

SEL Activity

Caring for the Ocean



grades 4-5



20 minutes

Objectives

- Students consider what they love about the ocean.
- Students learn ways to care for the ocean.
- Students understand that small actions are impactful.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to take care of something?
- Why is it important to take care of the ocean?
- How can I develop my relationship with the ocean?

Vocabulary

Care: verb; to take interest, look after, or protect someone or something.

Before you Begin

Preview the Video: [How to Care for the Ocean \(6:35\)](#).

Program Connections

This activity focuses on giving to the environment—a theme that runs through our core programs. To learn more, visit our [PROGRAMS](#) page.

MATERIALS + MEDIA

Video: [How to Care for the Ocean \(6:35\)](#)
Notebook or piece of paper

SEL CORE COMPETANCIES

Self-management
Responsible decision-making
Gratitude

THINK • GIVE

Ocean Favorites

Students stand in concentric circles. Students in the inner circle should face outward, and students in the outer circle should face in so everyone has a partner. Ask the first question (see list below); students discuss it with their partner. After one minute, ask a few students to share their answers with the class. Students rotate to a new partner. Repeat the process for the second and third-round questions.

Round 1: What does it mean to care for something?

Round 2: What do you love about the ocean or another body of water (e.g., ponds, lakes, streams, creeks)?

Round 3: Why is caring for the ocean important?

Watch: [How to Care for the Ocean](#) (6:35). This video highlights the importance of caring for the ocean and how people make a difference. Students should write thoughts or observations in a notebook or on paper as they watch.

Discuss:

- What did you learn from the video?
- What interests you most about the ocean? How can you use that interest to help make positive change?
- Even if you live far from a body of water, what small ways can you care for the ocean?

CONNECT + CLOSE

Pair/Share: Students take a few minutes to individually brainstorm ways (big and small) they might be able to care for the ocean (or a nearby body of water) (e.g., use metal instead of plastic straws, cut up plastic rings from soda six-packs, use a reusable water bottle). In pairs or small groups, they share the ideas they have come up with.

Discuss:

- What action steps can you take to begin caring for the ocean?
- What are the positive impacts of caring for the ocean/bodies of water?
- How can you encourage others to help care for the ocean?

ACTION

Explain: Consider the ideas that came out of your individual and the class brainstorm. Take an action to try to change one behavior that will help care for the ocean—and then try to make this change in behavior a habit!

REFLECTION

Lead a discussion or allow students to journal. Use the following questions as a guide:

- How did you care for the ocean?
- How did it feel to change a behavior?
- How can you continue to take action to care for the ocean?