Planting the Trees of Kenya
The Story of Wangari Maathai

A RIF GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Themes: Heroic Women, Perseverance, Environment, Education

Grade Level: 3rd to 5th grade

Book Brief: A Kenyan woman fights to save her country, one tree at a time.

Author and Illustrator:
Claire A. Nivola
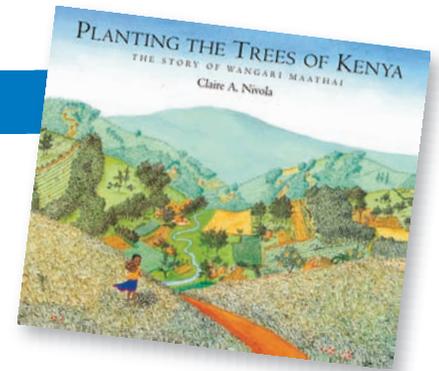
TIME TO READ!

Before reading, build background: Does your child know how important trees are? Trees give us oxygen to breathe and help keep the soil from washing away. Find Kenya on a map to show where the story takes place.

While reading, point out the pictures: Ask your child how the pictures change during the story. What can you learn from the pictures before reading the words?

After reading, ask questions:
◆ Why was the fig tree sacred?
◆ What does sacred mean?
◆ What is sacred to *you*?
◆ What might have happened if Wangari hadn't returned to Kenya?
◆ Describe Wangari.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

GARDEN IN A BOTTLE

Materials: 2 liter bottle, dirt, seeds

Who needs a garden when you have a bottle? Clean out a 2 liter bottle and remove the label. Cut the bottom off and fill it with dirt. Plant some seeds and sprinkle with water. Put the top of the soda bottle back onto the bottom and place in a sunny spot. Help your child track the progress of the plants that grow in your bottle.
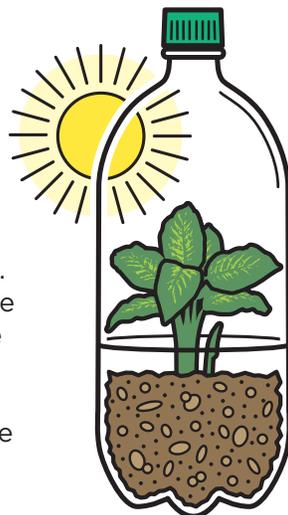
TASTY TREE SNACKS

Ingredients: graham cracker, green apple, red grapes or berries

Put 1/4 of a graham cracker on a plate or paper towel for the trunk. Cut a green apple and place slices at the top of the cracker to look like tree leaves. Place 3 red grapes on the apple slices for the fruit.

OUT AND ABOUT

Go to a local plant store and let your child see the plants. Pick one to plant in a small pot or in your yard. You can also walk around your neighborhood or go to a nearby park and find an acorn or seed to plant.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OTHER BOOKS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Seeds of Change, Jen Cullerton Johnson (2010),
All the Water in the World, George Ella Lyon (2011),
Giving Thanks, Chief Jake Swamp (1995).

Reading Is Fundamental