

WEB OF LIFE ACTIVITY

Materials Needed:

- A large amount of heavy unbreakable string
- A shallow unbreakable plate
- A pitcher of water
- Scissors



Instructions:

1. Students form a circle facing each other. The activity works well with 10-12 students standing shoulder to shoulder in a circle. If there are additional students, they can form a circle behind the first student circle.
2. Each student grasps the string as the facilitator creates the first ring of string around the circle.
3. The facilitator begins weaving a “dreamcatcher” type pattern working inward from the original circle of string until an entire “web” is created. The weaver will need to weave from beneath the web to complete it. Please see this YouTube video for weaving instructions: <https://youtu.be/ce1XJ9K7xrM>
4. As the web is being woven, the facilitator discusses the ways in which people and resources are connected.
5. When the web is complete, the facilitator balances the plate in the middle of the web and allows students to get the feel of balancing it.
6. The facilitator pours water into the shallow plate explaining that the water represents natural resources we are entrusted with and the web represents the connections and relationships between people and those resources. *Note: the web will get increasingly unstable for the students to balance when water is added, and they will need to work together to keep it stable. This can be a teachable moment to discuss how we need to work together to balance our demands for resources.*
7. Option: If there is a second ring of students, the facilitator can discuss the importance of maintaining these resources for future generations and ask the second ring of students to be the “next generation” by taking the place of a student holding the web. This will may cause water to spill from the plate as students switch “generational” positions. It is a teachable moment to discuss the challenges of each generation to live in balance and wisely use resources so that they are there for future generations. Consider that indigenous people consider seven generations in the future when making decisions today!



Weaving technique



8. Once the students have stabilized the web and the plate of water, the facilitator takes the scissors and poses a “what would happen if....?” questions to the group. Questions can be posed about how different environmental impacts and decisions might affect the sustainability of our natural resources. An example might be “what would happen if climate change causes extreme flooding in this environment?” With each question posed, the facilitator snips one piece of the string web, representing how that issue can affect the sustainability of all resources. This makes the plate and water even more unstable until finally enough cuts cause the web to break, and the water and plate drop to the ground.

9. The facilitator reinforces that actions and decisions we make about environmental issues affects the sustainability of all natural resources, culture, and people for now and future generations.

We are all connected in this web of life!