



The Green Child by Hollie Hughes and Britta Teckentrup

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Learning Resource Guide for Teachers and Librarians Suitable for ages 5+

Key curriculum areas: Developing reading, writing, oracy, science, geography and PSHE through a heartfelt, hopeful story about how small changes can make a big difference to our planet.

Themes:

- Woodland
- Nature
- Seasons
- Weather
- Climate change
- Environmental action
- Community

Description:

As winter shifts into spring, the Green Child rouses from slumber and breathes new life into the world. Through ever-brightening days, she ushers in the changing seasons until summer finally arrives. But as the days grow hotter and hotter, the forest withers away. The Green Child realises she must send a message to mankind... but will anyone listen?

This modern classic celebrates the rhythms of nature, encouraging readers to live in harmony with the planet and inspiring a new generation of environmental heroes.

Hollie Hughes is the author of many much-loved picture books for young children, including the bestselling, award-winning *The Girl and the Dinosaur*, illustrated by Sarah Massini. When not scribbling away on picture book texts, she occasionally writes stories, poems and plays for older children and grown-ups too. Previously a youth worker and higher education lecturer, Hollie is a regular contributor at festivals and events and runs writing workshops for both children and grownups alike, working in schools and prisons all across the UK.



More about Hollie can be found at holliehughes.com

Britta Teckentrup is an award-winning illustrator and author, having written and illustrated over 160 children's picture books that have been published in over 30 different languages. Britta was born and lived in Germany before moving to London in 1988 to study illustration and fine art, she now lives and works in Berlin with her family.

More about Britta can be found at brittateckentrup.com



Reading and Discussion:

1. Look at the front cover together and discuss:

- What do you notice first?
- Can you see the Green Child? What words could you use to describe her?
- Who is she talking to? Are they friends? How do you know? What might they be saying to each other?
- Where does this story take place?
- What do you notice about the plants in the illustration? What colours can you see? Are the plants tall or short? Can you name any of the plants?
- What do you think this story might be about?

2. Read the book together and then discuss:

- Discuss the author's word choices on the opening pages: deepest, densest; trees twist gnarled and wild; a winding path. What do these words mean? Why has the author chosen them? Take turns feeling pieces of wood that are twisted and gnarled. What other words could you use to describe this wood?
- Work together to order the seasons in a circle: autumn, winter, spring, summer then back to autumn. What does the Green Child do in each season? How does the forest change?
- Name the woodland animals in the story (squirrel, bat, hedgehog and fox). How are these animals similar to the Green Child?
- Reread pages 9 to 14. How do we know the summer is very hot?
- What is the message the Green Child shares with the children? (The world is much too hot. The world must slow down and cool.)
- What can we do to look after the world and help it to cool down? (Plant more plants and trees; walk, cycle or scoot instead of going in the car; use less electricity and gas; recycle; fix broken things instead of throwing them away; waste less food and water; swap clothes and books with friends instead of buying new; eat less meat and dairy).





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3

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3. Use the following activities to explore the topic further:

Activity 1: The Seasons	p4
Activity 2: Woodland Animals	p5
Activity 3: A Woodland Scene	p6
Activity 4: Forest Foraging	p6
Activity 5: Plant a Sunflower	p6
Activity 6: Create your own Green Child	p7
Activity 7: Sharing the Green Child's Message	p7
Activity 8: Take Action	p8



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Activity 1: The Seasons

4

Match each season to the correct illustration. What is the Green Child doing in each picture and why? What is the weather like?

Autumn

Winter

Summer

Spring



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Activity 2: Woodland Animals

5

Write the name of each animal under the correct picture. Can you describe each animal? Which do you like best? Why?



Squirrel

Fox

Hedgehog

Bat



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6

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Activity 3: A Woodland Scene

Go out into a woodland and use your senses to learn about the setting. What can you see? What can you hear? What can you smell? What do the trees and plants feel like? (watch out for nettles!)

If you can't go outside, look carefully at images of forests or the illustrations from the story. Describe a woodland scene to a partner and ask them to draw along. Use colours and interesting descriptive words (adjectives). Partners may ask questions for more information or details.

Activity 4: Forest Foraging

Illustrator Britta Teckentrup uses a collage technique to create her fantastic illustrations.

While out in the woodland, collect fallen leaves, broken flowers and small twigs. Make sure you don't pick up anything still attached to a plant. Use these items to create a collage in the style of Britta's illustrations. You may wish to add torn pieces of colourful paper to your collage. Can you create your own Green Child or some of the animals? How can you combine objects to create a beautiful forest scene?

If you can't go outside, look carefully at images of forests or the illustrations from the story. Describe a woodland scene to a partner and ask them to draw along. Use colours and interesting descriptive words (adjectives). Partners may ask questions for more information or details.

Activity 5: Plant a Sunflower

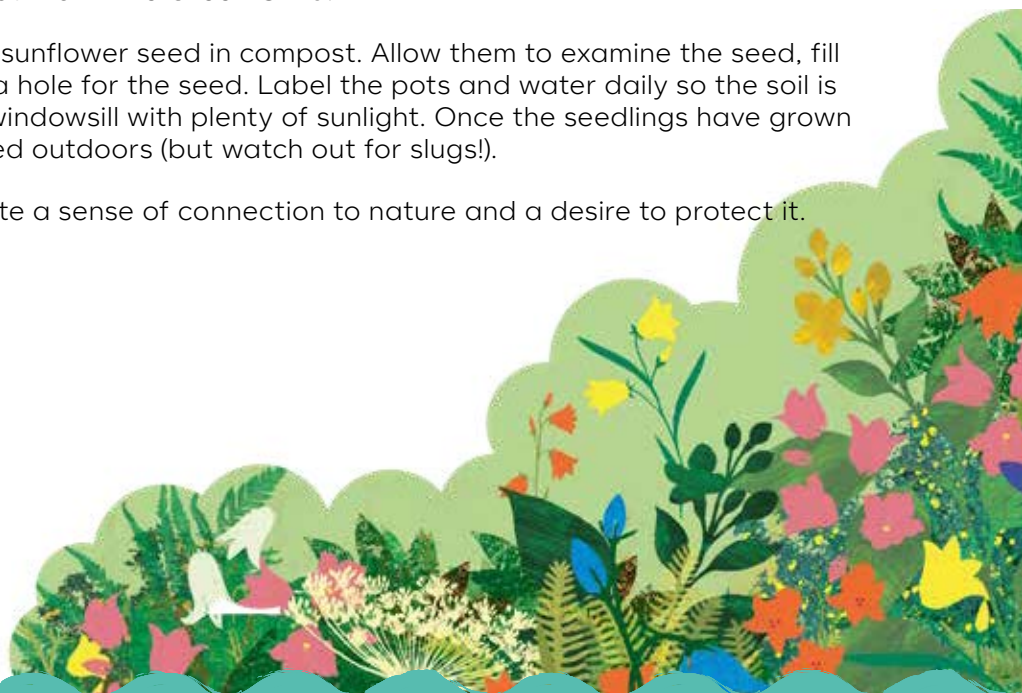
Focus on the beautiful sunflowers across pages 11-12. Talk about what flowers need to grow: compost full of nutrients, water, sunlight and space. Discuss what might happen if there isn't enough water or the temperature is too hot like in *The Green Child*.

Support the children in planting a sunflower seed in compost. Allow them to examine the seed, fill their pot with compost and poke a hole for the seed. Label the pots and water daily so the soil is moist. Place the pots on a warm windowsill with plenty of sunlight. Once the seedlings have grown to about 10cm, they can be planted outdoors (but watch out for slugs!).

Growing their own plants will create a sense of connection to nature and a desire to protect it.



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7

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Activity 6: Create your own Green Child

The Green Child is an inspiring guardian of the forest. Discuss why her clothes are green and how they might be made. Create your own Green Child using a wooden peg/doll, colourful felt (or fallen leaves), permanent felt-tip markers and tiny flowers. Adult support with a glue gun will be most effective but PVA glue will work too (just hold it in place a little longer).

Start by covering the body with a small piece of felt or a leaf. Add extra details like buttons or a collar with another colour of felt. Make a hat by rolling a semi-circle of felt into a cone, securing it with glue and attaching it to the head. Cover the hat with small flowers. Add facial features with permanent marker.

There are lots of peg doll ideas online. You're sure to find some images and inspiration by searching "peg doll gnomes".

Activity 7: Sharing the Green Child's Message

Now that you have your very own Green Child, think about her message for human children. (The world is much too hot. The world must slow down and cool.)

Work together to come up with key messages and suggested actions to help the world cool down. Some examples may include: planting more plants and trees; walking, cycling or scooting instead of going in the car; using less electricity and gas; recycling; fixing broken things instead of throwing them away; wasting less food and water; swapping clothes and books with friends instead of buying new; eating less meat and dairy. Encourage children to personalise these actions with practical things they can do in their everyday lives.

Pass these messages around a circle in a 'telephone' style. One person starts and whispers their message in the next person's ear. Continue passing the message until it gets to the final person who says the message out loud. Has the message stayed the same or has it changed along the way?

Fill a Tuff tray (or similar) with sand, soil, leaves, twigs and other natural objects. Encourage children to build their own forest and reenact the Green Child's activities. Think about what the Green Child does in each season and what happens to the forest in the summer.

Talk about the challenges the Green Child and the woodland creatures experience and their message for all humans. Help children vocalise this message through their peg doll.

As an extension, children may share their message and suggested actions with others in different ways. They could make a poster, create a poem together, write the next part of the story as children take action and the Green Child returns to the forest; record video messages to share with others; or take photos of their Green Child peg doll in a woodland (or Tuff tray) setting and add speech bubble messages.



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8

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Activity 8: Take Action

Encourage children to put their suggested actions into practice. Working in teams, they might choose to create a recycling station; plant a tree; organise a book swap; collect glass to recycle; challenge the school community to walk, cycle or scoot to school; or try to use less water at home for a week. The possibilities are endless and children are sure to come up with some great suggestions!

With the support of an adult, each team (or the whole class) can speak to key decision makers like the headteacher, school administrator or caretaker and put a plan into action. Keep it simple but effective to ensure children feel empowered and experience success.



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