Science Learning Packet

Grade 1 Reader

Spinning Earth: After Sunset

Suggested science learning activities for SPS students during the COVID-19 school closure.

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After Sunset

by John Erickson
illustrated by Bradley Clark
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2. The following terms should be used in recording the condition of the book: New; Good; Fair; Poor; Bad.
After Sunset

by John Erickson
illustrated by Bradley Clark
“Hey, come watch the sunset,” I called to my little sister.

We watched as the sky got darker. Some pigeons flew by. “I guess they’re finding a place to rest for the night,” I said.

“Let’s go inside,” said my sister. “It’s getting dark, and we won’t be able to see anything.”

“Just wait,” I said. “There’s a lot to see after sunset.” We watched the sky until the sun was below the horizon. A few bright stars appeared.
“Where do the stars come from?” my sister asked.

“The stars are just there,” I said.

“But they weren’t there a little while ago,” she said.

“Is that what you think?” I asked her.

“The pigeons go rest at nighttime and come out in the daytime,” she answered. “Do the stars go somewhere in the daytime and come out at nighttime?”
I said, “The stars are hard to see in the daytime, but they are still there. When the sky is bright with sunlight, you can’t see stars. When the sky gets darker, the stars look brighter. Look at the sky now!”

We could see many more stars.
As we looked up, we saw the blinking lights of an airplane.

“Airplanes aren’t like stars or pigeons,” said my sister. “You can see them in the daytime when the sky is bright, and you can see them at nighttime when the sky is dark.”

“You’re right,” I answered. “Stars and pigeons and airplanes are not alike.”

“But they are all things we see in the sky,” my sister added.
“Where is the **Moon**?” my sister asked. “I can’t see it.”

“I’m not sure,” I said. “But I like it when the Moon is not in the sky at night. I can see the stars better.”

“Isn’t the Moon in the sky every night?” she asked.

“No,” I told her. “Some nights we don’t see the Moon at all. Sometimes we see the Moon in the daytime instead!”
Suddenly, we saw a streak of light in the sky.

“Ooh. A meteor!” I said.

“That was cool!” she said. “Will we see another one?”

“I don’t know,” I told her. “I don’t think you can predict a meteor. But I do know we’ll see the Moon again one night soon.”
A dark shape flew over our heads. My sister said, “Did you see that bat? You were right. There is a lot to see after sunset.
I pointed to the sky again. “Do you see that bright light?”

“Yeah,” she said. “Is it a star?”

“No,” I replied. “It’s a planet. I think that one is Jupiter.”
“I’ve heard of Jupiter,” she said. “And other planets, like Venus and Mars. Can we see those?”

“I’m not sure. I don’t know if they are in the sky right now.” Then I remembered something. “There is one other planet that I know you can see. Look down. That’s planet Earth!”
“It’s funny to think that Earth is a planet,” said my sister. “It’s not up in the sky.”
“Right,” I said. “We are standing on Earth. But if we were in space it would look different.” Then I saw something that I don’t see very often. It was the perfect time to see it.
“This is your lucky night,” I said. “Look at that bright light moving across the sky!”
“Keep watching,” I said.

“It’s not blinking or making any noise like an airplane. What is it?” my sister asked.
"It’s a space station!" I told her. "It’s farther away from Earth than any birds or airplanes. Much farther. It’s so far from Earth that they can look out and see that Earth is a planet in space just like Jupiter and Mars."
“There are people up there?” she asked.

“Yes,” I answered. “Rockets take people up to the space station to live.”
“The space station has windows so the people can look down at Earth,” I said. “They take pictures so we can see what Earth looks like from space.”

My sister said, “I wonder what they see.”
“Hey, come over and see the sunset.”
Glossary

daytime: the part of the day when the sky is bright

Earth: the planet we live on

horizon: the line where Earth and the sky look like they come together

meteor: the light we see when a piece of rock burns up far above Earth

Moon: the round object in space that sometimes looks like it has another shape

nighttime: the part of the day when the sky is dark

planet: a round object in space like Earth, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, or Saturn

predict: to use what you already know to decide what you think might happen

stars: objects in space that look like dots of light in the night sky

streak: a line that is a different color than the background

sun: the bright object in space that gives us light in the daytime

sunset: the time in the evening when the sun looks like it moves below the horizon
Books for Spinning Earth:
After Sunset
What Spins?
Nighttime Investigation
A Walk Through the Seasons
Patterns of Earth and Space

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What can you see after the sun goes down?

A lot! These two sisters see birds, bats, stars, planets, an airplane, and even a space station in the sky. What do the people in the space station see when they look down at Earth?