

# Conversation about Conservation

Utah Studies, Social Studies



## Materials

- ◆ A small tootsie roll for each student

## Background

In our efforts to protect the environment we sometimes confuse the terms preserve and conserve. This activity is designed to help students understand the difference between conservation and preservation and indiscriminate use.

## Activity Procedures

Divide the class into three groups. Give each student a tootsie roll. Instruct each group as follows:

Group 1: These students are to eat the tootsie roll immediately.

Group 2: These students may unwrap the tootsie roll but they may only lick the candy, they can't eat it.

Group 3: These students may not unwrap their tootsie roll during this activity.

## Terms:

*Indiscriminate users* are the students in group 1.

*Conservationists* are the students in group 2.

*Preservationists* are the students in group 3.

## Discussion:

- Which group makes the best use of the candy? Why?
- Would it make a difference if we determined the reason for having the candy?
- What if the group had not eaten in three days, would that make a difference?
- Which group would be the wisest group?
- What if the goal was to have the same amount of tootsie rolls a year from now? Which group would have met that goal?
- Like any areas of decision making there are no right and wrong answers. Students are encouraged to examine different aspects of the situation, make their decision, and be able to defend that decision.

## Applying to Areas of Conservation:

Preservationists might want to save all trees and all forests no matter what. Indiscriminate users might cut down trees and forests no matter what. Conservationists might want to use the forest by harvesting trees and managing the forest so that it can regenerate itself.

Time: 30 minutes

**Grade Level: 6, 7, 9**

## Grade 6

Standard 4—Students will understand current global issues and their rights and responsibilities in the interconnected world. Objective 2—Explore current global issues facing the modern world and identify potential solutions.

Indicator a—Investigate pressing issues facing the world today (e.g. environmental, pollution, political turmoil, hunger, poverty, genocide, famine, natural disasters, child labor)

Standard 3—Determine human rights and responsibilities in the world.

Indicator b—Propose steps individual students can take to protect these rights (e.g. support for sister schools, energy and resource conservation, letter writing, career choices, fundraising efforts)

## Utah Studies Standard 1:

Students will understand the interaction between Utah's geography and its inhabitants. Objectives:

1. Investigate the relationship between physical geography and Utah's settlement, land use, and economy.
2. Examine the interrelationship between Utah's climate, location, landforms and life.
3. Assess how natural resources sustain and enhance people's lives.

## Geography Standard 5:

Students will understand the interaction of physical and human systems. Objective 2: Assess the importance of natural and human resources.


- Describe the roles of natural and human resources in daily life.
- Identify worldwide distribution and use of human and natural resources.
- Compare and contrast the use of renewable and nonrenewable resources.
- Evaluate the role of energy resources as they are consumed, conserved, and recycled.

## Have a Ball Looking at the Issues

Do you have some complicated issues or problems to discuss with your students? What are the facts? What is the emotion of the players? Why do the players have the opinions they do? How can there be so many points of view? The fact that there are so many points of view on a particular situation can make the situation an issue. Children looking at issues? The problems or issues discussed in the classroom should definitely be grade appropriate.

Why would individuals want to indiscriminately use, conserve, or preserve natural resources? Use a ball to demonstrate why a person might have a different “point of view.” You’ll need a 12 inch rubber or plastic ball and a marker. Write the numbers 1–4 or 1–6 on your ball like they would appear if the ball was a cube (or die). If you decide to write 6 numbers write the number 5 on the top of the ball and the number 6 on the bottom. Now, hold the ball in front of your students and ask a student on an opposite side of the room which number he or she sees. Ask a student in front of you what number he or she sees, and so on. Are they sure they see a number 1? You see a number 3, and Susan sees a number 2. Why, if you are looking at the same object, a ball, are different students seeing different numbers? Each has a different “point of view.”

“*The Blind Men and the Elephant*” story may also be useful to further note different perceptions. Solving situations or problems often requires that we look at the viewpoints of others to arrive at a workable solution. Life’s problems can be turned into issues that aren’t so easy to solve, but by teaching your students to look at the facts in the context of various viewpoints they will hopefully become problem solvers and be able to make decisions.



*Teacher Notes:*