** 12. The woman who loved the trees**

*There is an accompanying PowerPoint for this assembly*

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| **Age range:** Primary |
| **A book cover of a person with birds on a tree  Description automatically generated with low confidenceTheme:** This term, we are thinking about leaders, leading and following, and now continue our theme looking at leaders from across the world and across history, to inspire us to be better leaders – and followers! – ourselves. We will look at wise words and wise lives, as well as use some key religious dates on the calendar to connect us with stories about leaders. This week, the focus is on the life and work of environmental activist Wangari Maathai, and her work in re-foresting Kenya. There is a wonderful picture book that you can buy to read to children at another time.  |
| **Diamond How does this link to your school’s Christian vision & values?**This week, we are taking some time to think green – and learn about how one woman’s actions have impacted an entire country for the better. We hope that this will inspire you to ‘start little– and do the best you can!’ |
| **Resources:** * The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in **bold** show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
* There is also a short video from the Nobel Peace Center about her work: [Wangari Maathai: the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Who Planted Trees - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJtC-3DKwfM&t=27s) which you will use to tell the story of her life, during the collective worship. It does a really good job, so we decided to use this rather than do it ourselves! As with all videos, do watch it yourself first, and be prepared to pause and explain some sections if needed.
* **Use this link to access a background sound picture to go with the PowerPoint picture for the reflection:** [**Download Backgrounds Forest Ambience 3 B04 Sound Effect Royalty Free FX 00890 Serene (videvo.net)**](https://www.videvo.net/sound-effect/backgrounds-forest-ambience-3-b04-00890/763501/)
* You can also find some more about her life and work here: [Wangari Maathai | The story | About Wangari Maathai | Wangari Maathai Foundation](https://wangarimaathai.org/wangaris-story/), including her story about the little hummingbird: (watch her tell the story if you want to, here [I will be a hummingbird - Wangari Maathai (English) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGMW6YWjMxw)) and here, about the Green Belt movement: [The Green Belt Movement](http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/)
* **Reflective activity:** this week, go outdoors, lie under the trees and think, reflect or pray….
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| Door Open**Gathering:** * **Slide 1:** Use these gathering words for this term, or your usual greeting if you prefer. The greeting comes with BSL signing, you can view the demos using links under the slide.

**Leader:** As we share these stories of leaders…**ALL:** May we follow their example in **thoughts** and **words** and **actions**. |
| Puzzle**Engaging:** * **Slide 2:** Over the past few weeks, we’ve heard from the lives of some leaders who’ve made a difference to the lives of many other people, through their words and their actions. [Pause and recall how here…]
* Today, we are going to be hearing about someone else whose life story has also made a huge differencein her home country of Kenya, and whose words we will be thinking about later.
* **Slide 3:** This is Wangari Maathai, who was born in the **African country of Kenya**, in 1940. She is the founder of the **Green Belt movement**, a tree-planting charity that has made a difference not only to the environment, but also to the lives of thousands of people, especially the women in her home country of Kenya. As we’ve heard about through the lives of Wilma Rudolph and Dr Martin Luther King, Wangari also championed the cause of people who didn’t have a voice – the women….and the trees! She saw the devastation to her village when trees were cut down across large areas – and did something about it. She was also the first ever black woman to win a Nobel Peace prize, in 2004. Let’s find out some more….
* **Slide 4:** Use the short story video link to find out about Wangari’s life and work: click on the picture and it will take you to the YouTube short film from the Nobel Peace Center.
* *[You may need to pause and explain some sections, especially for younger pupils, as the narrator talks quite quickly! Spend some time talking with pupils afterwards about the difference that they think Wangari made to people, to plants, and her country.]*
* Wangari herself told a story which helps explain why she didn’t give up…..
* **Slide 5:** She tells the story of a little hummingbird, one of the smallest birds in the forest, who one day spots a fire that’s beginning to burn……
* **Slide 6:** All the forest animals look on, helplessly, as they watch the fire beginning to take hold….
* **Slide 7: …**but the little hummingbird, instead of just watching like all the other animals, flies to the nearby river and takes just one small drop of water in her tiny beak, which she **lets it fall** onto the fire. The other animals watch in amazement, not quite believing what they are seeing, and ask hummingbird what she thinks she’s going to achieve with such a tiny drop of water. Hummingbird replies **‘I’m doing the best I can!’**
* **Slide 8:** Wangari Maathai went on to explain that she would be like the hummingbird, doing the best she could to save the forest too, by planting one small tree at a time.
* **Slide 9:** I wonder if you can guess just how many trees the women of the Green Belt movement have planted across Kenya?..... [guess] **It’s 51 million…..**that’s a HUGE number, and all because one person acted on a small idea that they had!
* **Slide 10:** So here’s another big question for us to think about as we come towards the close of our time together today…..**Whose trees are they?** *[allow children to talk about this question, which may have a range of answers, such as:*
	+ *God’s – Christians, Jews and Muslims believe he gave people the responsibility of caring for his garden, the world – and that it still belongs to him*
	+ *Ours/everyone’s – if we don’t look after the world, who will?*
	+ *Children of the future – are we just ensuring that the trees are still there for future generations?*
* So here’s another question: does who the trees belong to change how we care for them?..... *[again, talk]* Actually, it doesn’t – I think we can all agree that whatever our reason for caring for the trees, it’s still our job to look after them – and throughout this week, let’s try to find as many ways as we can – and keep on doing it!
* **Slide 11: ….now in the stillness of this moment, let’s spend some time being still together…..** Close your eyes and just listen for a few moments to the sounds of the forest…..imagine yourself there amongst the trees…..I wonder how it makes you feel?......stay in this moment for a while…..*[leave as long as you feel appropriate: you could even help children to ponder on how it might feel to lose the sound of the forest, if bulldozers move in to clear the trees….]*
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| **Slide 12: Responding (words for worship):** …despite all that human beings have done which has spoiled our world, it is still a place of wonder….…a place that we want to preserve for future generations…..…a place that we need to protect and look after….….I wonder what you feel when you look at our world – maybe at the trees, like Wangari did….….I wonder if you might feel that you are very small like the little hummingbird, wanting to make a difference….**….Wangari Maathai made a difference one small tree at a time….****….I wonder what we might learn from her example?....****….I wonder how her actions might inspire us today?....****….to start little, and do the best you can....****Slide 13:** I’m going to pray now, and ask God to help us to do the best we can – which are your words if you’d like to make this prayer your own….Join me if you’d like to at the end of each line of the first part, by saying **‘WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN.’****Prayer:**Having heard Wangari’s story – **WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN.**In treasuring our trees – **WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN.**In the way we use our world’s resources – **WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN.****Slide 14: Amen**  |
| **Sending: Slide 15****Leader:** As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead…**All:** ….– **WE WILL DO THE BEST WE CAN.** |
| **To listen to / sing:** [One World](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWs-Boqk-5s) (NBD) |
| **Tree With Roots with solid fill\*\*Reflective activity:** This week, go outdoors, lie under the trees and think, reflect or pray….Take every opportunity that you can to appreciate the shade that they provide, or the fruit that they are growing, or the homes they are for tiny insects…. |

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***Wangari Maathai started the Green Belt Movement to help plant trees in Kenya and give women a chance to work. They have planted over 51,000,000 trees, since 1977…..***

**What has inspired you about Wangari Maathai’s words or actions?**

**What about her life has made you think?**

**Why is it important that we care for trees – for ourselves and for others?**

**Go outside and lie under the trees. Close your eyes and listen to the sound of the leaves… Think about what you might do to protect *these* trees**