



**SOUL
ACTIVITY**

FRANCIS & FRIENDS

WALKING IN THE WOLF'S PAWS

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Activity Instructions

In the story of Olivia the Owl and Sally the Squirrel fussing at each other about sharing a tree, they were reminded of a story about the Wolf of Gubbio! The town's fear of the Wolf was based on Wolf being hungry and needing food. Wolves holds a very important place in the Energy Web and there is value in living together with all players in this intricate web of life.

Wolves, like all living things, have to get their energy from somewhere to live. They are just one part of the Energy Web, sometimes called the food chain. All energy begins with the sun. From the sun, energy is passed to plants. In the Energy Web, plants are called producers because they produce their own food! They use light energy from the Sun, carbon dioxide from the air and water from the soil to produce their food in the form of glucose/sugar. This process is called photosynthesis.

Animals are next in the Energy Web and are called consumers because they cannot make their own food; they eat either plants and/or other animals. There are 3 groupings of consumers to help us categorize them, Herbivores (eat only plants), Carnivores (eat only meat), and Omnivores (eat both animal and plant energy). Animals that eat only plants are the Primary Consumers and animals that eat other animals are the Secondary Consumers, like the wolf.

All levels of the Energy Web are needed to maintain a balance within an ecosystem, which is a community of living organisms and the nonliving parts of their environment (things like air, water and mineral soil). To see how every level of the Energy Web depends on the other levels to be there, we can play the Energy Web game!

Imagine yourself at any point on the Energy web and let's see how important you are!

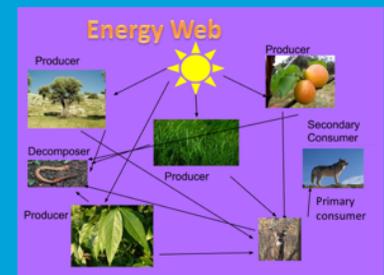
- A. Have each child select a random index card or stuffed animal. They will pretend to be that plant or animal in our game.
- B. Have one child play the role of the sun, standing in place and have them hold one end of the yarn.

Supply List

Index cards prepared with names and pictures of different plants and animals, one per card.

If you have small stuffed animals to represent animals this can be used instead of index cards.

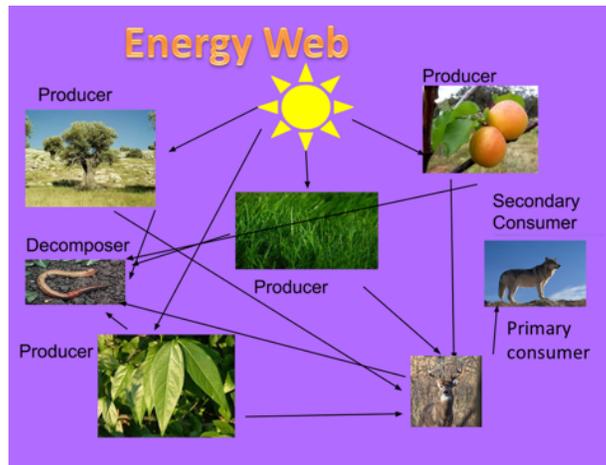
Large skein of heavy yarn.



Prayer

Life-giving God, you give us all we need to survive. Help us to see how we depend on one another to live. Help us to be grateful for all that comes before us in the Energy Web for providing us the energy we need to survive. Amen.

- C. Have each child talk about who they are then pick up the opposite end of the yarn being held by the Sun. Cut the yarn.
- D. Hand the yarn end to another child and figure out if their plant or animal fits as a producer, primary consumer or secondary consumer and connect them in their right spot by having the connection hold the other end of their yarn. Cut the yarn and repeat this with every child, creating a web that connects the passing of energy from the sun to producers to primary consumers to secondary consumers.
- E. Once every child is connected in the web, remove 1 child and their link in the chain, showing how it impacts other animals further down the web.



Discussion Questions

1. What happens to the Energy Web when different plants and animals go extinct and are removed from the web?
2. Are there other impacts to the ecosystem when animals are removed?
3. Can pollution impact the Energy Web?
4. What impact do humans have on the Energy Web?
5. As the top predator, what can we do to help preserve the web and keep it healthy?

Additional Links

How wolves changed Yellowstone National Park <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q>

Play the producers, consumers and decomposers game! <http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/content/animals/kidscorner/games/producersconsumersgame.htm>