heating or cooling houses, etc. Encourage children to think of personal lifestyle changes - practical things they and their families can do, make wise choices, especially in consumption, such as reduce what we buy and waste, walk and bike more, recycle and reuse. Have children make one commitment that will be better for the environment.