REDFORDCENTERSTORIES

Chapter (Lesson) 2. **Earthrise**: awakening hope for the future

Lesson Two Intention(s):

- Students consider the history/meaning/future of gathering in circles to share stories/learn together.
- Students explore the history/meaning of Earthrise, a photo taken during the Apollo 8 moon mission.
- Students consider the Earth as an ecosystem, in relationship to the science of the universe/humans.
- Students examine the meaning of "environment"; "environmentalist"; "climate"/"climate change."

Lesson Two Overview:

This lesson invites students to consider the following questions: **How do we think about our "environment"– where does it start and end?** What does it mean to be "an environmentalist"? Who gets to participate in and tell the story of the Earth; and of its protection and repair? The oldest human tradition is to gather in circles and communities to tell stories and share experiences so that we might better understand ourselves, our world, and our relationship to all that exists in this environment as a whole. How have people tried to explore, describe, map, calculate, and express their "environment"? **We are the first generation to comprehend the scientific story of the universe, with a vast array of tools to reflect on our relationship to the Earth**. How are we using these tools, and how *might* we use them? This second step of the journey explores these questions too. It invites students to travel into the reaches of space and across the Earth with Apollo 8, Martin Luther King Jr., scientists, ecologists, and filmmakers to explore **the power of perspective.** It includes many extension options, including an overview of what is meant by "climate" and "climate change," and looks at Earth as a single ecosystem.

Key Themes:

- ➔ Curiosity and observation
- ➔ Relationship between universe, Earth, human beings
- ➔ Earth as many systems within one system
- ➔ Power of perspective (changing our angle of view)
- ➔ The critical nature of hope and wonder/imagination

Duration: *This lesson is designed for 30 mins., but can be done in 15-20, or expanded to 45-80 mins.*

Lesson Components:

- Slides (in Google slides format; adaptable for educator needs/preferences)
- VIDEOS: Robert Redford: The Global Climate Summit; Island Home, Manzanar Diverted
- WRITING/REFLECTION: MLK, Maya Angelou
- Resources, activities and extension ideas (see end of lesson)

Materials:

- Educators: Lesson PDF, access to online media (for video viewing), slide deck (customizable)
- Students: pencil/pen and paper

Connections (see extensions/resources and standards below; full standards for this project here):

Justice; Environment; Film, Reading/Writing; History; STEM
Mini-challenge (can be used as a way of assignment/assessment)
Further Reading; Watching; Exercises

Slide 4

Going Beyond

As a place to begin, you might offer the following quote (or a chosen quote you enjoy) to students:

"*The world cannot be discovered by a journey of miles...but only by an inner journey, **a journey of one inch**, very arduous, and humbling, and joyful.*" – Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry is an American poet/writer, farmer and environmental activist who has dedicated himself to understanding and writing about "the roots of life." He writes and speaks about **living life in close connection with the earth and with people**–as the ground for a healthy planet and meaningful life.

Invite a student to read Wendell Berry's quote out loud before exploring the following questions:

- Wendell Berry says the world is discovered "only by an inner journey, a journey of one inch"
  - What do you think he means "**journey of one inch**"?
    - How do you take this kind of journey?
    - What do you pack? Bring with you? Leave behind?
  - What happens if you turn your attention even one inch in a different direction?
  - What happens for a photographer or filmmaker if they move their head one inch in a different direction? What might be different?

(*You can look online for details about *Look and See*, a film about Wendell Berry, with producer Robert Redford)

Slide 5

Circles (Ripples) of Change

Sometimes we talk about "change" as being orchestrated by one person, involving only certain people, or applying only to one community or issue. In fact, our actions (beginning with **the way we attend to, notice, observe, and experience things**) ripple into the world; in ways we see and don't see. Actions in our local community (family, school, neighborhood, beyond), ripple into the world; and events across the world impact all of us directly. Technology can help us see this more clearly; if we are willing to look**.**

Each of us has a **unique point of view** and our point of view is often the beginning of a story we might have to tell, or the way we might go to explore an issue in our local community, or beyond.

Gathering in circles and community is **the oldest human tradition**–people coming together to share stories and experiences, learn about the world, solve problems: around a fire, in wisdom circles (indigenous traditions); drum circles; musicians; choirs (circles of music); poetry/hip hop circles and ciphers; kitchen tables, town council, student council, the United Nations, Stonehenge (image on last slides if you'd like to use it)... ***Other/our own examples?**

As people come together now, what new stories and points of view can be shared? And how can we learn even more about the place we all share**–the Earth**. What kind of imagination, wonder and exploration is needed now? And how can we create circles that feel inclusive for all people?

Slide 6

Earthrise

With the image on Slide 5, invite students to explore some of the following questions (or some like this):

- When you see this image/photograph, what are the **first 3 words** that come to you?
  (*try not to edit yourself, just see what first arises for you, and be curious about it)
  (*if online, you might invite students to put some/all answers in the chat as works well, or you might have students share their words on a Google Form, or shared document).

Slide 7

Ask if anyone knows **the story of this image**, and explore some of the following:

- What *could* be the story?
  - When do you think this photograph was taken? (any guesses?)
  - Who/what could have taken this photo? (any guesses?)
    - And whose imagination brought us here?
- What name was this photo given? What name would *you* give it?

- Robert Redford has said, “Storytelling begins with **a sense of place**.” What is our sense of this place,the Earth? And why/how does storytelling “begin with a sense of place?”
  - If you were going to describe the place you are in right now, what would you focus on first? Then what would be include? Why do you think this is?

This is a photograph taken by astronauts on the **Apollo 8 mission to the moon in 1968** (Bill Anders, Frank Borman, and Jim Lovell), and later given the name “**Earthrise**.” The “Earthrise” photograph is often referred to as **“the image that shared the world,”** because it was the first photograph that showed the Earth from space (sort of like Earth looking in a mirror). It changed the **perception** of space exploration from an effort to leave Earth behind to a chance to wonder at the singular beauty of the Earth and the life it supports.”

(see the Global Oneness Project)

An Opening Invitation (Video)

Slide 8

Earthrise created a certain invitation for new ways of seeing and relating to the Earth. Here is another invitationfor us to consider…Show the first 1-minute of the opening ceremony of the **Global Climate Summit video** (narrated by Robert Redford). You might follow this video by exploring questions like:

- Robert Redford begins, “It’s been said that if we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change.” What do you think this means?
- Why does it matter to “gain a fresh perspective,” “walk in another’s shoes,” or “first be willing to change our minds”?
  - What strength, creativity, greater sense for our life and world might we gain from changing our minds, or altering our point of view or the “place” we occupy (physically or otherwise)?
  - What helps us change our minds/hearts about something? Examples?
- What does it mean that the Earth is “perfectly calibrated” (in balance)?
  - Examples of what it’s like when you’re in balance (however you think of this)? Or out?
- When people in the future look back at this time in history, what will/might they learn from us?

Slide 9 & 10

Earthrise, 50 + years later

In 1968, The Earthrise photograph offered a powerful **shift in perspective** for many people as an image that **“transcended”** national, political, and religious boundaries. It helped people all over the world **see Earth as one ecosystem**–something indigenous communities all over the world long have held at the heart of their worldview, or way of relating to the Earth and its systems. **What about now?**

"Environment"

Slide 11 & 12

To look at this from further angles, we might ask: **What do we mean when we say "environment"?**

- What do we include?
- Where are the boundaries and borders?
- Who/what is composed from the material of the environment?
- Is there a difference between our "natural" environment and our "social" environment?

"Environmentalist"

Slide 13

An "environmentalist" can be a profession, and is often associated with only a small section of people, but here is the definition in many dictionaries: **"An environmentalist is a person who is concerned with and/or advocates for the protection of the environment."** What is not part of our "environment"?

What might be some of the impacts (results) of having a narrow idea of who is an "environmentalist"? Impacts on the Earth? On our communities? If you look up (Google or otherwise) "environmentalist," what images do you find?

- Who is telling the story of Earth and Nature/natural resources? (*How could you research this?)
  - Which voices are *not* being heard?
  - What does it mean to be an "advocate"?

An Open Call to All of Us: Environmental Activism and Film

Slide 14

The next films, Island Home (made by 3 students who participated in the Redford Center Challenge last year), and Manzanar Diverted, a feature film, discuss the impacts of humans on native ecosystems and some of the ways people are engaging in environmental activism to reverse some of these negative impacts. Consider the following questions:

- Do these films challenge your ideas of what it means to be an environmentalist? If so, how?
- What in their messages stand out to you?
- What filmmaking or artistic choices do they make to convey their messages?
- How do the filmmakers share their story, passion, and their roles in creating a healthier community and planet?
- How does using film as a medium to tell a story about the environment impact you differently than reading something, viewing still images, or listening to a song?

Slide 15

Martin Luther King Jr. did not live to see the Earthrise photograph, but even without seeing it, he spoke of his sense for the whole as an interconnected whole. How do you think he came to this feeling:

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated." – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

How do we **talk** about the Earth in ways that help us relate to it as a whole system?

- How have people in different eras of history found language/images for this?
  - Earthrise is one example, but what about other stories/mythology/images…

A question for us all to consider…

****** When communicating about what is happening to the Earth, and to people across its communities, what aspects of the story are we focused on? Who is telling the story? Whose stories are being told?

★ **Lesson Two Challenge Prep: Change the Perspective, Change the Story**

Introduction: Perspective means the way things are seen from a particular point of view. “Point of View” is a very important consideration for storytellers and filmmakers. The point of view of how we tell a story and how we show a story can achieve different outcomes and experiences for the audience.

For example, imagine a story about an anthill. If we zoomed in very close to an extreme close up shot of a single ant and told a story from an ant’s point of view. What would that story be about? Who would the characters be? How would the audience experience the world of the ant?

Now, let’s zoom out. Imagine the same anthill, but this time we are looking at it from a distance and we can now see that the anthill is on a field next to a sprinkler and a tree with birds in it. Now, what would that story be about? Who would the characters be? How would the audience experience the world of the anthill and the threats to the ant colony?

Let’s zoom out one more time. Now we see a soccer field with many players on it and people in the stands cheering. We can barely see the anthill at all, but we do see a player at the edge of the field near the tree jumping around and scratching their body. What is the story about now? Who are the characters? How does the audience experience the anthill in the story?

How we look at issues, people, places, and objects makes a huge difference to the story that we draw from observing it.

Assignment: Encourage your students to observe an object and/or place from three different perspectives. They should take a picture or draw what they see from a close-up perspective, a medium-shot perspective, and a wide-shot perspective. Have them write a short story from each perspective. Each story should contain a new set of characters, new challenges, and a new perspective about the object’s relationship to the story.

Additional Activity Option:

** Possible Activity: **Student-Driven Bio Project (part 1)**

Invite students to research stories about space exploration that emphasize the lives, curiosity, and discoveries of people who are not well-known, or are underrepresented in our history?

- Who is less represented in space exploration?
- What stories do we not yet know? How can we find out?
- Where/how might we find new/more stories?

You might have students create a one-paragraph or one-page bio or story about the person they choose, or invite them to represent the story in a visual way.

*Recent news: **Victor Glover,** the first Black crew member on the space station (NY Times article HERE).
*The story and history of Mae Jemison (see National Women's History Museum HERE).

Additional Activity Option:

** Possible Activity: **Student-Driven Bio Project (part 2)**

Invite students to research/write short bios or stories about "environmentalists" that emphasize the lives, curiosity, joys, cares, actions of people who are not well-known or underrepresented in our history? What stories do we not yet know? This might be someone in a book or other source, and/or it might be a parent, grandparent, sibling, neighbor, teacher, friend...

Additional Activity Option:

Identifying/guessing meaningful places nature (see bonus slide)

Further options for this lesson WRITING/REFLECTION (or can be used as homework; on bonus slide):

(Writing Prompt/conversation; a different view on/of Martin Luther King Jr.):

"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated." – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

This prompt can be used as a free write or free response. Share it with students and let them see where it takes them in their own reflection. You might invite students to share what this quote means to them. As they do, see which aspects of their sharing you can help affirm and reflect back to them, and how you can help identify and draw out connections between different reflections.

You might also explore questions like:

- What is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. most known for?
  - Is it unfamiliar to think of him as "an environmentalist"?
- What do you think of when you hear the word "interrelated"?
  - What does it mean to you? What pictures or sounds does it create for you?
- Why might Dr. King say that "all life is interrelated"? Or that "it all boils down to this"?

From Drew Dellinger, "Martin Luther King Jr.: Ecological Thinker" (additional article: New York Times)

"In the final phase of his life...King was connecting issues and linking movements: confronting poverty and entrenched racism in Chicago and Cleveland, speaking forcefully against US imperialism and the war in Vietnam, and organizing a Poor People's Campaign that would unite people across racial and ethnic lines to demand economic justice. These often-ignored radical aspects of King's thought came through clearly as I began studying his speeches, sermons, and writings about 15 years ago.

By immersing myself in King's words, something else gradually revealed itself, **something largely unnoticed even by King's many scholars, biographers, and historians**. Reading through his consistent references to the universe and the cosmos, to interrelatedness, interdependence, and connectedness, to mutuality and participation, an inescapable conclusion dawned on me: **Martin Luther King was an ecological thinker.**

He was also a cosmological thinker with a deep interest in the universe. As early as the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1956, King said, "The fact that this new age is emerging reveals something basic about the universe. It tells us something about the core and heartbeat of the cosmos"...As I studied King's words, it also became clear that his vision was essentially one of **connectedness**...King saw reality as an **interlacing network of relationships**, viewed the nations and **peoples of the planet as one, and linked various social injustice**s, saying, "All of these problems are tied together"....

One of the best examples of King's ecological view, and links he draws [with] connectedness, justice is his "Christmas Eve Sermon on Peace," delivered in the last months of his life from his pulpit at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. "If we are to have peace on earth," he told the congregation, "we must develop a world perspective. .....Yes, as nations and individuals, we are interdependent." Then, with a sentence that could easily have been uttered by...Rachel Carson, King states, **"It really boils down to this: that all life is interrelated."**

Suggested Standards: Language Arts and History/Social Studies

This lesson gives students multiple opportunities to engage with **language, images and text**, with particular focus on how point of view impacts the story one tells. Students also have a chance to reflect on their own experience and point of view in **conversation and writing.**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3
Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3
Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Suggested Standards: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Throughout this lesson students are encouraged to understand the primacy of **observation**, and the need to attend closely to **patterns and relationship**s, and to be able to envision **the impact of actions**.

- Patterns and relationships
- Precision and depth in observation
- Inference and probability

Suggested Connections: NGSS/Environment

Students are encouraged to make connections between the health of natural systems and the health of human beings and human communities. In addition, phenomena and change may be observable at one scale and not another, or may require a different way of inquiry and attention to detect and understand.

- Health of human lives and health of natural systems
- Flow of energy and matter at the scale of the entire planet
- Exchange of matter between natural systems and human societies affects long-term functioning of both
- Patterns in the night sky
- Phenomena that can be observed at one scale may not be noticed/observable at another scale
- Systems interact with other systems
- Stability might be disturbed either by sudden events or gradual changes that accumulate over time.
- Time, space, and energy phenomena
- What matter is made of

Suggested Connections: Social Justice

The integration of perspectives and voices in this lesson is intended to encourage greater appreciation for the depth of **one's own identity**, and **respectful curiosity about others' lived experience**.

Identity. Students will recognize that people's multiple identities interact and create unique and complex individuals.
Diversity. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.
Justice. Students will recognize that power and privilege influence relationships on interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional levels and consider how they have been affected by those dynamics.

Suggested Connections: Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Components of this lesson are meant to support students' sense of **confidence and agency**, as well as their social-awareness and sense for relationships; as well as how much relationships need tending, both with **respect** to our relationship with the natural world and each other.

- Self-awareness (confidence, self-efficacy)
- Social-awareness (perspective-taking, appreciating diversity, respect for others)
- Social skills (communication, relationship building)
- Responsible decision-making (evaluating, reflecting)

Suggested Connections: UN Sustainability Goals

(*Click the images to go to pages on the UN's website that detail the goals and intentions behind each.)