



LESSON 8

Beach Etiquette

Grades 4 - 7

Objectives

- To demonstrate good beach etiquette when exploring out on the beach or seashore.

Materials

Paper bag, paper, pencil crayons, pictures of intertidal animals, large rock

Concepts

- Intertidal animals and humans have some things in common.
- We need to treat intertidal animals and plants carefully and make sure we put them and the rocks back where we found them.

Activities

1. Introduction to beach etiquette

Hold up a closed paper bag and ask students: If I don't know what is in this paper bag or how much is in this bag, how should I take care of it?

A: I would handle it carefully because I don't know if there are living things in the bag or something breakable.

Let's say the bag is full of candy. How could you estimate how much candy is in the bag without opening it or picking it up?

A: You would just have to guess by how the bag looked from the outside. You wouldn't have a good idea of how much there was in the bag.

How is the ocean like this paper bag?

A: We can't see the whole ocean so we don't know what kind and how many animals and plants live there.

When is a rock not just a rock?

A: When it is a home or apartment for animals, when it is habitat.

Like the candies in a bag, when you see a rock you don't know what is under it. You need to practise good beach etiquette.

What does etiquette mean? Good manners?

A: It means rules of behaviour.

2. Beach etiquette on the seashore

When you go to someone else's house, how are you supposed to behave?

A: You should behave well and politely, saying please and thank you, not jumping on the furniture or re-arranging it, etc.

When we go to the beach, we will be going into someone else's home – the home of many marine animals and plants. Remember the rocks. Those are homes. We need to watch where we are walking. If we lift up a rock, we need to put it back carefully where we found it. Why?

A: If the rock is left upside down, it would be like having your house upside down. The animals that live under rocks like the dark, moist habitat. If it is upside down, the animals can dry out or be eaten by predators.

If you pick an animal up, where does it need to go back?

A: Animals should be put back where you found them. Like you being dropped into another city or town, you may be lost if not returned to your home.

Is it okay to take things like shells from the beach?

A: Only if there is nothing living on or in the shell. Sometimes a hermit crab has a large shell and you don't notice that there is a crab inside, so make absolutely sure before you take it. I usually leave shells that I think hermit crabs might use for homes.

3. Handling crabs

What about crabs? Do they pinch to be mean?

A: No they are defending themselves.

Remember what a crab sees with its compound eyes – hundreds of pictures rather than one so if a hand comes towards a crab it actually sees hundreds of hands! Scary!

I have heard someone say that it's okay if you drop a crab and a leg or claw breaks off because it will grow back. Is that true?

A: Yes, a crab can regenerate another leg or claw but it takes time and meanwhile, it has a harder time moving, getting food and defending itself. The crab must moult several times and it takes time. When the leg or claw grows back it isn't as large as before either. So if you do pick up a crab, be careful – it's not okay to break off legs and claws!

4. Being thoughtful

What can you do? Learn as much about the ocean as you can. Observe tide pools and under rocks very carefully. Sit in one spot and see how much life there is!

Some good beach etiquette practises include:

- Take care where you step! There are creatures everywhere at low tide.
- Look at creatures in their home. Some may be delicate and should not be picked up such as nudibranchs. Notice how the creatures move, what they eat etc.
- If you do pick up an animal, handle it gently and then put it right back where you found it.
- If you move a rock to see underneath it, be sure to replace it so the animals have protection from drying out or from predators.
- Don't collect anything that contains a live creature. Make absolutely sure there is no hermit crab in the snail shell if you want to take the shell home.
- Respect the creatures you find and the habitats you explore. Learn about them by observing, asking questions and reading more about them.

Conclusion

- Review good beach etiquette.
- Draw a picture of what you see on top of a rock and under the rock at the seashore.