

NEEDS GARDEN: WHAT HELPS US GROW

Section

Use a calm and reassuring tone throughout. Let students know that the Earth is always changing in small ways, and scientists study those changes to help us live safely and responsibly. Avoid personal or traumatic stories; instead, highlight how knowledge, observation, and working together help us solve problems.

Remind students that being prepared doesn't mean being scared, it means being informed. Creating a classroom environment where students feel safe to ask questions, share ideas, and make mistakes is just as important as the experiment itself.

If any student feels uneasy, gently guide them back to curiosity and discovery. Remind them that science gives us tools to better understand our world, and that caring for the Earth is something we can all do together.

Lesson

Science

Grade

4-5

Learning Objectives

Students will conduct experiments to explore matter and natural processes, using scientific inquiry and data analysis to understand environmental phenomena and natural events.

Duration

1 class (40 Minutes)

Required Materials

Paper
Pencils
(No worksheet for this lesson)

Preparation and Implementation

Set up a calm and friendly classroom. Tell students this is a safe science activity. The aim of the study is to identify the basic needs of living things (water, air, food, love, safety, etc.), understand how these needs relate to health, nutrition, and overall well-being, help students become aware of their own emotional and physical needs, support healing and a sense of safety, self-care, and belonging after trauma

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1 INTRODUCTION (10 Minutes)

Trauma-Sensitive Notes: Let students know that they are not alone—just like flowers grow stronger with sunlight and water, people grow stronger when they feel seen, safe, and supported.

1. Show a poster in class: *“What does a living thing need to grow?”*
2. Discuss the needs of plants (water, sunlight, soil), animals (food, water, shelter, love), and humans (nutrition, safety, love, rest, education, etc.).

Then, teacher draws or writes on the board:

- **Needs of plants:** water, sunlight, soil
- **Needs of animals:** water, food, shelter, care
- **Needs of humans:** nutrition, health, love, play, rest, safety

Local Plant examples:

Plants in our garden:

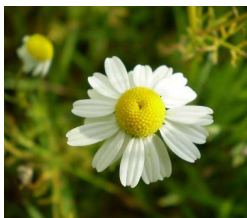
Dandelion – Karahindiba

“A dandelion is soft, quiet, and full of potential. It teaches us that something small can travel far, grow again, and carry hope.”



Daisy

“A daisy is small, but bright. It reminds us that even quiet things can bring joy. It grows where the ground is soft and the sun is kind.”



Note for Teachers:

We chose to include **dandelion and daisy** because many of our students have seen or played with them.

It's helpful to use **plants that children recognize and have emotional memories with**. You can change or add plants depending on what grows around your school or community.

3. Ask students: *"What happens if one of these needs is not met?"*



2 DISCUSSION (5 Minutes)

Introduce the idea of needs, nutrition, well-being, living things, self-care.

Living Things: "Living things are plants, animals, and people. They grow, need food, and can move or respond."

Basic Needs: "These are the things all living things need to stay alive and grow. Like water, food, air, love, and safety."

Nutrition: "Nutrition means the healthy food our bodies need to grow and stay strong."

Well-Being: "Well-being means feeling good in your body and mind. It means you are healthy, happy, and safe."

Self-Care: "Self-care means taking care of yourself—eating well, sleeping, playing, and resting when you need to."

After giving brief information about the important terms, a class discussion follows. Teacher asks:

"If you were a flower, what would you need to grow?"

"Is it enough for a person just to eat food? What else do we need?"

What are some things plants and people both need?

What helps you feel better when you're upset or tired?

Trauma-Sensitive Notes: Emphasize that every feeling is valid, and every person has the right to feel safe and cared for, just like every flower deserves sunlight. Can someone grow without love? What happens when we don't feel safe for a long time?"



IMPLEMENTATION (20 Minutes)

- **Design Your Own Flower**

Students imagine themselves as a flower.

On an A4 sheet, they draw a flower. On each petal, they write a personal “need” (e.g., love, play, peace, food, friendship, safety, etc.).

- **Stormy Weather and Safe Soil**

Ask students: *“What if one of your needs wasn’t met—how would your flower feel?”*

They express their feelings in writing or drawing.

Then ask: *“What can help this flower feel safe and grow again?”*

They draw or write solutions for emotional healing.

Trauma-Sensitive Notes: This part allows children to recognize emotions linked to loss, fear, or neglect, and helps guide them toward solution-oriented thinking and emotional recovery.

FEEDBACK

Duration: 5 minutes

Students may share their flowers and reflections if they wish. The teacher reinforces these messages:

- Everyone has needs—and it’s okay if they’re sometimes unmet.
- Asking for help and connecting with others helps us heal.
- Like flowers, we grow strong when we are well cared for.

A metaphor such as *“The Gardener Inside Me”* can be used to show students how they can care for themselves.

Collaboration with a school counselor is recommended, especially for students affected by trauma (e.g., earthquake, displacement, loss).

- What needs do humans and plants have in common?
- How might someone feel when a need isn’t met?
- What do you do when you feel sad? What helps you?
- After today, how can you support a friend who’s feeling down?

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Start the session by letting students know that this is a safe space to ask questions, explore, and make mistakes.

- If any student expresses anxiety or concern, respond with empathy: "It's okay to feel that way. Learning helps us feel more in control."
- Keep the pace steady and predictable. Clearly explain each step before moving on.
- Use a calm and steady tone. Explain each step clearly before moving on so that students feel secure and prepared.
- Allow students to participate in their own way—some may want to speak, others may prefer to draw, write, or simply listen. All forms of expression are valid.
- Be mindful of nonverbal cues. A quiet student may still be fully engaged. Let them know they can share if and when they're ready.
- Use soft transitions between sensitive questions and creative activities. A short breathing moment or gentle stretch can help students feel calm and grounded.
- Celebrate different kinds of flowers: some may be bright and bold, others small or delicate. Each one reflects a real and important part of how we grow.
- Encourage students to revisit their "flower" later in the week: "Has your flower changed? Does it need more sunlight, more water, more rest, more kindness?"