

# Mother Earth



## Lesson Message

- ◆ What does Mother Earth teach us?  
Mother Earth teaches us patience and forgiveness.
- ◆ What do trees and mountains teach us?  
Trees teach us to live for others, and mountains teach us to be steadfast in values we hold.

### OPENING PRAYER

3 MINUTES

ॐ सह नावतु ।  
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।  
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।  
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥  
*om saha nāvavatu,*  
*saha nau bhunaktu,*  
*saha vīryam karavāvahai,*  
*tejasvināvadhītam-astu mā vidviṣāvahai.*  
*om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.*

May He protect us both.  
May He nourish us.  
May we acquire the capacity  
(to study and understand the  
scriptures).  
May our study be brilliant.  
May we not cavil at each other.  
*Om Peace Peace Peace.*

### ATTENDANCE

5 MINUTES

Take attendance, and let each child respond *Hariḥ Om*, when his/her name is called.

### MEMORY TIME

10 MINUTES

Children will learn to chant the verse on *Śrī Gurudevah* and read the meaning of the verse given in the Introduction.

### TOPIC OF THE DAY

35 MINUTES

The topic of the day consists of:



- ◆ **Tale:** King Yadu
- ◆ **Riddle:** Who Am I?
- ◆ **Brainstorming:** My Teacher, Mother Earth
- ◆ **Tale:** What Can't Be Cured, Must Be Endured
- ◆ **Discussion:** Patience
- ◆ **Tale:** Forgiveness
- ◆ **Tale:** The Giving Tree
- ◆ **Tale:** Be Steadfast Like The Thumb
- ◆ **Game:** Erect As A Mountain

### Tale: King Yadu

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mission on earth was nearing its end. At that time, Uddhava, a devotee, requested *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* to enlighten him with the knowledge of how one should live in the world. In response to this request, *Bhagavān* narrated the dialogue between King Yadu and saint Dattātreya.

Dattātreya, a wandering saint, lived in the kingdom of Yadu. The king had noticed the blissful appearance of this saint. The king wanted to know the secret of the saint's happiness and therefore approached him. Dattātreya said, "O noble king, I have roamed freely on the earth and have learned the art of living from my twenty-four teachers. What I have learned from them, I will tell you; listen carefully."

यदुरुवाच

कुतो बुद्धिरियं ब्रह्मन्कर्तुः सुविचारदा ।

यामासाद्य भवाँल्लोकं विद्वान्श्चरति बालवत् ॥ ११ ७ २६ ॥

*yaduruvāca*

*kuto buddhiriyam brahmannakartuḥ suviśāradā,*

*yāmāsādyā bhavāṁllokaṁ vidvānścarati bālavat. 11.7.26.*

11.7.26. King Yadu said:

O *Brahman*, though not involved in activities, please tell me from where did you get such a brilliant intellect? Using which, though very learned, you are moving in the world like a child (full of innocence)!

जनेषु दह्यमानेषु कामलोभदवाग्निना ।

न तप्यसेऽग्निना मुक्तो गङ्गाम्भःस्थ इव द्विपः ॥ ११ ७ २९ ॥

*janeṣu dahyamāneṣu kāmalo bhavadavāgninā,*

*na tapyase'gninā mukto gaṅgāmbhaḥstha iva dvipaḥ. 11.7.29.*

11.7.29. People in the world are burning in the fire of desires and greed. You, being totally free like an elephant standing in Ganges water, are not burning with that fire.

त्वं हि नः पृच्छतां ब्रह्मन्नात्मन्यानन्दकारणम् ।  
 ब्रूहि स्पर्शविहीनस्य भवतः केवलात्मनः ॥ ११ ७ ३० ॥  
*tvaṁ hi naḥ pṛcchatāṁ brahmannātmanyānandakāraṇam,*  
*brūhi sparśavihīnasya bhavataḥ kevalātmanaḥ. 11.7.30.*

11.7.30. O sage, you are unblemished by the world, i.e., wife, children, and wealth. You seem to be established in your own Self at all times. Please, tell us how are you experiencing the inexplicable joy of Self within yourself.

ब्राह्मण उवाच  
 सन्ति मे गुरवो राजन् बहवो बुद्ध्युपाश्रिताः ।  
 यतो बुद्धिमुपादाय मुक्तोऽटामीह ताञ्छृणु ॥ ११ ७ ३२ ॥  
*brāhmaṇa uvāca*  
*santi me guravo rājan bahavo buddhyupāśritāḥ,*  
*yato buddhim-upādāya muktto'ṭāmīha tāñchṛṇu. 11.7.32.*

11.7.32. The *brāhmin* said:  
 O King, using my intellect I have taken refuge in many teachers. Having learned from them, I move about freely in the world. Please listen to who all my teachers are, and what I have learned from them.

The *brāhmin*, then described his twenty-four teachers from whom he learned the art of living happily in the world which is given in the eleventh chapter of Bhāgavatam. In Grade 3, children learned the first nine chapters of Bhāgavatam. During the first six months in Grade 4, children learned the tenth chapter—Kṛṣṇa stories from Bhāgavatam, and in this curriculum children will learn the eleventh chapter of Bhāgavatam.

### Riddle: Who Am I?

I have eight siblings, I never sit still, I keep revolving causing days, nights, and seasons. I am shaped like a sphere. Who am I?

### Brainstorming: My Teacher, Mother Earth

My first teacher is Mother Earth.

भूतैराक्रम्यमाणोऽपि धीरो दैववशानुगैः ।  
 तद् विद्वाञ्च चलेन्मार्गादन्वशिक्षं क्षितेर्व्रतम् ॥ ११ ७ ३७ ॥  
*bhūtairākramyamāṇo'pi dhīro daivavaśānugaiḥ,*  
*tad vidvāñcha calenmārgād-anvaśikṣaṁ kṣitervratam. 11.7.37.*

11.7.37. I have learned from the earth to remain unperturbed even when oppressed





by people. Everyone is subject to the will of destiny. Being conscious of the fact that all beings are subject to their will of destiny, a wise man should not deviate from the course of righteousness.

शङ्खत्परार्थसर्वहः परार्थैकान्तसम्भवः ।

साधुः शिक्षेत भूभृत्तो नगशिष्यः परात्मताम् ॥ ११ ७ ३८ ॥

*śaśvatparārthasarvehaḥ parārthaikāntasambhavaḥ,  
sādhuḥ śikṣeta bhūbhṛtto nagaśiṣyaḥ parātmātām. 11.7.38.*

11.7.38. Being the disciple of mountains and trees (which are modification of the earth), I have learned to do good to others; in fact their very existence is only for the service of others. So also, all actions of good people should only be for the service of others.

Earth teaches us endurance and patience. We plough and tear her up and yet, she gives us plenty of grains. She supports and nourishes us. We dig and she gives us oil, jewels, and precious metals. She never complains nor screams.

Generally, people act according to their destiny and desires. Sometimes, they do not act in a manner that is pleasing; at such times, we must not complain, instead have patience, and we must forgive them as “they know not what they are doing!”

Earth’s extensions are mountains and trees; they live as if they have taken birth for the service of the people. Each and every part of the tree is useful for mankind. Trees teach us to give generously all we possess for the service of mankind.

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### **Tale: What Can’t Be Cured, Must Be Endured**

There was a scientist in Geneva, Switzerland many years ago. He was observing the changes in atmosphere on a barometer and had taken notes for twenty-seven years. He kept his papers next to his barometer. One day, his old servant left him and a new lady servant replaced him. She, being a very enthusiastic worker, wanted to clean the house properly. She replaced the old papers containing data, painstakingly collected by the scientist for the past years, with fresh clean papers! The scientist asked her about the papers, and gently she explained how dirty they were and how she had replaced them with clean papers! All his research data, work of twenty-seven years, had gone to a garbage dumpster because of the new servant!

Very patiently, the scientist told her not to remove any papers from his room! He knew by getting angry, his papers were not going to come back.

Learn to have patience like the earth. Patience is one of the important qualities in gaining success. A patient person always keeps his head cool. We need patience to keep balance of mind.

## Discussion: Patience

Discussion below will teach children that complaining does not change our circumstances.

- ◆ Patience with circumstances: Slow moving freeway traffic; declining economy; crowded cities; humid air; two feet of snow; rainy day; busy restaurants. These are a few of the million circumstances we tend to complain about. What is the use of impatience under such circumstances? Discuss. Even if we complain, circumstances will not change. Then, why complain!
- ◆ Patience with people: Annoying teachers (who demand work from us); snobby classmates; noisy neighbors; rude relatives; silly sister; boisterous brother; mean mom (seems mean because she is a strict disciplinarian); dictatorial dad (who has the wisdom to discipline us because discipline alone brings success) are a few of the millions of people we would love to complain about. What is the use of impatience with people? Discuss.
- ◆ Patience with self: That “A” you didn’t get; that team you didn’t make; that popularity contest you wanted to win but did not get the trophy because you missed just by few points. These are a few of millions of reasons to whine about. What is the use of impatience with self? Discuss.

Think. Where do we fall? Are we also not snobby or rude or silly sometimes! Regardless, understand that everyone acts according to their own understanding about life. Also, be kind to yourself.

The key to patience is understanding that what cannot be cured must be endured. “There is a reason for every pain that I must feel, there is a reason for every tear that I must shed, and there is a reason for everything...He knows the reason; I do not know the reason.” Have patience, and God will take care.

## Tale: Forgiveness

Once upon a time a traveler passed by a tree filled with ripe mangoes. Wanting some of the fruit, he threw stones at the tree. One time, he missed the tree and the stone hit the king who was passing by. The king got very angry and had his guards arrest the traveler so that he could punish him.

The traveler said, “O king, how much better the tree is, compared to you. Because I was hungry, I was throwing stones at the tree. The tree forgave me for hitting it and gave me fruits to satisfy my hunger. But one time I missed the tree and you got hurt by accident. And you are punishing me for that!”

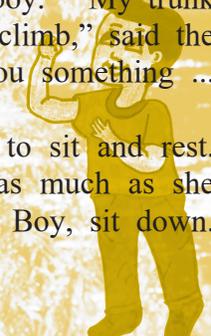
**Think:** We misbehave by hurting Mother Earth in so many ways. She silently suffers and gives us many gifts without which we could not survive. Man is the crown of creation. And yet, if someone misbehaves with us even once, we forget about forgiving. Instead we want to punish them right away!



## Tale: The Giving Tree

Once there was a tree ... and she loved a little boy. And everyday the boy would come and he would gather her leaves and make them into crowns and play king of the forest. He would climb up her trunk and swing from her branches and eat apples. And they would play hide-and-go-seek. And when he was tired, he would sleep in her shade. And the boy loved the tree ... very much. And the tree was happy. But time went by. And the boy grew older. And the tree was often alone. Then one day the boy came to the tree and the tree said, "Come, Boy, come and climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and eat apples and play in my shade and be happy." "I am too big to climb and play," said the boy. "I want to buy things and have fun. I want some money. Can you give me some money?" "I am sorry," said the tree, "but I have no money. I have only leaves and apples. Take my apples, Boy, and sell them in the city. Then you will have money and you will be happy." And so the boy climbed up the tree and gathered her apples and carried them away. And the tree was happy. But the boy stayed away for a long time ... and the tree was sad. And then one day the boy came back and the tree shook with joy and she said, "Come, Boy, climb up my trunk and swing from my branches and be happy." "I am too busy to climb trees," said the boy. "I want a house to keep me warm," he said. "I want a wife and I want children, and so I need a house. Can you give me a house?" "I have no house," said the tree. "The forest is my house, but you may cut off my branches and build a house. Then you will be happy." And so the boy cut off her branches and carried them away to build his house. And the tree was happy. But the boy stayed away for a long time. And when he came back, the tree was so happy she could hardly speak. "Come, Boy," she whispered, "come and play." "I am too old and sad to play," said the boy. "I want a boat that will take me far away from here. Can you give me a boat?" "Cut down my trunk and make a boat," said the tree. "Then you can sail away ... and be happy." And so the boy cut down her trunk and made a boat and sailed away. And the tree was happy ... but not really. And after a long time the boy came back again. "I am sorry, Boy," said the tree, "but I have nothing left to give you—My apples are gone." "My teeth are too weak for apples," said the boy. "My branches are gone," said the tree. "You cannot swing on them—" "I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy. "My trunk is gone," said the tree. "You cannot climb—" "I am too tired to climb," said the boy. "I am sorry," sighed the tree. "I wish that I could give you something ... but I have nothing left. I am just an old stump. I am sorry ..." "I don't need very much now," said the boy, "just a quiet place to sit and rest. I am very tired." "Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as she could, "well, an old stump *is* good for sitting and resting. Come, Boy, sit down. Sit down and rest." And the boy did. And the tree was happy.

-Silverstein, Shel. The Giving Tree. HarperCollins, 1964.



## Tale: Be Steadfast Like The Thumb

This is an African folktale. Once all the five fingers were side by side on the hand. They were all friends and did almost everything together. They ate together, played together, giggled together, and worked together.

One day they saw a golden ring. All the four fingers, except the thumb, wanted to have the ring and thought how beautiful it will look on them! But the thumb said, “No, we should not take this ring as it does not belong to us.”

Rest of them insisted that they should take the ring since no one owns it, no one is here to see this, and no one is here to claim it. The thumb stood aside and declined to join them. He said, “No, I will not join you as that is stealing. It is wrong to steal.”

The other four grumbled saying that just because the ring does not fit, the thumb does not want to join us! And they told the thumb not to hang around with them.

That is why the thumb stands apart from all the other fingers. The thumb in this folktale also personifies steadfastness, which sets it apart. Similar to the thumb, we need to be steadfast in principles and dedication, to serve others for a happy life. Sometimes we need to set ourselves apart to uphold correct principles.

## Game: Erect As A Mountain



This game reinforces how to be firm and steady like a mountain. Ask few children to stand straight in an upright, and erect position like a mountain. Let other children try to make them laugh, and they are not supposed to laugh or move. If children standing like mountains move or laugh, they are out of the game, and the next batch of children get the chance to stand like a mountain. Time the children and the one who remains firm for the longest time, is the winner.

The mountain (which is an extension of earth) symbolizes steadfastness. It withstands all weather and gusty winds, yet contributes to the welfare of mankind.

Let us be patient like the Mother Earth.



Let us learn to give like the trees.  
Let us learn to be steadfast like the mountains.

## QUIET TIME

5 MINUTES

Follow one of the techniques described in the Introduction to make children's mind quiet. A quiet mind is an inspired, creative, peaceful, courageous, truthful, and happy mind.

## CLOSING PRAYER

2 MINUTES

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिद् दुःखभागभवेत् ॥  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥  
*om sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu nirāmayāḥ,  
sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu mā kaścid duḥkhabhāgbhavet.  
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.*

May all be happy.  
May all be healthy.  
May all enjoy prosperity.  
May none suffer.  
*Om Peace Peace Peace.*