

Dear Educator:

Thank you for signing up for *Critter Communities*, a 50-minute program designed to help students learn about the importance of diversity in making healthy communities for both plants and animals.

Critter Communities will answer the following Essential and Guiding questions:

- Why do healthy communities need diversity in order to thrive?
 - What is a community?
 - What happens to the health of a community when there isn't diversity?
 - What actions can you take to protect healthy communities?

The Oregon Zoo hopes that as a result of this program, students will be able to:

- Define community as a group of organisms that depend on one another for survival.
- Explain why healthy communities depend on a diversity of plant and animal life.
- Describe what happens to the health of a community when diversity is lost.
- Name two things they can do to protect healthy communities.

The program is correlated to the following academic standards:

NGSS:

2-LS4-1. Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats

Oregon Social Science Standards:

2.21. Evaluate information relating to an issue or problem.

In an effort to prepare students for their Zoo School program, please consider the following activities:

1. Explore the characteristics of a classroom community.
Our Classroom Community (Emily Newbold)
<http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tlresources/units/Gallagher2003Fall/ENEWBOLD/OURCLASSROOMCOMMUNITY.htm>
2. Explore the concept of diversity by discovering the variety of colors found in nature.
Colour Me (Investing In Nature: A Partnership for Plants in Canada)
https://www.bgci.org/files/Canada/english_docs/colour_me.pdf
3. Read a community or diversity-related story written for young children
 - *The Tree in the Ancient Forest* (Carol Reed-Jones) – Story portrays the amazing ways in which the inhabitants of the forest depend upon one another for survival.
 - *Whose Hands Are These?: A Community Helper Guessing Book* (Miranda Paul) – Meet the helpers that make their community a safe and fun place to live.

- *I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Book About Understanding and Appreciating Each Other* (Cindy Gainer) – Kids learn how to appreciate the ways they are alike and affirm their individual differences.

Continue the learning after we leave your classroom with the following enrichment activities:

1. Explore the important role each animal plays in its community and what happens to the health of the community when the animal disappears. A great activity to reinforce the concepts introduced in the Zoo School program.
Endangered Species (Education World: Connecting Educators to What Works)
http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/03/lp310-03.shtml
2. Increase the biodiversity at your school by creating a wildlife garden. Both the National Wildlife Federation and Oregon State University Extension offer valuable information and support to teachers and schools.
 - National Wildlife Federation
<http://www.nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/Create/Schoolyards.aspx>
For additional information contact Morgan Parks (parks@nwf.org) at the National Wildlife Federation's office in Portland.
 - Oregon State University Extension
<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/4hwildlifestewards/>
For additional information and support contact Maureen Hosty (maureen.hosty@oregonstate.edu) at Oregon State University Extension 4-H – Multnomah County.
3. Encourage students to take action outside the classroom by planting their seed paper in a garden at home.
4. Take a fieldtrip to Sauvie Island Center and learn more about the unique role pollinators play in creating healthy communities.
<http://www.sauvieislandcenter.org/new-home/>
For additional information contact Sarah Philips at sarah@sauvieislandcenter.org