



ECO COURAGE: STUDENT ACTIVITIES FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

**BROUGHT TO YOU BY
ECO-SCHOOL NETWORK AND OK YOU**

This booklet was created for student green teams and other youth groups taking action to care for the Earth.

When you care deeply about the planet, it's normal to feel a lot. Helping students care for the Earth also means helping them care for their hearts. These activities help students set down some of that worry, reconnect with the natural world, and feed the resilience and optimism they need to keep caring for the living world with hope and energy.

This guide offers simple, creative activities that help students pause, connect with nature, and support their own mental wellness while taking action for our communities and planet. Think of these activities as small moments to breathe, reflect, build community, and refill your courage along the way. Green teams can use these activities as short opening rituals, creative projects, or closing reflections during meetings.

The Eco-School Network is a community of Oregon parents, teachers, and students working together to make K–8 schools healthier, greener, and more resilient—one project at a time. Our trainings and ongoing support grow initiatives that connect students with nature, nurture sustainability, and help them discover their power to make change.

OK You offers free online creative wellness projects and resources, as well as community workshops, trainings, and partnerships. Informed by diverse advisors, artists, and youth, their resources engage young people in practices that build resilience and ongoing self-care habits.



ecoschoolnetwork.org



okyou.org



BEFORE YOU BEGIN, LET'S CREATE YOUR GROUP AGREEMENTS

OK You's projects invite students to share personal artwork and emotions, so it's important to create a safe space for creating and sharing.

We recommend giving everyone in your group the opportunity to share their thoughts. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

We will make space for each other's voices and listen when someone shares

It's okay not to share

What we hear here, stays here.

Once you've collected ideas on a piece of paper, have each student sign their name, then hang the agreements in your meeting space where you can refer to them as needed.

How we flow:

CONNECT

1. Choose from a warm-up activity on page 3

CREATE

2. Choose a project on pages 4-8

SHARE

3. Offer students the opportunity to share (if they'd like)

REFLECT

4. Invite students to reflect on their experience

REPEAT

1: CONNECT

Begin your creative sessions with one of these short community-building activities



GIVE WORRY A TIME-OUT

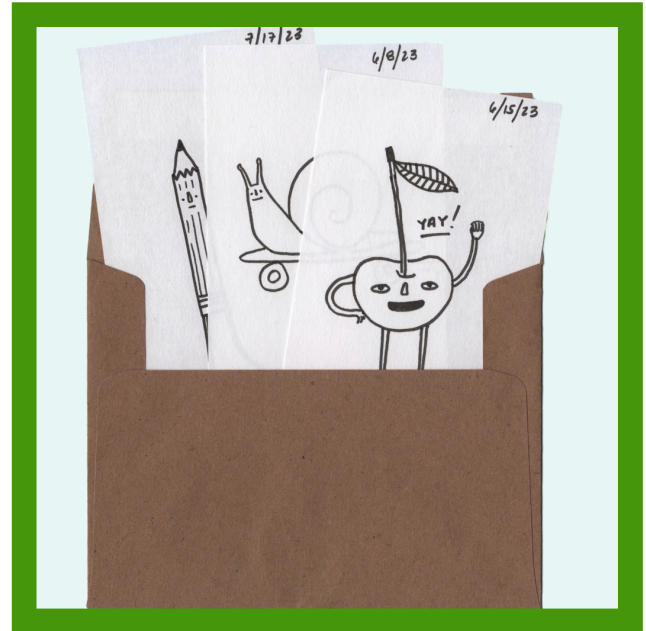
This worry stone ritual gives students practice in naming their feelings and deciding what to do with them: take a break, share with a friend, get help, or hold onto them if they need more processing time.

Worry stones normalize big feelings by giving students the opportunity to see that their classmates have worries, too.

Students also get to look back on previous worry stones and realize that difficult moments and emotions come and go.

For step-by-step instructions, click below.

START PROJECT



START YOUR DAY WITH CHECK-IN CARDS

Through this one-minute check-in activity, students are asked to draw how they're feeling as an animal, piece of fruit, school supply, or other prompt.

Sharing their cards with others normalizes big feelings, and looking back at past cards reminds students that difficult emotions come and go.

Characters created by students also make great prompts for continued art and story-making—see instructions for ideas.

For step-by-step instructions, click below.

START PROJECT



2: CREATE

Next, select your project from the following 7 pages



MAKE FRIENDS WITH A TREE

PROJECT SUMMARY:

MAKE FRIENDS WITH A TREE encourages students to connect with the natural world through their relationship with a special tree of their choosing.

Through journaling, drawing, and (optional) photography, students document their observations and reflections, tracking their tree's inhabitants and seasonal changes.

Observing trees changing throughout the seasons is not only a calming ritual, but also a great reminder to students that we're always changing, too—and that our sadness or worry will eventually fall away, just like the leaves.

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

45-60 minutes to introduce the project, identify a tree, and engage in a short journaling activity.

Future tree visits: 15 to 60 minutes depending on the creative activity—see instructions for options.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Awareness
- ✓ Self-Management
- ✓ Social Awareness
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Journal
- ✓ Writing/drawing materials (pens/pencils/markers)
- ✓ (optional) Phone for taking photos

START PROJECT





PLANT A FOREST

PROJECT SUMMARY:

PLANT A FOREST provides students experiencing climate anxiety with an ongoing calming ritual. With every tree they plant (draw) in their journal or on a poster, they're encouraged to imagine a real tree being planted by people around the world working to restore forests.

Once the project is introduced and students have set their personal planting goals (filling a journal or drawing a certain number of trees each day or week), this activity can serve as a warm-up ritual before moving on to other projects.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Awareness
- ✓ Self-Management
- ✓ Social Awareness
- ✓ Climate Courage

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

30-45 minutes to kick off a tree-planting/drawing practice.

As an ongoing ritual: 5 to 10 minutes.

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Paper or a journal
- ✓ Drawing materials (pencils, markers)

START PROJECT





TAKE YOUR BRAIN ON VACATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

TAKE YOUR BRAIN ON VACATION engages students in dreaming up their ideal brain vacation spot—a special place of their own imagination that they can fly to whenever they're feeling stressed or worried.

This calming activity is supported by a visualization exercise and several project extensions, including drawing a map, writing a travel guide, designing a postcard, and creating T-shirts and other souvenir items.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Awareness
- ✓ Self-Expression
- ✓ Self-Management
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

45-60 minutes to introduce the project and facilitate a guided visualization and map-making activity

Project extensions: 30 to 60 minutes depending on the activity.

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Paper (thick cardstock if possible)
- ✓ Writing/drawing materials (pens, pencils, markers)
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ String
- ✓ Tape

START PROJECT





RAISE YOUR VOICE

PROJECT SUMMARY:

RAISE YOUR VOICE empowers students to speak up about the issues that matter most to them—including protecting the health of our planet.

Through creativity and self-expression, young people build confidence while learning how art can inspire awareness and action.

Artist Kelsey Snook shares her tips for designing signs that communicate powerful messages and bring important causes into the spotlight.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Awareness
- ✓ Self-Expression
- ✓ Self-Management
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Pencil
- ✓ Paper or journal
- ✓ Cardboard or other sturdy sign surface (consider reusing something from the recycling bin—or even recycle an old sign. If you plan to leave your sign outside, you'll want your surface to be waterproof.)
- ✓ Markers or paint (waterproof markers or acrylic paint if your sign is going to be outside)
- ✓ Paint brushes if you'll be painting

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

60 minutes, including time for journaling and sketching. This project could be broken into two parts: idea generation and poster-making.

START PROJECT





FLY A PEACEFUL UFO

PROJECT SUMMARY:

FLY A PEACEFUL UFO invites students to transform discarded plastics into imaginative UFOs—each carrying a message of peace or hope for Planet Earth.

Working individually or in teams, students reimagine materials that might otherwise end up in a landfill, turning waste into a creative act of care for our planet.

The project also includes a link to a companion activity—[MAKE A TRASH CREATURE](#)—created by high school student Luke Histand, who designed it as a way to support both personal well-being and environmental health.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Expression
- ✓ Social-Awareness
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Trash! Bottle caps, candy wrappers, plastic containers, foil, breadclips, whatever you can gather!
- ✓ Glue, a glue gun, or tape
- ✓ String or yarn
- ✓ Markers (permanent markers or paint pens if you're drawing on plastic)
- ✓ (Optional) Googly eyes or eye stickers

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

30-45 minutes if trash is provided; an additional 30-45 minutes if students are involved in collecting trash.

START PROJECT





HANG A WISH

PROJECT SUMMARY:

HANG A WISH invites students to transform climate anxiety into climate hope.

This collaborative project is ideal for a classroom or school community, encouraging collective participation while creating a shared space for reflection, comfort, and connection. Over time, it can grow into a meaningful place of solace—a visual reminder that hope is something we can build together.

If you don't have access to a tree or plant, students can create one by drawing or painting a paper tree. Wishes can be written directly on the tree or added on sticky notes, allowing the installation to evolve as new hopes are shared.

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

20-30 minutes if a tree or plant is available;
45-60 minutes if students create a paper tree.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Self-Expression
- ✓ Social Awareness
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ A tree, plant, or paper if drawing a tree
- ✓ Paper or post-it notes for writing messages
- ✓ Writing/drawing materials (pens/pencils/markers)
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ String
- ✓ Tape

START PROJECT





CREATE A MAZE TO FIND YOUR WAY

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Outdoor mazes and labyrinths are not only fun to create—they give students a chance to collaborate, problem-solve, and build something meaningful together.

Once complete, these creations become a gift to the wider community, inviting others to slow down and release their own stress and worry.

This project also includes options for drawing mazes and labyrinths, allowing students to plan or experiment on paper before taking their ideas outside.

LEARNING & LIFE SKILLS:

- ✓ Social awareness
- ✓ Connection
- ✓ Climate Courage

APPROXIMATE TIME TO COMPLETE:

30–60 minutes depending on the size of your maze, and whether you first introduce a drawing exercise.

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Sticks, stones, or other items you can find outside like pinecones, leaves, etc.

To practice drawing mazes on paper:

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ A pencil
- ✓ An eraser
- ✓ A pen

START PROJECT



3: SHARE

Offer students the opportunity to share (if they'd like)

When inviting students to share their creations, especially those that reflect personal feelings, it's important to make it clear that they can always choose to pass.

Also, offering different ways to share—with a partner, in a small group, or simply by displaying their work without talking about it—gives students the freedom to engage in a way that feels safe and comfortable for them.

4: REFLECT

Invite students to reflect on their experience

Building leadership skills and confidence begins with sharing reflections and ideas. Here are a few questions you can ask at the end of your creative sessions:

What did you think of this project?

How did you feel while working on it?

What did you learn?

Did this project make you think differently about anything?

Did it give you ideas for other creative projects you could do?

How do you think this project could be helpful to others?



A Note of Gratitude

Thank you, supportive adult, for being here.

It takes heart, courage, and imagination to support young people who care deeply about the Earth. The space you create—for noticing, feeling, wondering, and acting—matters.

As you help students care for the planet, please take loving care of your heart, too. When you make space to breathe, rest, and reconnect, you are quietly showing students how to care for themselves, too.

You do not have to carry every hard truth about the world into the room. One of the greatest gifts you can offer is simpler and deeper: helping young people reconnect with nature, with one another, and with their own sense of possibility.

Sometimes the most important thing is simply to step outside. Breathe. Look up. Listen. And play. Joy, wonder, and time in the living world grow the resilience and courage our children, our planet, and we ourselves need.

For questions, support, or partnership inquiries, reach out to us any time:
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