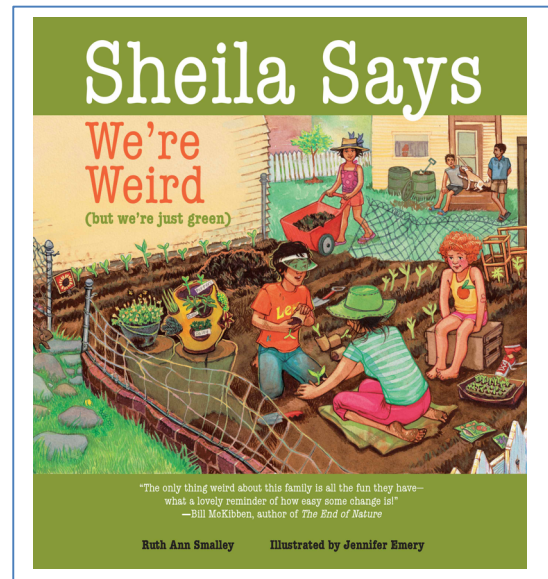


Sheila Says We're Weird (But We're Just Green)

Ruth Ann Smalley
Illustrated by Jennifer Emery
Paperback, \$7.95
ISBN 978-0-88448-379-3
9 x 10, 32 pages, color illustrations
Children/Green Living; Grades 2-6

Summary

Sheila loves playing with her neighbor Tina, but she thinks the way her family does things is weird. Hanging up laundry outside instead of using a dryer, planting flowers and vegetables instead of grass, riding their bikes instead of driving. What is up with them? Sheila learns sometimes doing things differently can have a big effect.



Sheila Says We're Weird will lead to discussions about

- Local foods from local farmers and farmer's markets
- The benefits of consuming less
- Carbon footprints and how to decrease them
- Grassroots movements
- Neighbors

Before You Read

Background

It's sort of natural to label something or someone you are unfamiliar with as "weird." But, often, with time, you figure out that what you thought was weird is actually pretty cool.

Our book *The Goat Lady* is about two kids who befriend the "weird" old lady with lots of goats in her yard. They find out she is not weird at all, but kind and generous. The fact that most people are pretty nice is especially true once you get to know them. Invite the children, when meeting new people, to ask them questions that might lead to what they have in common. Practice in pairs or have your students write out what they might ask a person from a different country or who has just moved to your area.

After You Read

Activity

Calculate Your Carbon Footprint

A carbon footprint is the negative impact that something has on the environment—the amount of carbon created by you or another person or a business during a specific time. One of the most common ways we create a carbon footprint is when we use something that burns fuel (car, airplane, electricity, heat, etc.). So what can you do to turn your negative impact into a positive impact?

Go to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's website and follow their steps to calculate your carbon footprint:

www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids/calc/

How to Cook SLOW Food

There is a movement among people in the United States, to rebel against how busy we all are by returning to our roots of homegrown, home-cooked food. Some folks call this the Slow Food Movement, as opposed to the food we are all used to grabbing on the run from a fast-food restaurant.

Let's see how good slow food can taste by creating our own vegetable soup from local foods.

The first step is to research what food is available locally, from farmers or farmer's markets. If possible, get the ingredients for your vegetable soup from the farmer's market or invite a local farmer to visit your classroom.

Here is a recipe link for soups from Mollie Katzen, who authored some of the Moosewood cookbooks:

www.molliekatzen.com/archives.php

Find What's Green

Sheila Says We're Weird is filled with examples of green living. Can you find these items in the illustrations?

- Rain collection barrel (used to water plants in gardens)
- Worm bin
- Composting bins
- Board games (Is there a TV in Tina's house?)
- Bicycles (how many?)
- Clothesline

- Vegetable garden
- Push mower
- Sun tea maker
- Fan
- Cloth towels and napkins (Are there any paper towels?)
- Cloth bags (Are there any plastic or disposable bags?)
- Books
- Refillable water bottles

For Further Discussion

- Which activity do children and their families already do?
- Which would they like to try?

Further Reading

The Goat Lady by Jane Bregoli (Tilbury House, 2004)

A strange neighbor ends up as a close friend.

The Lorax by Dr. Suess (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1971)

The classic environmental story about consumerism and greed.

Before We Eat, from farm to table by Pat Brisson (Tilbury House 2014)

The Soda Bottle School by Seño Laura Kutner (Tilbury House 2014)

Riparia's River by Michael Caduto (Tilbury House 2011)

Swimming Home by Susan Hand Shetterly (Tilbury House 2014)

Internet Resources

You may find the following Internet resources helpful as your students continue to explore the topic of the book.

Living Green with Baby

Inspires healthy, environmentally sustainable habits and a healthy lifestyle at an early age

<http://www.livinggreenwithbaby.com>

Recycle Now

Recycle Now is the national recycling campaign for England

<http://www.recyclenow.com>

EPA

Online site of the United States Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov>