

Precious Places



Topic Focus

Caring for our environment, being an active citizen and beliefs about death

Overview

The activities in this topic develop children's appreciation of what makes a burial ground so special, exploring its atmosphere, their feelings towards it and what burial grounds mean to the local community. Children will investigate the ways in which people use burial grounds, how they are cared for as a unique habitat and how they can get involved. The activities also provide children with an opportunity to reflect upon different attitudes towards death and how life is celebrated and remembered.

The activities are: Something Special, Unique Uses, People Power, Making Sense of Life and Death.

EYFS, KS1 & KS2

Key Skills

Reflecting
Discussing
Empathising
Questioning
Problem Solving
Responding

Key Words

Manage
Conservation
Volunteer
Celebrate

Curriculum Links

This topic helps develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding in English, PSHE & Citizenship and RE.

EYFS

Personal, social and emotional development
Self-confidence and self-awareness
Managing feelings and behaviour
Making relationships



John Muir Award

Discover
Explore
Conserve
Share



Try these activities if you are working towards any of the following badges and challenges:

Rainbows - Look and Learn

Beavers - Creative Challenge Award, Explore Activity, Faith Activity, Global Challenge

Brownies - Culture, Seasons, Wildlife Explorer

Cubs - Community Challenge, Global Conservation Activity

Guides - Community Action, Discovering Faith, Challenge 1

Scouts: Heritage Activity, My Faith Activity, World Faiths Activity, Environment Partnership Award, Community Challenge Award

People Power

The suggested activities give children an insight into the ways burial grounds are managed and cared for. They encourage discussion and debate about the need to manage different areas in different ways. They also introduce children to the role volunteers play in their community. They provide ideas about how they can get involved in volunteering themselves as active citizens.

Learning Outcomes

Children will:

- Understand the role of volunteers and know that we all have a responsibility to care for our environment
- Identify ways of helping others in the local community and investigate community issues
- Use a range of problem solving skills
- Work as part of a team to meet a challenge

Resources

Clipboard, camera, writing materials e.g. paper, clipboard and pencils.

Bug Hotel Guide

Plant Labels

Key Questions

Who looks after the burial grounds? Why do they manage it as they do?

Why do people volunteer? What can I do to help?

Preparation

This activity will require several visits to your local burial ground and research into how it is managed, who manages it and why. It may be useful to speak to a volunteer and ask them to talk to the children about the work that they do and why they do it. Children could interview them and find out information for themselves about the volunteers who work in their local burial ground (or wider local area) before a visit.

It is important to seek permission and advice before undertaking any volunteer roles at your local burial ground. Arrange a visit and find out as much as you can about it. You can also find useful information at www.volunteernow.co.uk, which has lots of advice on organising volunteer projects with children.

Introduction

Establish with the children what volunteering is.

It's an opportunity to; help out, meet new people, develop skills and learn new ones, work as part of a team, build confidence and a sense of achievement, try new things and have fun!

A good way to think of volunteering is; giving your time and energy for free to make a real difference to a community and the environment.

As you walk around the burial ground highlight different areas to the children and talk about whether they think they are cared for or not. You can adapt and steer discussions and encourage debate by asking – What do you think? Who thinks differently? Why do you think that? Who agrees? Why?

Discussion point – different areas are managed in different ways. Do some areas look different because they are being managed to encourage wildlife?

Children will use their first visit to see for themselves the work that volunteers do and the difference they make e.g. well tended paths, various well managed habitats and planting, no weeds in flowerbeds, litter or graffiti etc. This activity would work well even if your local burial ground is not managed and is run down or vandalised.

Activity Ideas

Create a 'Volunteer Plan' or a 'To do list' of tasks that could be undertaken at your local burial ground in order to help care for and manage the site. Children could collect evidence by taking photographs of parts of the site in need of work.

Volunteer ideas could include: bulb planting, seed sowing or planting plug-plants, litter picking, raking leaves, collecting long grass or hay, making and putting up bird boxes and bird feeders, creating a simple compost bin, creating woodpiles and creature hotels or raising awareness of important burial ground wildlife and conservation projects. You may wish to use the burial ground as inspiration and try to increase the wildlife in your school grounds by focussing your volunteer effort there.



The Caring for God's Acre Action Pack has advice and ideas on volunteer projects. You can find it here: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk.

Grassland in burial sites is often species rich and a really valuable habitat with a unique range of plant species. Bulb, seed or plug planting may be more suitable in flower beds or else back at school rather than in the burial site turf. Seek advice on this.

You could choose one of the tasks listed below.

1. Bug Hotels - are an excellent way to contribute and provide hiding places for wildlife. Creating the right habitat can increase wildlife numbers in burial grounds especially in areas that are being managed with tidiness rather than wildlife in mind. You may choose to begin with a wildlife survey to establish what is living there already but you do not need to do this. Use the [bug hotel guide](#) included in this pack to help you with this conservation project.

2. Leaf Compost - create a cylinder of chicken wire and fix it to the ground with tent pegs or bamboo canes. Fill the cylinder with leaves collected in autumn. This can be repeated annually. During the year children can investigate the leaves and see what is living amongst them and how they are decomposing by lifting part of the wire and pulling out some of the leaves from the bottom.

3. Bird and Bat Boxes - the RSPB has instructions on how to build a nest box. You will find information at www.rspb.org.uk/advice/helpingbirds/nestboxes/smallbirds/making.aspx. You will also find a useful activity sheet on the Wildlife Watch website too. www.wildlifewatch.org.uk/images/activity_sheets/nestbox_activity_sheet.pdf

4. Wildflower Plugs for Planting Out - plug planting of wildflowers tends to be more successful than scattering seeds. Plugs can be grown in school in yoghurt pots with a hole in the bottom and you could also use waxed cardboard fruit juice cartons. Use peat free compost and various wildflower seeds such as; Primroses, Meadow Buttercups, Ox-eye Daisies, Black Knapweed, Field Scabious, Cowslips, Corn Flowers and cornfield annuals to create your plugs. You can also grow wildflower bulbs in pots; Snowdrop, Wild Daffodil, Snake's Head Fritillary perhaps?

Look at the Flora Locale website to find suitable suppliers who could recommend the correct species for your area www.floralocale.org. The Conservation Volunteers may be able to advise as well www.tcv.org.uk.

As many burial sites already have fantastic wildflowers (particularly the older ones), you may choose to use the

burial site as inspiration and then plant in your school grounds.

Use the **plant labels** to get started; cut out and stick the paper label onto a lolly stick or similar

Plenary

Discuss findings and decide on a task that the children think needs to be undertaken. Who do we need to ask? What do we need to do next?

Back at School

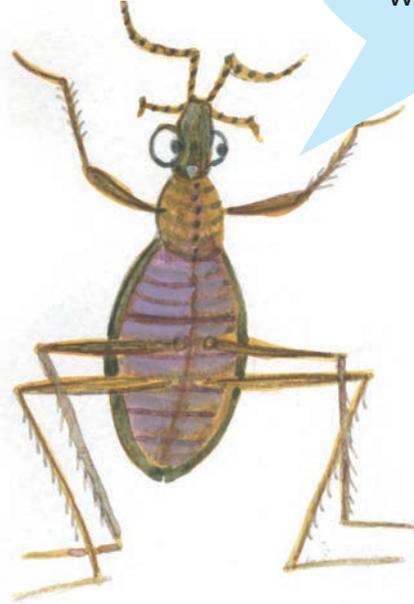
Exciting Writing

- Create an information poster to put on a notice board explaining what you are planning to do.
- Write a job advert calling for a 'Burial Ground Conservation Volunteer' to help out at your local burial ground. Create a job description and personal specification. What qualities will they need?
- Plan a work party – Write a letter to the organisation that looks after the burial ground and ask their permission and advice on organising a work party.



Bug Hotel Guide

We love burial grounds because there are usually good places for us to live with good things to eat.

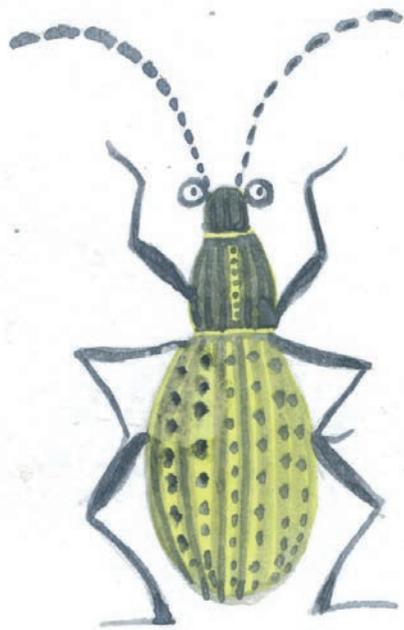


Sometimes we run out of good places to live because humans like to keep things too neat and tidy in the garden and in the school grounds.



You can help by building us a new home to live in. Some bugs like to live in damp and dark places.





Some of us like to live in the warm and dry. Either way, a bug hotel with lots of holes, crevices, gaps and cracks will keep us all happy.

They are so easy to make and you can use things that you already have lying around.



You could use

- Pallets, strips of wood and bamboo canes
- Cardboard tubes, corrugated card and drinking straws
- Straw, hay, dry leaf litter and moss
- Pine cones
- Different sized pipes
- Plant pots
- Stones, bricks and blocks
- Oasis with holes made with a pencil
- Tiles
- Logs drilled with different sized holes
- Dead hollow stems cut from shrubs and plants
- Turf
- Succulent plants or ivy



Let's get started

First things first, choose the right spot. A level, firm place in sunlight or light shade works well - most of us prefer moist and quiet areas so somewhere sheltered will be ideal. If you are using pallets you could fill each level with different conditions for different bugs. Try using wood, tubes, pots and pipes and cram these and the gaps between them with hay, dry leaves, bark, moss and straw (my favourite).



Keep stacking the pallets on top of each other and then you can create different conditions in each layer to keep a range of bugs happy and comfortable.

Arrange bricks, logs with holes in and plant pots together and fill these and the gaps between them with woodchips, leaf litter, pine cones, twigs and sand. You could stack wood on top of your bricks to create the next floor of the hotel.

Remember to keep your hotel dry. Roof tiles, a plastic sheet, old carpet tiles or roofing felt are ideal. On top of this you could plant sedum or other low growing drought tolerant plants or you could add turf, a worms favourite.

Be as creative as you want and enjoy building your 'Five Star Bug Resort!' All you have to do now is sit back, wait and watch while I check in.





Bellflower

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Bluebell

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Meadow Buttercup

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Black Knapweed

Caring for God's Acre



Cowslip

Peter Carty



Cornflower

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Forget-me-not

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Goat's Beard

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Lesser Celandine

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Meadow Crane's Bill

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Ox-eye Daisy

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Primrose

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Poppy

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Red Campion

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Snowdrop

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Field Scabious

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Viper's Bugloss

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Marjoram

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