



Greater Good in Education
SCIENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR KINDER, HAPPIER SCHOOLS

EARTHRISE PHOTOGRAPH: CULTIVATING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

"At least for an instant in history, I believe people looked upon themselves as citizens of the Earth."

—Astronaut Frank Borman

OVERVIEW

Students watch the film Earthrise and learn how the Earthrise photograph provided a context for what it means to be a global citizen.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- At the start of a unit on earth science, environmental science, ecology, or astronomy
- On Earth Day, April 22nd
- Anytime throughout the school year, but especially to foster a sense of global citizenship and interconnectedness

TIME REQUIRED

- 2-3 class periods

LEVEL

- Middle School
- High school
- College

MATERIALS

- Internet access and TV/projector

- Earthrise [film](#)
- Earthrise [photograph](#)
- Earthrise ["Citizens of the Earth" video clip](#)
- Access to a phone camera or other kind of digital camera for each student
- Writing materials

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- Understand that when we see our planet as an interconnected web of life, we are often inspired toward conscious and responsible decision-making about how to live

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making Practices Culturally Responsive](#)
- [Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision-Making

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- In 1968, three astronauts completed the first manned orbit around the moon, becoming the first humans to see the Earth from space--as it had never been seen before. The first color photograph taken beyond Earth's orbit was later titled *Earthrise*.
- This new perspective, shared with the world through the Earthrise photograph, radically changed humanity's view of itself and our relationships with each other and the planet. The visible lack of national boundaries and seeing the Earth as a beautiful complete whole in the vastness of space, provided a window into the beauty, unity, and vulnerability of life on Earth.
- Take a moment to reflect on the Earthrise photograph. How might the photograph allow you to see the Earth as one ecosystem?
- Think about how the Earthrise photograph became a symbol which helped to spearhead the environmental movement, creating a renewed reverence for the planet.

INSTRUCTIONS

This practice is the third in a series of three practices on the Earthrise photograph: [Earthrise Photograph: Fostering Awe \(Practice #1\)](#) and [Earthrise Photograph: Bearing Witness to Our Planet \(Practice #2\)](#); it can also be done on its own. If using this practice with the other two, you may skip the initial viewing of *Earthrise* in Part 1 below.

PART 1 (45 MINUTES)

- Share with students background information about the film *Earthrise*:
 - *In 1968, three astronauts completed the first manned orbit around the moon, becoming the first humans to see the Earth from space--as it had never been seen before. The first color photograph taken beyond Earth's orbit was later titled Earthrise.*
 - *The film "Earthrise" tells the story of this image captured by the Apollo 8 astronauts—Bill Anders, Frank Borman, and Jim Lovell—and recounts their experiences, exploring the beauty, awe, and grandeur of the Earth against the blackness of space.*
- Watch the film [Earthrise](#) (30:01) with students.
- Display the [Earthrise photograph](#). Ask students:
 - *The Apollo 8 astronauts acknowledged that "you don't see cities, you don't see boundaries" on Earth from space. What did they see? How might this view, of Earth's interdependence, contribute towards making and supporting responsible environmental decisions?*
 - *"Life Magazine" described Earthrise as one of "100 photographs that changed the world." In what ways do you think the Earthrise photograph changed the world?*

PART 2

- Lead a discussion with students exploring some or all of the following questions:
 - Share the short [clip](#), "Citizens of the Earth" which highlights astronaut Frank Borman. He said, "I think that view of the Earth, at least for an instant, transcended national boundaries...I believe that people looked upon themselves as citizens of the Earth." How might seeing the Earth without divisions be an important symbol for the future of our planet?
 - UN Security Council Secretary-General, U Thant called the astronauts of Apollo 8 "...the first universalists." What might it mean to be a "universalist"? What perspective would a universalist have on global issues such as climate change?
 - In 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on the serious impacts of global warming. The report warns that warming must be kept at a maximum of 1.5C, and going beyond, the globe will see an increase in droughts, floods, and poverty. What aspects of human behavior do you think have prevented society from moving forward to more sustainable models of living on the planet? How might the symbol of the Earthrise photograph galvanize people into action? What actions are you interested to take? Why?

PART 3

- Ask students to respond to one of the following prompts using photography:
 - What is your relationship to our planet?
 - How are we all interconnected?
 - In what way is your community protecting the environment?

- How can we change our perspective to see our planet as one home?
- Consider how one could use visual images to answer these questions. Images do not have to be of the natural world but should help to express the human relationship with the environment.
- Students can turn the camera on themselves or on family, friends, or community members.
- Ask students to write a caption, a one-sentence description, about their photograph. Geographic location should also be included.
- Ask students to reflect on their photograph and the choices they made, answering the following questions in one or two paragraphs:
 - How did the film and the Earthrise photograph inspire or inform the decisions you made in taking your photograph?
 - What would you like your place in the world to be remembered for?
- Students can share their photographs using #RememberEarth on any social media platform. (Note: Students must be 13 or older to use social media platforms.)

CLOSURE

- Ask students to reflect on their experience of viewing the film *Earthrise*. In what way is the Earthrise photograph a symbol for what it means to be a global citizen? How might Earthrise, a powerful symbol of interconnection, inspire action?

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

Do students show a greater awareness of the environment, the health of our planet, or our interconnectedness after engaging in this practice?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Studies have found that students who participate in [Global Citizenship Education](#) (GCE) demonstrate greater cross-cultural sensitivity as well as understanding, empathy, and interest in global issues. (Note: Most of these studies have been done with affluent populations who usually represent the majority group within a country.)

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

It's an exciting time to live in this world, as it grows smaller and the divisions start to disappear. As a result, our schools, workforce, and communities are becoming more diverse, encouraging us—whether people want to or not—to reach out to one another in friendship and understanding.

GCE, especially the kind that focuses on cultivating a sense of global humanity, gives students a head-start in appreciating the "genius" of another culture. This positive view of humans along with our [innate ability](#) to demonstrate kindness, compassion, and connection—something that science corroborates—has the potential to create a world in which we learn to work and live together, valuing both our similarities and differences. As astronaut Frank Borman put it, as "citizens of the Earth."

SOURCE

The Global Oneness Project is a free multimedia platform that brings the world's culture alive in the classroom by using stories as a pedagogical tool for growing minds. Their collection of documentary films, photo essays, and lesson plans highlight cultural, environmental, and social issues with universal themes including our common humanity. <https://www.globalonenessproject.org/>

To access the entire Earthrise curriculum, visit the Global Oneness Project: [click here](#)

The film *Earthrise* was nominated for a Webby Award for the best video in the science and education category. In addition, *Earthrise* was a finalist in the Creativity category for *Fast Company's* World Changing Ideas Awards.