



Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide

Title: *Our Big Home: An Earth Poem*

Author: Linda Glaser

Illustrator: Elisa Kleven

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Millbrook, 2000

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author

Summary: This is a poem about the connections between people, plants, animals, and the earth. The goal of the book – as stated in the book’s inside cover - is to gently lead children toward the all-important understanding of caring for our environment. This book was a feature selection of Reading Rainbow and was presented at the United Nations for International Literacy Day in 2002.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

Tips for Reading:

- Weather permitting, read the book outside in a natural setting.
- Read the book slowly and in a close circle, if possible, to allow the audience to appreciate the detail of the illustrations.
- Adapt reading tone to the tone suggested by the words: breathy for “Wind whooshes and whirls,” hushed for “The night, when stars sparkle in the deep, endless deep,” lively for “When I stretch, or dance, or hop, or laugh,” etc.

**Questions
before reading:**

- Do you know what planet we live on?
- What else lives on the Earth besides people?
- What do you like to do outside on sunny days? On rainy days?
- What does the wind do? How can it help us?

**To Introduce
this story say:** This story reminds us of the good things on Earth that we share with other people, plants and animals.



**Questions
After Reading:**

- What kinds of things do we share with other creatures and plants on this Earth?
- What does the rain do for the creatures and plants of the Earth?
- What does the sun do?
- Why do you think the words in the book were placed in a circle?
- How can we help keep our Earth home clean?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:

- Make an ***Our Big Home*** collage: On patterned paper or wallpaper, have each child draw an animal that: 1)flies; 2)walks on the earth; or 3) swims. Cut the animals out and put them on a bulletin board or wall on a tri-color background: light blue for the sky, green for the earth, and dark blue for the water.

Language:

- The book is subtitled “An Earth Poem.” After presenting the entire book, re-read a page at a time and point out the poetic elements of rhyme and alliteration (or, in simpler terms, the same sound repeated). After demonstrating this for a few pages, ask the audience to identify the rhyming words and repeated sounds.

Science:

- Talk about the nocturnal animals that appear in the book on the pages dealing with night. Have children identify as many as they can.

Other:

- Go for a walk outside and ask the children to think about each of the following parts from the book: air, wind, water, rain, soil, sky, sun, moon and night.

**Suggestions for
English Language
Learners:**

- On the walk outside, point and name the parts of the earth from the book: air, wind, water, rain, soil, sky, sun, moon and night.
- Ask the children to name the above words in their native language.
- If any children were born in another country, ask them to describe the part of the earth where they came from.

Related Books:

- ***Out of the Ocean*** by Debra Frasier (Harcourt, 1998)
- ***Where Does the Wind Blow?*** by Cynthia A. Rink (Dawn Publications, 2002)
- ***Children of the Earth--Remember*** by Schim Schimmel (NorthWord Press, 1997)
- ***I'll Play with You*** by Mary McKenna Siddals, illustrated by David Wisniewski (Clarion, 2000)
- ***Old Turtle*** by Douglas Wood, illustrated by Cheng-Khee Chee (Pfeifer-Hamilton, 1991)

