

Web of Life Game

Invite the participants to stand in a circle. Give each person an index card and a pen or pencil. Ask for 4 volunteers, one to be the Sun, another to be the Air, one to be the Water, and another to be the Soil. (If your group is small, you may eliminate Air and Soil.) All the others may select any other living creature, so long as there are no duplicates. Then have each person write their name (air, tiger, mouse, etc.) on their index card and pin it to their shirt.

The Sun takes a ball of string or yarn, holds one end of it, and passes it to another person, explaining why that other person is dependent on the sun. For example, the Sun may choose to throw the ball all the way to the other side of the circle to the Corn and say that corn needs the sun to grow. The Corn then holds onto the string and passes the ball to another explaining why that person needs corn, and so on. For best results, encourage tosses across the circle. When everyone has at least one piece of the string (some may have more), stop the tossing.

With everyone holding onto his or her piece(s) of string, explain that you all have just created a Web of Life. This web represents how everything in our environment is dependent on something else to survive. Ask everyone to put a little stress on the web by pulling the strings a bit tighter. Ask what would happen if there were no water; ask the person who is the Water to drop their string. How does this affect the web? Ask another to drop out. The web should be able to support, with some adjustments, a couple of missing pieces, but then take away the Air, Sun, and Soil - the remaining foundations for life, and the web will fall apart.

Begin a discussion about the affects on the environment when one element is destroyed. How do we fit into the web? What part do we play? What have we done to change the balance of the web? What other things can we do to change its balance?