The use of children's theatre as a tool for teaching environmental education

Celeste Koren Soderbery

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THE USE OF CHILDREN’S THEATRE AS A TOOL
FOR TEACHING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Environmental Education

by
Celeste Koren Soderbery

June 2003
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May 22, 2003
ABSTRACT

The play, Madagascar Mayhem, was devised as a means of developing ecological understanding about rainforest preservation and educating and expanding upon the use of drama as it relates to environmental education. This play was performed on April 26, 2003 by three school entities, one fourth-grade class from Palm Elementary School, one high school drama class from Cajon High School, and several University students majoring in the theatrical arts. By being involved in and learning about issues addressed in the play’s content, students learned about how their actions may have a positive impact on rainforest preservation, the biodiversity of Madagascar, its agricultural loss, the movement to protect it.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my professors at California State University, San Bernardino: Dr. Darleen Stoner, Dr. Ron Argelander, and Dr. Gary Negin. Without their encouragement, commitment to education, and constructive criticism, I would have been unable to complete this project. Also, without the aid, direction, and warmth of the schoolteachers, Mary Beth Norris and Monique Handle, and the performances and energy from their students, and the University students, especially for the play, the direction of Carolyn Creel and the choreography of Richard Baker, this project would have not been a success. And finally, but not lastly, I would like to thank my family: my mother, Robbin Soderbery, for her patience and love; my dog, Dona, for her undying loyalty; my partner, George Adrian, for his selflessness; and my friends for keeping me humble and sane with humor.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................ iv

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

- General Statement of the Problem .................. 1
- Significance of the Project ....................... 2
- Statement of Needs .................................. 3

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

- Environmental Education: What Is It?......... 6
- History of Madagascar’s Threatened Biodiversity ........... 8
- The Future of Biodiversity in Madagascar .... 11

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN OF THE PROJECT ............. 13

APPENDIX A: MADAGASCAR MAYHEM, A THEATRICAL PLAY ......................... 16

APPENDIX B: THE CAST LIST OF MADAGASCAR MAYHEM ... 37

APPENDIX C: PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL OF MADAGASCAR MAYHEM ................ 39

APPENDIX D: MADAGASCAR CLASSROOM LESSON ............ 47

REFERENCES ............................................. 51
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

General Statement of the Problem

"Drama is no longer considered simply as another branch of art education, but as a unique teaching tool, vital for language development and invaluable as a method in the exploration of other subject areas," according to Johnson and O'Neil (1989, p. 7). Thus, theatrical arts is a worthwhile endeavor to include more often in environmental education curriculum. It behooves environmental educators to expand their teaching to include theatrical based instruction since drama is an excellent way to express ecological concerns and promote responsible stewardship in a manner that promotes sensory exploration at a heightened level.

Not only do teachers face the issue of how to teach environmental education topics but of which topics and/or issues to choose. Although environmental education topics related to local ecological areas are often emphasized, it remains important to keep students informed of the world beyond their playground and neighborhood. It has been apparent that a continued effort must be made to educate
youth about physical geography. "Several national surveys indicated that many high school and college students suffered from geographic illiteracy" (reviewed in LeVasseur, 1999, p. 265). If this is true of students' overall knowledge of physical geography, then what can we assume they know about smaller, less well-known countries such as Madagascar? This small island, east of Africa and the coast of Mozambique, often goes without notice or comment in the United States.

Significance of the Project

Because the subjects of the ecology and biodiversity of Madagascar are ones students are often not familiar with, a theatrical production entitled, Madagascar Mayhem, was created and a review of topics related to the benefits of protecting this area was completed.

With this project, the primary goal is to familiarize teachers and their students about world rainforests, specifically the ones in Madagascar. The project also strives to enlighten those unaccustomed to dramatic outlets for teaching an environmental issue. Theatrical drama related to environmental issues is a form or outlet that is slowly coming of age. This project will add to the
currently small portfolio of theatrical compositions related to environmental education intended for young people.

Statement of Needs

C. A. Bowers (1993, p. 12) wrote, "Scientifically based studies of the planet’s ecosystems now constitute the major part of the environmental literature." Based on this, would it be too far fetched to ask why there is not more evidence of ecologically focused ideas in theatrical writings? The answer may be that there is not a clear understanding of the potential theatrical writing has to promote environmental understanding.

Drama intended for youth should not be confused with environmentalist drama for adults. Environmental theatre for youth is not designed to promote activism, which is one of the possible outcomes for adult environmental drama. Instead, it is intended to educate youth on environmental themes.

Other questions arise and have continued to perplex those in the theatrical education arena, such as what are the differences between creative drama and participation theatre, and what is the definition of theatre for youth?
For these questions, it has come to a matter of agreement between the groups involved to decide the terms' actual definitions. As in the case of creative drama, it is defined as "an improvisational, non-exhibition, process-centered form of drama in which participants are guided by a leader to imagine, enact, and reflect upon human experiences" (Behm & Davis, 1978, p. 1). Creative drama differs from its compatriot, participation drama, based on who is involved since creative drama is often a term used for drama that involves all ages while participation drama relates to children. Creative drama and theatre for youth are two currently used forms of theatrical experiences. Though their terminology differs, their "distinctions are increasingly blurred in theatre" (Davis & Evans, 1987, p. 34).

It is important to teach young students information about the country of Madagascar and other countries with rainforests in peril through the dramatic arts. The loss of tropical rainforests is a global concern. The destruction of these forests and their endemic vegetation has left Madagascar and other countries devastated. Visible from satellites in space, one may see the island of Madagascar's ring of red in its water around
the island. This is the product of erosion. Though this occurs over 5,000 miles away from the United States, an outcome of seeing this play on Madagascar should lead to enhanced awareness about rainforests.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This review provides a comprehensive survey of literature related to environmental education (EE) and the history of Madagascar's threatened biodiversity.

Environmental Education: What Is It?
Research was gathered to attain a true definition of EE. This proved difficult since many definitions of EE are dependent on an action or result associated with the action. A report in The Journal of Environmental Education stated one of the better-known definitions of EE, that by William B. Stapp, et al., "Environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to solve these problems, and motivated to work toward their solution" (1969, p. 31). Though this definition of EE is acceptable and still used today, as time went by, the impact of EE needed to be addressed to include action. Thus in 1996, Stapp, Wals, and Stankorb wrote, "We regard environmental education to be a catalyst of simultaneous improvement of both the educational and community environment as long as it is recognized that
History of Madagascar’s Threatened Biodiversity

In 1997, S. Goodman and B. Patterson edited an influential book entitled, *Natural Change and Human Impact in Madagascar*. This volume synthesized many aspects of what has impacted and continues to affect the environment of Madagascar. Though the book’s main focus is related to human impact on natural areas of Madagascar, the subject of Madagascar’s biodiversity is addressed throughout. The book is a product of a three-day symposium where participants considered, “the island’s diverse and dynamic environments from various geological, historical, and ecological perspectives” (p. x).

The issue of Madagascar’s biodiversity and depletion of it has been a significant concern for many years. Scientists, like Goodman, have been attracted to this land plagued with environmental problems for over 20 years. Twelve years before the symposium, Andriamampianina (1985) wrote a paper entitled, "Traditional Land-use and Nature Conservation in Madagascar." Although it dealt less in detail with the biodiversity of Madagascar, it adequately summarized human involvement and impact on Madagascar’s land and gave justification as to how and why it has been
depleted. The report stated that agricultural land, land altered by humans, "inevitably leads to the deforestation of forests and consequently to the loss of wild flora and fauna habitats" (p. 82).

Madagascar's native inhabitants have been aware of the issues related to country's troubled environment. The country's environmental officials have reported problems such as, "water pollution, reduction in forest cover, soil degradation, threats of extinction of fauna and flora, natural cataclysms, human activities (agriculture, fishing, industry, energy, transport), [and] demography" (Lehmann, 1997, para. 1). This same report stated that these problems are mainly attributed to "progressive reduction in the forest cover" which has reduced the forest coverage in 1985 of approximately 24 to 28% of the territory to 16 to 17% today (para. 2). Lehmann believed this is related to human impact.

Other reports stated an even more alarming rate of destruction since the 1950s. Some reports estimated the loss of forests to be far more than the numbers described in Lehmann's report. One of those recent studies by Green and Sussman, "studied aerial photography and satellite imagery in order to measure the deforestation of the island
of Madagascar" (cited in Hagan, 1996, para. 17). Green and Sussman found that rainforests that once covered 11.2 million hectares in the eastern part of Madagascar only covered 3.8 million hectares in 1985. Though these numbers do not correlate with Lehmann’s findings, the destruction of Madagascar’s biodiversity is generally attributed to human impact.

Madagascar’s plight is not the only one that the future of global biodiversity faces. It is important to review both specific information related to the depletion of valuable forested land in Madagascar and forested land elsewhere. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) Forest Conservation Program Officer, Simon Rietbergen (1999), wrote that, “Increasingly fragmented forests have become much more susceptible to fire than was ever thought possible: tens of millions of hectares of normally fire-resistant forest have been destroyed by catastrophic infernos in the Amazon, Central America, Indonesia, West Africa, and Madagascar” (para. 1).
The Future of Biodiversity in Madagascar

Madagascar has long perplexed those who study its flora and fauna. It "has been targeted by conservationists as a megadiversity country, one of the five countries in the world that contain the most species of plants and animals (Wright, 1997, p. 381).

Fortunately for the island, its people, and its biodiversity, there has been a national and international awareness brought on by Madagascar's uniqueness. Not only is the island's natural heritage being promoted, also "its historical, literary and artistic wealth" (Andriamampianina, 1985, p. 89). Organizations around the world and in the country of Madagascar have been and are continuing to be formed to protect its valuable resources.

International organizations such as Wildlife World Fund (WWF) aim to construct an ecological plan and basis for this country's future generations. Since a decree was issued in 1979 for an agency to be formed in the capital city, Antananarivo, WWF has grown exponentially and created bonds with national organizations such as IUNNC to create educational programs intended to halt the destruction of
the country's resources and protect its biodiversity
(Andriamampianina, 1985, p. 88).
CHAPTER THREE
DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

Many students and teachers were involved to help create a basis and opportunity for the performance of the play, Madagascar Mayhem (see Appendix A).

From this project’s onset, two teachers were instrumental in orchestrating their classrooms to participate fully in the play. Those teachers were Mrs. Monique Handle, a high school teacher at Cajon High, and Mrs. Mary Beth Norris, a fourth grade teacher from Palm Elementary.

Before fully involving the teachers, research was compiled and the play was written with the help University instructor, Dr. Ron Argelander. The writing of play required many hours of revising and public readings.

In the meantime, it seemed appropriate for the fourth-grade class to learn more about subjects related to the play; therefore they were introduced to key concepts about Madagascar in a lesson, entitled Forest Believers Incorporated (see Appendix D), in their classroom by the play’s author. The goal of this lesson was for students to
learn the value and importance of participating in the
play, Madagascar Mayhem.

The high school class worked with the play’s author and
their instructor, Mrs. Handle, to create a set of musical
recordings to be used in the fourth grade classroom to aid
them in preparing for the play. Chorus songs, as well as
individual character songs, were written with the intent of
including the fourth grade class as much as possible in the
play’s performance. Some of those songs include “The
Vanilla Rapture Song”, “Flower Power Song”, and “How a Tree
Can See” (see Appendix A).

University students read and partially acted out the
play before it was in its final stages so that it could be
seen, not just reviewed on paper. At the end of the
reviewing process and nearing the end of the preparation
time for costumes, props, and rehearsals, the students
devoted much time and energy. These efforts continued until
April 26, 2003, when the play was performed on stage in
front of a large audience at the Environmental EXPO.

The fourth-grade students also contributed to the play
before its performance date. They created necessary
background props that were used onstage during the
performance. The sponge leaves used to create those props
and the remaining props, flower and tree hats, for instance, were designed by Celeste Soderbery (see Appendix C).

It was a fabulous experience that is worth repeating. It is hoped that this play will be used in future junctures related to environmental education. All of the participants mentioned here and others who have also helped as public readers, informal critics, and prop donators have made this project successful.

The play, Madagascar Mayhem, was successfully launched into a direction where its content would be heard not only by its participants, but also by the audience it was intended to reach at the Environmental EXPO.
APPENDIX A

MADAGASCAR MAYHEM,

A THEATRICAL PLAY
**MADAGASCAR MAYHEM**

*Cast of Characters*

**Group 1: Characters to be played by young adults ages 15-25**

**Clark:** A young, fit twenty-year old man with Zen-like qualities

**Ted:** An easily stressed man in his early 20s, the director of this small theatrical production.

**Male Tourist:** A typical male American tourist

**Sandy:** A young, feisty woman in her late teen years

**Female Tourist:** A typical female American tourist

**Group 2: Characters to be played by students ages 13-17**

**Mom/ Big Tree** A soft-spoken woman in her mid-thirties who mothers both Little girl and Big Brother.

**Vanilla Villain** A young “lumberjack type” who defends his/her right to burn forests in Madagascar

**Medicine Villain** A "farmer type" with little regard for the further development of disease cures related to the land he tends to.

**Gem Villain** A “hustler type” male with a long mustache with a French accent trying to lure tourists into buying precious gems.

**Group 3: Characters to be played by students ages 9-12**

**Dancers, Flower Chorus, Villain Chorus, and Tree Chorus**

**Lone Flower:** A whiny-voiced, 6 year-old girl

**Sick Girl** A small, sickly child dying of leukemia

**Big Brother** Little Girl’s bigger 11 year-old brother who often taunts his sister

**Singer:** Big Brother’s academically focused best pal

**Time and Place**

Present; A small theatrical stage at the Environmental EXPO, April 26, 2003

**Synopsis of Action**

Three main characters introduce us to the play’s intent, to educate people about the environment we live in, in relation to the one in Madagascar. One of those three then continues to guide the audience through the various sides of issues the country of Madagascar has, how we Americans can relate ourselves to it, and how we may help to remedy any related issues. Those issues are represented by several dialogue and musical scenes starting with the vanilla industry and forest destruction, illegal gem mining, forest clearing for cattle raising, and ending with water pollution and its overall worldly impacts.
Prologue

(Clark is balled up, arms and legs in, center stage. Ted enters frazzled with clipboard in hand.)

TED: (sighs) Clark, what are you doing?

CLARK: (lifts head slightly in Ted’s direction) I’m being Madagascar.

TED: What?!

CLARK: I am trying to be the environment of Madagascar.

TED: Well, I have no clue what Mada...rats...car is...

CLARK: (Clark interrupts with a cough) It’s MADA-GAS-CAR.

TED: I have no idea what it is, how to say it, or why you are trying to be it, but all I know is that I have a deadline. We have a play to do, here, today on this stage: We have to tell all of these people something about the environment for this Environmental EXPO.

CLARK: Maybe if you relaxed a little and got down here...

TED: (Ted interrupts and raises arms in frustration) Relax! I cannot relax today because I have an agenda!

CLARK: So do I.

TED: How could you? You’re on stage hunched over looking like...a...foolish...a turtle, that’s it, a silly turtle.

CLARK: Great!

TED: What?!

CLARK: That’s exactly what I wanted you to see. I’m a Malagasy radiated tortoise.

TED: A turtle? I thought you were Mad...aunt’s-car.

CLARK: Yes, I am still MAD-AGAS-CAR (said in corrective tone).

TED: I give up. What is Mada...gasy...car?

CLARK: Oh, I thought you would never ask. It is a...
(Clark exaggerates his attempt to start new words as Sandy enters quickly from stage right with clipboard, looking busy and distracted she stops behind Clark and tilts the top half of her body)

SANDY: Hey, Clark, did you lose something? Why are you bent over like a mountain?

CLARK: Yes, I am a montagne.

(Sand stands proudly then settles into a new stance. His arms stretch out while his hands dangle. He bends his knees and faces stage left preparing to leap sideways.)

SANDY: What, a montagne? Isn’t that French for something?

TED: Gee, Sandy, he’s Mad...gnats...spar today.

CLARK: No, I am the environment of MAD-AGAS-CAR today, thank you.

TED: Right. He’s Mad...nap’s...roar, a country, a turtle, a mountain. I don’t know and I don’t care!

SANDY: Oh, Mad...anteleope’s...far. I think I’ve heard of it. Oh, I get it, and they speak French! Isn’t it near the South Pole? (Sandy scratches her head)

(Sand raises his hands a little and rolls his eyes to show he is displeased with the pronunciation)

Aren’t there penguins there?

CLARK: Yes, yes indeed, there are penguins in MAD-A-GAS-CAR but no, it is not very close to the poles. It is a HUGE (arms outstretched and circle downward) island next to Africa.

TED: (Struts around the other two characters and nods his head. Sandy looks speculatively his way.)

Ahhha! You can’t be Mada...nut’s...rare. Penguins can’t live in Africa or anywhere near there!

CLARK: (Clark reacts with no facial expression) Yes, they can.

TED: Isn’t it really hot in HAPPY-GO-LUCKY’s-CAR?

CLARK: The environment of MAD-A-GAS-CAR is made up of many things like turtles, mountains, and beaches. It is surrounded by water, the same water that helped those penguins swim over from...

SANDY: Antartica?!
TED: No, don’t be stupid. That’s too far!

CLARK: No, not really, not a long time ago when the continents were closer and there was a big super continent called Gondwanaland.

TED: Now I have heard it all. Mada..walk...too...far and now, Gone...away...long. (Ted pauses then addresses Sandy) Where are those bird props, Sandy?

(Clark is now trying to fly. He runs toward the front of the stage while flapping his arms)

SANDY: Oh, the birds, right. Look at Clark, he’s a bird! We don’t need any props if we have him.

TED: Sandy, please, (strained) Hurry it up!

SANDY: OK, do you want the plastic Malagasy Parrots or the paper blue pigeons?

TED: A pigeon, a pig, or a pill bug! Anything! (Ted pauses) Oh, I almost forgot.

(Ted jumps up nervously and looks at his watch.)

It’s almost show time and we’ve done nothing except talk about silly subjects like turtles and penguins and YOU,

(Ted points to Clark who is flapping his outstretched arms)

You’ve been standing like that forever. You’ll never be ready.

SANDY: Clark’s ready. He’s a mammal now, not a bird.

TED: Our story today was supposed to be about our environment and our place in it. How are you going to do that looking like the rejected Karate Kid?

SANDY: A lemur. He is a lemur. I think he will be able to tell people very well about humans and their impact. (Sandy points to audience)

CLARK: Yes, I am now a prosimian, one of the first primates in the world. See, a lemur is like us. It is a primate too. I just wish I could jump like one.

(Clark jumps sideways like a lemur might but stumbles back dramatically)

TED: A lemur, a prosimian, lives in Mad...at you, Clark..star, not here! It is from across the world.

CLARK: That’s the point.

TED: The show starts in one minute, take your places. (Ted turns to the audience and gasps) They’re already here.
CLARK: Yes, they have been here for about two thousand years.

TED: Who?

CLARK: Humans.

TED: No, I am talking about the audience.

CLARK: Sure, them too.

TED: (Ted screams) AAAARGH! (Ted throws his hands up)

CLARK: Lemurs have been here even longer than us. We should learn to live with them and protect them.

TED: A leanmore?

CLARK & SANDY: Lemurs.

TED: A primate like us?

CLARK: You two are getting it.

TED: Who cares? They are in Mad...a...about ...to...start, and we have...

CLARK: An agenda.

TED: Ah, you're getting it too. OK, we have to start.

SANDY: Break a paw, Clark! (Sandy exits)

TED: Do whatever you need to do to say something, anything about the environment. And you're on, Clark, in five, four, three, two (Ted exits)...one.

Scene One
Vanilla

(Chorus stands behind trees on stage. Clark puts on lemur mask, jumps sideways around room, then back to stage right front. Three Villains lurk on stage. They look around each tree as they slink sideways with hands inside trench coats).

Clark: (singing)

One by one the villains come
To steal away my precious ones.
They'll start with vanilla  
Something important, I tell ya  

They move to the gemstone  
Ripping apart this land on loan  

Then to plants, with cures for diseases  
And to trees, where this play ceases.

(Clark jumps across stage as Chorus sings from behind trees)

Vanilla Chorus: *(sung to the tune of 'Three Blind Mice')*

Three blind vice  
Three blind vice,  
See how they run!  
See how they run!  
They all run  
After the prize  
It makes life so precious and nice,  
Three blind vice  
Three blind vice

Clark: The prize is vanilla, a gift so delicate and sweet  
One treasured across the world for perfumes and treats

Vanilla Chorus:

Did you ever seen such  
A sight in your life?  
Three blind vice  
Three blind vice

(The Villains turn their backs to audience while Vanilla Villain removes tree where little girl stands with ice cream. He exits as Big Brother enters from stage left, sees little girl, runs, and snatches ice cream from her hand.)

Little Girl: *(LG is startled and starts crying)* That's my ice cream, you meanie! Get your own!

Big Brother: *(Big Brother holds ice cream cone just out of reach of little girl)* OK... *(BB pretends to give back ice cream, then pulls it back again)* but I can't. I wish I could, but there is just not enough to go around.

Little Girl: There is plenty. Go to the store and give me back mine! MOM

*(Little Girl calls Mom in demanding tone while eyeing Big Brother. She reaches for the ice cream.)*
**Big Brother:** There won’t be enough vanilla to make ice cream if we keep hurting the earth.

**Little Girl:** (*LG unimpressed, rolls eyes*) What do you know? Just because you’re some BIG sixth grader now doesn’t mean you know everything. Momm!

**Big Brother:** (*BB holds cone up higher as LG jumps*) I DO know that vanilla grows in tropical, wet places like Madagascar. There, a lot of trees are cut to make charcoal to sell in the market. If the land dries up because there are not enough trees, then vanilla can’t grow anymore.

**Little Girl:** Hum. Well, what can I do to get my vanilla ice cream back?

**Big Brother:** Give me ALL of your candy, ice cream and....

**Little Girl:** (*yelling*) Mom!

**Big Brother:** No, OK, OK, settle down (*BB raises hands in front of LG*), really, you could write a letter to save the forests. If you help save them you can have your ice cream, you brat. (*Brother runs away*)

**Little Girl:** (*LG gives loudest scream yet*) MOM! MOM! Mommmmm!

(*Mom enters stage left reaching little girl before her last syllable is uttered, as brother sneaks quickly behind tree with ice cream in hand.*)

**Mom:** (*Mom puts arm around Little Girl*) What do you need, dear?

**Little Girl:** Some paper. I need to write a letter.

**Mom:** To whom?

**Little Girl:** To the vanilla thieves.

**Mom:** Why, dear?

**Little Girl:** (*She crosses her arms*) Because I want my ice cream back.

(*Mom exits stage left with arm around little girl whose head turns looking for brother as he peaks around side of tree, relieved, he begins to eat ice cream with long, slow licks. Clark is sitting on the edge of the stage watching the scene. Singer, Big Brother’s classmate, walks quickly to center stage from stage right clutching Biology textbook tightly.*)

---

**Vanilla Rapture Song**

*(Sung by Big Brother, Singer, and Dancers)*

**Big Brother:** Hey, bud, what’s your hurry?
Singer: Can't you see, it's a test in BIOL-O-GY!

(Singer taps textbook he is carrying and then friend's head)

Big Brother: How about some vanilla ice cream?

(BB waves cone in front of Singer)

Singer: Who cares about ICE CREAM?
Vanilla's not for me.

(Dancers enter from both sides of stage carrying vanilla items)

Dancers: Do you ever eat vanilla pudding, cakes, pies, or tea?

(Dancers hold items near Singer's face; he responds by holding up textbook as if to hit them)

Singer: No, no, no,
Don't you see?
Vanilla's not for me.

Dancers: What do you mean,
You've never had toffee?

Singer: A sweet tooth, I have not

Dancers: Then, maybe a perfume
Or a decorative pot?

(Dancers surround Singer with perfume spray bottles. They turn into the circle to spray and turn out to spray again. One dancer pirouettes in front of circle with flowerpot)

Singer: OK, OK
You'll have your way

(Singer begins to gorge himself on food items presented to him)
Dancers: Would you like some syrup
While you stay?

(Dancers pretend to pour vanilla syrup on Singer’s head then set down vanilla items around him. Singer sits down at center stage to eat while textbook lays open in front of him and Dancers exit giggling)

(All three villains come back on stage. Villain One approaches Singer on the ground. The other 2 villains create a line behind Singer as the Vanilla Villain song begins. Singer does not see visitors approaching as he eats.)

The Vanilla Villain Verse
(Sung by Vanilla Villain and Villain Chorus)

Vanilla Villain: (singing with slow, sultry tones)
So, you think you’re smart,
So set apart?
With your potions
and notions

(Vanilla Villain points to open textbook)

Vanilla Chorus: You’re just like the rest,
Who think they’re the best.

Vanilla Villain: I’ll tell you a story of a village…
Whose trees were pillaged.
And I’ll tell you the reason why…
We’re hungry and poor
Nothing but mud for a floor
We need to eat
Cook fires to heat
What little we find
When nature is being kind
So, we can’t hear your complaints,
You so-called “environmental saints”

Vanilla Chorus: ‘Cause our bellies ache
For Goodness sake

Vanilla Villain: And you want to tell me to
Stop cutting down trees?,
If you please

The villain, I am
Is nothing but Man

**Villain Chorus:**
Whose goal is clear
To make charcoal appear

**Vanilla Villain:**
I care not of your lessons of burning and erosion.
You see, I am a villain of vanilla potions.
The villain, I am
Is nothing but Man

**Villain Chorus:**
Whose goal is clear
To make charcoal appear

*(Villain exits as Singer gathers up all vanilla items greedily and exits)*

---

**Scene Two**

**The Gems**

**Clark:** *(singing with head in his hands)*
Two by Two,
The gems will be
A reason for this
Catastrophe.
Miners come with axes and sticks
To desecrate the land we need to fix
Two choices we make
Only one is for land’s sake

**Chorus:** *(sung to the tune of “Mary had a little lamb”)*
Madagascar is a little isle, little isle, little isle
Madagascar is a little isle, little isle, little isle
Whose land is red as bricks

*(Gem Villain stops at tree, pushes it with his foot, and exposes 2 tourists, one male, and one female. Male tourist faces center stage with hand over eye to shield from sun. Female tourist looks out to stage right with binoculars. Villain gets closer to Male Tourist who is laden with equipment and dressed in short shorts and knee socks.)*

**Gem Villain:** *(twirls mustache and eyes tourists possessively)*
Bonjour, mon ami, how’d you like a brand new
*(Gem Villain opens his jacket to expose gems inside)* ROCK to add to your collection?
Male Tourist: (MT smiles meekly as he pushes up eyeglasses) Oh, dear, lookie here, this nice man has a pretty stone to show us.

Gem Villain: Yes, oh, yes, a very pretty rock just for your very pretty, eh, wife?

(Gem Villain nudges MT and winks)

Female Tourist: (still looking at bird) Darling, look at this bird specimen.

Male Tourist: (MT eyes the gem)

Specimen, yes, I see it, isn’t it a wonderful gem?

(MT becomes entranced)

Female Tourist: Gem? dear, whom on earth are you talking to?

Male Tourist: A man (spoken slowly as if hypnotized), you should see what he has for us.

Gem Villain: Monsieur, I have many more good things to...

Female Tourist: (interrupts, moves closer to husband to see what he is looking at)

Honey! I turn my back on you for 2 seconds and look...

(male tourist hands her a gem). What is this?!

(FT points gem at villain and turns back to husband) Let’s go.

Gem Villain: But, Madame, I am sure you will find something you like...

(Gem Villain tries to pull the Female Tourist into his trance by showing a large gem, she looks closely at it.)

Female Tourist: Dear, um, this is nice, but...(she shakes head) We want nothing to do with this man or his pretty sapphires.

Male Tourist: (pouts like small child) But, dear, they are so pretty and our anniversary is only a month away.

Female Tourist: Dear those beautiful gems, should remain here in Madagascar. Ask this man (points to man) how many trees were cut to get to these or how much the people were paid to find these, not much I assume, maybe (looks to man) one dollar a day?

Male Tourist: It is just one little shiny rock.

(Male Tourist pulls away from the Gem Villain)
Female Tourist: We came to see birds. If we buy even one little, tiny sapphire we will support an industry that destroys these birds’ habitats and make this land even more RED.

Gem Villain: Trust me, no bird was harmed to get this rock (holds up big brown rock) Look, there is one flying now (points to sky)

Male Tourist: He’s right dear, there is that rare bird we were looking for and this land looks pretty in red just like you, dear.

Female Tourist: The land is not as pretty as it could be. That red land is seeping into the ocean! As gems are mined, the land erodes and more of this island washes away.

Male Tourist: Then, we should go away from this man. Hey, there’s that bird again. Do you want one of those for your birthday?

(FT hits her husband playfully as they walk away while holding hands. A bird flies back and forth in the background. MT looks back. Gem Villain nods to man and shows him another gem but Female Tourist and Male Tourist exit.)

**Scene 3**

Flower Freedom

Clark: Spore by spore, the plants will leave,
Leaving me with no reprieve.

Chorus: (Chorus sings to the tune of “Hush, little baby...”)

Hush, little flower
Don’t say a word
Mama’s gonna get you
A new lil’ world

Clark: Medicine ‘ll vanish, the green will fade
People will die ‘cause the mess we’ve made
Burned land for cattle grazing
They’ll be no space for tree raising

Chorus: If that new lil’ world
Don’t change
Mama’s gonna have to
Re-arrange

Clark: Destroyed there, is not just vanilla, periwinkles, or trees
There is so much in rainforests no one yet sees

Chorus: If that rearrange
Don't spark
Mama's gonna need
You to make your mark.

(Chorus points to audience)

(Medicine Villain, dressed as farmer, enters and stops at tree. He lifts tree out of the way to see a little boy/girl sleeping on a bed with a blanket covering him and an IV pole attached. Villain takes IV pole and begins to walk away.)

Sick Child: (Sick girl wakes up, groggy and says softly...) Why are you doing that?

Medicine Villain: (stops, only turns back slightly) I need to burn the land so my cattle can graze.

Sick Child: But, why are you taking my medicine?

Medicine Villain: Your medicine?
(Medicine Villain points to IV bag, looks at it questioningly)

No, this is my land! I am caring for my cattle. I have a family to feed. I have a village to run! Without my farm, people here will starve.

Sick Child: When you burn your land you are killing flowers like the Madagascar periwinkle that helps stop my leukemia.

Medicine Villain: Leukemia? Cured by a flower? No way!

Sick Child: Yes. So, please, stop burning the forest. I need those flowers.

(Villain walks to stage left without exiting while Sick Girl talks softly and exits. All other Villains enter, dressed as farmers, and surround chorus flowers with torches)

Flower Power Song
(Sung by all four villains, Lone Flower, and the Flower Chorus)

Villains: Ah, ha, I have the power

(Villains point torches at flowers as they duck and quiver)

Flower Chorus: Don't make this my final hour!

Villains: Burn, burn

Flower Chorus: Turn, turn

Villains: Here come the flames of my pyre,
Why should I care if your need is dire?
We have been working,
We have cattle to feed.
Get out of the way, I said,
You flowers can’t stay!

(Villains move closer to the group of flowers as one by one they fold)

**Flower Chorus:** Farmers! Turn to the light,
Can’t you see this isn’t right?

(One lone flower hides in the corner while villains circle the rest of the flowers who begin to raise hands in defense)

**Villains:** Right!? Right, of course we’re right!?

(Flowers show fatigue, all gradually stagger and drop to ground)

You’re just silly flowers
With so little power.
Come on, you poor cowards,
Can’t stand up to flames?
Then we shall burn you again.

(Farmers raise torches again but the last flower comes to the farmer villain and stops him by holding his arm up. The Farmer falls to the ground on his knees. The remaining villains are staring, scared)

**Lone Flower:** (solo)
I have the power
To save your family.
I can rid the world of its ailments,

**Flower Chorus:** (quickly in loud whisper)
Colds, coughs, infections, flues, and fevers
Colds, coughs, infections, flues, and fevers

**Lone Flower:** I can stop the spread of disease

**Flower Chorus** *(loud whisper)*: Tuberculosis, malaria, asthma
leukemia, anemia

**Lone Flower:** I can save you, your wife, your children

*(LF hits villain on his knees and he falls all the way down to the floor)*

Even your precious, arthritic knees!
I have the flower power
Flower Chorus:
(Flower Chorus rises up from ground and begin singing and dancing to)

We've got the flower power
This is not our only hour
We've got the goods that heal,
We've got the meds that seal,

(Flowers dance and prepare for "Staying Alive" stance)

(Sing to the rhythm of "Staying Alive")
We are trying to stay alive, stay alive,
Anh, anh, anh, anh,
Stay Alive...a-live, to keep you alive
(Chorus points to audience)
Anh, anh, anh, anh

(Flower Chorus moves across floor together)

Lone Flower:
(Lone Flower approaches villain on the ground as he rises slightly again and lifts his chin)
I hear you cry in the night,
When you don't feel right
Your child is crying
And you think she could be dying

Flower Chorus: (loud whispered chant)
From...Tuberculosis, malaria, asthma, leukemia, anemia

Lone Flower: I have the power to make it go away
Just let me and my friends stay
Because...(Lone flower points to flowers)

Flower Chorus: (Flower Chorus rises up from ground and begin dance from Saturday Night Fever)

We've got the flower power
This is not our only hour
We've got the goods that heal,
We've got the meds that seal,
We are trying to stay alive, stay alive,
Anh, anh, anh, anh,

Stay Alive...a-live, to keep you alive!

Lone Flower:
Who can save you?
When you are sick
What have you got to do?
You have nothing else to pick,

You may still find that I can cure much more

Flower Chorus: AIDS and cancer, spore by spore

Lone Flower: Depend on me

Flower Chorus: I am the key

Lone Flower: I have the power

Flower Chorus: I am just one flower

Lone Flower: Protect me

Flower Chorus: I am the only one

Lone Flower: Save me

Flower Chorus: I am the only one

Lone Flower: Believe me

Flower Chorus: I am the only one,

Lone Flower: I am just trying to...(Flower Chorus joins in)

Lone Flower and Flower Chorus:
Stay Alive, stay alive,
Anh, anh, anh, an,
I will survive!
(Flowers move across floor together and exit)

Medicine Villain: (talking)
A flower that can fight,
Perhaps I just might...
Save a few flowers
in this nearly final hour.
There must be other ways to farm,
I could use natural techniques that cause less fire and alarm.

(All Villains exit stage together)

Scene Four
Tree Vision

Clark: (sings quietly as he shakes his head)

Four by Four the water pours
Grimly red down its course.
Is it the end of our travels today?
We saw much of the land, so red
All of the flowers in such dread
Now let us see what we can do...
We know plants are medicinal
We need to save them as our arsenal
And land can erode
When we cart away gems by the load
What of the big, tall greens?
What do they say of these scenes?

(Tree Chorus begins to liven up but move forward timidly and stop)

Tree Chorus: (Chorus begins to sing song softly to the tune of "Row, row, row your boat")

Sow, sow, sow your seeds,
Gently you must plant,
Carefully, carefully, carefully,
The earth will grow again

(Clark begins to clean up stage when a quivering tree trees catches his eye. He walks up to it and sees smaller trees behind it)

Clark: Why are you so scared? You’re all trembling like leaves!

Tree Chorus (in unison): Did you see that? Did you see all of those villains with their flames?

Big Tree: Those little flowers, oh those poor things?

Tree Chorus: Have you seen what those villains put into the water we have to drink?

Clark: Oh, I see it now. (A villain drains a bucket of dark liquid off the front of the stage and runs away)

Tree Chorus: We don’t know what to do. We can’t move, you see.

Clark: Can I help?
Trees: Yes, yes, you can.

Big Tree: Do you see those people over there?

Clark: Over there? (Clark points to theatre’s audience)

Big Tree: Tell them to learn about my sensitive roots because this water is killing me. It is red and unsafe.

(there smallest tree taps Big tree’s shoulder and whispers something)
And tell those people to learn about trees all over the world that are used to make paper. My friend here is a type of redwood from Madagascar that gets used to make paper in Japan!

Clark: (points to audience again) But how can these people help?

Tree Chorus: We’ll tell you.

How a Tree Can See SONG
(Sung by Big tree, Tree Chorus, and Clark)

Big Tree:
Some people say I can’t feel
But have you ever been at the highest point without steel?
Have you felt the wind through your limbs
As you reach out on the brim?

I’ve seen hawks nesting
And bluebirds crested

What a sight
But there is some fright
Because...

Tree Chorus: (Sung to the tune of “London Bridge if Falling Down”)

Mother earth is falling down,
Falling down, falling down,
Mother earth is falling down,  
My fair children

(One Chorus member yells: Clean up the rivers!)

Build her up with cents and bills,  
Cents and bills, cents and bills,  
Build her up with cents and bills,  
My fair parents

(Another Chorus member yells: Money can’t buy knowledge!)  
Cents and bills may go away,  
Go away, go away,  
Cents and bills may go away,  
My fair elders

CLARK, BIG TREE, & TREE CHORUS:  
Build it up with hopes and dreams,  
Hopes and dreams, hopes and dreams,  
Build it up with hopes and dreams,  
My fair lady teachers

Hopes and dreams are a start  
Are a start, are a start,  
Hopes and dreams are a start,  
My fair humans

EPILOGUE

CLARK: And that’s the end...

(All actors return to stage holding numbered signs, including Ted who runs to Clark’s side)

TED: (Ted yells happily) MAD-A-GAS-CAR! Madagascar, I get it!

SANDY: Finally.

CLARK: This was the finale to our play, but not to our actions.

SANDY: We have so much to do!
TED: I'll start our agenda. (TED takes out clipboard with Number One printed on its backside) One, travel to a place you have never been, just in your mind if you have to. There you will see mountains, forests, rivers, and all of the animals that live there.

TREE CHORUS: (holds up Sign 2 with picture of ecosystems on back side) Two, learn about its environment.

SINGER: (holds up Sign3 with photos of friends talking) Three, tell your friends and family all about what you have learned.

BIG BROTHER: (holds up Sign 4 with picture of recycled goods on it) Four, get involved. Recycle everything you can.

VILLAINS: (holds up Sign 5 with photo of people collecting trash on road) Five, get others involved. Help them collect trash and make less of it.

LITTLE GIRL/Female Tourist: (holds up Sign 6 with picture of White House/bill/letter) Six, write a letter to your Congressman, your mother, or your friend. Anyone you want to share your awareness with.

ENTIRE CAST: (All sign holders rip first layer off to reveal message underneath that spells out...LOVE EARTH) Be an educated believer in the environment no matter which one or where it is.

LE FIN
APPENDIX B

THE CAST LIST

OF MADAGASCAR MAYHEM
The cast of
Madagascar Mayhem

This play for youth guides us through environmental issues that plague Madagascar. Though the island lies over 8,000 miles away, the characters in this play share ways we can protect it and our world’s precious resources.

So, let them take you on a PLAY journey around the world.

Written by
Celeste Soderbery
Directed by
Carolyn Creel
Choreographed by
Richard Baker

Clark: Ricardo Valencia
Ted/Male Tourist: Richard Baker
Sandy/Female Tourist: Rebecca Roppolo
Big Brother: Josh Freeman
Singer: Donna Bean
Mother/Big Tree: Griselda Enriquez
Vanilla Villain: Crystal Olmeda
Gem Villain: Trent Greenan
Medicine Villain: Jake Ragan
Little Girl: Marissa Eastwood
Sick Girl: Erica Harrod
Lone Flower: Jenna Valdez

Tree Chorus:
Connor Androus, Jordan Beecroft, Brianna Jimenez, Ashley Schellhous

Flower Chorus:
Katie Allen, Jessica Bryan, Nicole Leatham, Shiree McCutcheon, Kaitlyn Riddle

Villain Chorus:
Jared Cook, Daniel Flores, Brittany Longo

Dancers:
Flower Chorus & Stephanie Walti

Chorus:
Brian Adams, Collin Bradley, Taylor Case, Tamiqua Edie, Crystal Funn, Veronica Moreno, Patricia Miller, Channing Runkle

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APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNAL

OF MADAGASCAR MAYHEM
The Rehearsal

Mom, Little Girl, and Chorus

Clark and Chorus
The Cast and Crew

CSUSB Students
Back: Richard Baker, Celeste Soderbery, and Rebecca Roppolo
Front: Carolyn Creel and Ricardo Valencia

High School Students
Back: Trent Greenan, Griselda Enriquez, and Josh Freeman
Front: Two Prop Attendants and Crystal Olmeda
Elementary School Students

Far Back: Kaitlyn Riddle, Erica Harrod, Jessica Bryan, Patricia Miller, Jordan Becar
Back: Briana Jimenez, Katie Allen, Marissa Eastwood, Taylor Case, Tamiqua Eddy, Stephanie Walti
Middle: Daniel Flores, Jake Ragan (cowboy hat), Brandon Gilstrap
Front: Veronica Moreno, Nichole Leatham, Conner Androus, Ashley Schellhous, Jared Cook (hat),
Channing Runkle, Crystal Funn
Big Tree surrounded by Tree Chorus

Big Brother, Mom, and Little Girl
The Stage Performance

Singer is approached by Vanilla Villain, Gem Villain, and the Villain Chorus singing the “Vanilla Rapture Song”

Ted is surprised that Clark is being a “silly turtle”
The Finale

The entire cast of Madagascar Mayhem reenters the stage at the end of the play to share their suggestions for protecting rainforests and other natural areas. Their final message: LOVE Earth.
APPENDIX D

MADAGASCAR

CLASSROOM LESSON
Have you ever dreamed of being an FBI specialist or CIA agent? Now is the perfect time for you to investigate environments around the world as a member of one of these new leagues: the Forest Believers Inc. and the Center for Environmental Interpretation Agency. So, let's get to work, we have a forest to find, protect, and save.

**Summary**

Students role-play a series of events "experts" may encounter, to understand that rainforests and other habitats are endangered and in need of outside awareness and possible intervention.

**Objectives**

Students will:
- Identify information related to Madagascar, its culture, its scientific and geographic standing, and the future of the island's biodiversity.
- Create a list of valuable resources a rainforest provides.
- Propose ideas for protecting the biodiversity of Madagascar as well as other rainforested areas.
- Suggest ways they may contribute to world rainforests' positive future.

**Materials**


**Making Connections**

It is likely you or one of your family members uses a product grown or extracted from a rainforest each day. Perhaps you do not have a rainforest in your backyard, but you may have pieces of one in your pantry, bathroom, or even as part of your house. It may also be likely that one-day one member of your family or yourself will contract a disease like cancer or leukemia and need to be treated by a product that is made only from plants ONLY found in a rainforest.

**Background**

Rainforests around the world provide us consumers with a variety of valuable commodities. Madagascar rainforests alone export a vast quantity of vanilla, cloves, coffee, and other spices used in decoration, perfumes, and even in flavoring one's favorite cake. More specifically a flower found in the rainforests of Madagascar, the Malagasy periwinkle, is used for treating young people with Leukemia here in the United States. Though there is still no cure for diseases such as cancer and AIDS scientists believe the answer lies within the depths of the rainforest. Yet unmapped and unharvested, many rainforests are in danger of becoming extinct before all of their riches are discovered, such as cures for more diseases. Currently obvious to many is these rainforest plants' job of helping us fight ailments such as colds, flues, malaria, wounds, coughs, and infections are treated with extractions from plant located only in pristine forests around the world. Though there are many rainforests globally in need of attention, Madagascar, is one more unfamiliar to people and, thus, in more need of mention in environmental education lessons such as this one.
Madagascar is an island off the coast of Mozambique, next to the continent of Africa. It is two times the size of Great Britain. As the fourth largest island in the world, it is not surprising that its natural habitats are diverse and dispersed widely across the island. It has reportedly six different microclimates, yet only three main zones: the eastern rainforests, western tropical dry deciduous woods, and the semi-arid south. The plants and animals in these areas evolved in isolation for over 150 million years. Eighty percent of those plant and animal species are found nowhere else in the world.

Many things have threatened these valuable species, their habitats, and their future. The diversity of each plant and animal has been in grave danger since man’s first induction to the island 1,500 years ago. Now those same threats have continued and had destructive elements added to its list such as industry, import/export of redwoods and lemons, slash and burn practices, and poor rice farming methods.

With over 10,000 varieties of plant species in Madagascar and more being discovered each day, it remains important to protect it. Learning more about this island and its already obvious benefits such as a plant that cures children’s leukemia, it is best that we continue to discover and protect the country’s resources. Researchers may find cancer’s cure or a medicinal answer to AIDS. The discovery of the cure for children’s leukemia and many ailment remedies have been discovered in the last 15 years. The search still goes on and must go on to find more plants and animals in these rainforests and other habitats, but the forest must remain for us to do that. We must unite and fight for places as far away as Madagascar because we are all connected and our lives depend on them.

**Malagasy Proverb**
Ny olombelana toy ny molo-bilany,ka iray midodidina ihany.

**English Translation**
Men are like the tip of a cooking pot, which forms just one circle.

(Uknown)

**Procedure**

**Warm-up:**
Read the first greeting in Malagasy provided on the sheet, Teacher Expert Questions. Then, read the second greeting in French provided on the same sheet. Ask the students to raise their hand if they have ever been to the rainforests of Madagascar. Then probe for more understanding of where it is located. Ask the question, “Where on earth is Madagascar?” Stress that adults often are not sure where it is located as well. Wait for student responses and then ask a volunteer to come to the front of the room and point to it on a map. Show the class where Madagascar is on the map quickly before asking for more volunteers of the main lesson activity.

**The Activity:**
1. Request the students to determine whom the “experts” on Malagasy life, culture, language, and science are in the classroom.
2. Ask for volunteers to act as experts.
3. Proceed around the room using the Expert TopSecret clipboard to "pretend" as if there is an official list of experts.
4. Tell each student who volunteers that he/she is an expert in a specific field. Ask them to go to the front of the room after showing and telling them their CODE name as printed on the Expert TopSecret sheet.
5. Give the volunteers their EXPERT cards as they walk to the front of the class.
6. Instruct all of the experts to stand and be prepared to answer questions related to their field of expertise.
7. Ask the first expert, the language expert, to respond to your question in Malagasy and translate the greeting you gave to the class during the warm-up. After receiving no response, then say the following, “Language expert, do you want to tell the class about your expertise? Don’t you want to tell them about…” This question will lead the student to read the answer on the provided EXPERT card.
8. From this point on the student will read from a sheet that gives a brief summary of their sector and answers each question you give them, which you will read from the Teacher Expert card.
9. Use the same method of questioning the remaining ‘experts’ as they remain standing at the front of the class. This will set the framework for the instructor to talk more about each of those topics later.
10. Follow the Teacher Expert card/sheet for questioning the students. Give the money expert a copy of the money page. All of the others can use props such as photos of Malagasy clothing, if you feel
Forest Believers Incorporated

they need them to describe their area.

11. Ask ‘experts’ to sit down.

12. Give class more details on the life, culture, history, and future of Madagascar’s biodiversity.

Wrap-Up:
Lead students to ask more questions about the history and ecological status of the island. Offer suggestions for ways the class may help this island preserve its rainforests. Make a class list of the reasons why it is important to learn about a country and its people while also learning about its natural areas with the direction of the graphic organizer; *It’s just a rainforest*. Ask them what other elements make up a country that has rainforests, like Madagascar. Complete the graphic organizer with their help. (See example on Teacher's completed copy)

Assessment
Begin the second graphic organizer, *Priceless Products*, to review products and valuable medicine that comes from rainforests. Add to the list if it goes beyond the answers in the sample sheet.

In conclusion, create a list of student suggestions of ways the class may contribute to the preservation of these products and the global rainforests that come from. Stress the subject of its biodiversity and protection as it relates to education. Add the following quotes:

- *When we heal the earth, we heal ourselves.*
  
  *David Orr*

- *If all mankind were to disappear the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed 10 thousand years ago. If insects were to vanish, the environment would collapse into chaos.*
  
  *Edward O. Wilson*

- *I’m an environmentalist. I’m an earth warrior.*
  
  *Darryl Cherney*

Resources

Extensions

Social Studies:
Show the students photos of the island and its people. Ask them to determine what origins these people may have had. Mention trade routes used and how the French colonized the island. If relevant, speak of the island’s independence from the French colonists in the 1960s.

Try to relate this to the island’s rainforest issues and possibly the country’s late independence as one of the reasons for the country’s environmental troubles.

Literature:
Review Malagasy proverbs and compare them to American proverbs and/or sayings.

Have students create poems or quotes of their own that relate to environment and the lesson possibly. For example: “I’m an expert. I know about Madagascar and I care” or “Protect Madagascar, there is only one”
REFERENCES


