

Domain: Water and Hygiene

Age group: 5-7 years; can be followed up later, e.g. at 10-14

Subjects: Domestic hygiene, safe water collection

3.1 What's in your water?

Learning goals:

Knowledge:

- Children understand the possible sources of contamination between the source and the mouth.
- They understand that water can look clean and clear but might still be unsafe to drink.
- They understand possible sources of contamination if water is not stored safely.
- They gain knowledge about the safe water chain.
- They begin to understand about faecal-oral disease transmission, and the concept of germs.

Attitude:

- Children reject contamination of water sources.
- They perceive that having safe drinking water sources and safe methods of collection are important for their own lives and that of their families.

Practical skills:

- Children can demonstrate at least two ways of safely transporting water.
- Children monitor and guide classmates and younger brothers and sisters.

Psychosocial life skills

- Children can think critically.
- They can think of and communicate alternatives.
- They can do so with adults (in our example with their mothers).

Participatory methods:

Role-play, short skit (drama)

Materials:

No materials required

Activities:

This example is a role-play which the teacher can prepare. Older children can make their own dramas.

The play has the following parts:

- Mama Wanjiku (or any other locally appropriate name)
- Two elderly men
- A thirsty and tired traveller
- A husband
- A baby child

The role-play is set in a rural village where the source is located two kilometres from the village. Mama Wanjiku travels with a bucket without a cover to collect water. When she reaches the water source, she draws the water into her bucket. She does not clean the bucket first. In the meantime one gentleman is relieving himself in the nearby bush. A few minutes later a drunken man staggers near the same bushes and pauses to blow his nose into his fingers. He stares at the contents in his hands, makes a face and mumbling under his breath proceeds to wipe his hands on the leaves at the top of the bush. He then staggers away.

Mama Wanjiku has filled her bucket, and reaching the bush, stops to collect her leaves. She needs these leaves to prevent the water from splashing, and also to reduce dust and the number of insects that may get into the water. She picks the nearest leaves on the bush, clearly the same leaves that were used previously by the two men. She goes on her way home. On the way, she meets a traveller who is very thirsty and asks her for some water. Mama Wanjiku gives him some water from her bucket. The traveller walks on. After some time he is violently sick.

Mama Wanjiku continues home and serves the water to her husband and the little baby at home to drink. She also drinks herself. Some time later the baby, her husband and she herself are seen to be unwell.

- Ask for five volunteers and give each his or her role separately.
- After the performance ask questions to help the children reflect critically, for example:
 - What kind of container did Mama Wanjiku use? Was it suitable or unsuitable? Why?
 - What should she have done before putting the water in the container?
 - Where else did the water get contaminated? Why?
 - How would you have done better?
 - What could Mama Wanjiku's husband have done?

Application:

- Ask the children to accompany their parents in the process of water collection. Tell them to observe good and bad practices and discuss these with them politely.
- Ask older children (10-14) to do a simple observational survey in groups at the village water sources. They can, for example, list for the first five users:
 - the types of container;
 - the sex of the persons collecting;
 - the perceived age groups of the persons collecting (agree in advance how to divide age groups);
 - whether the collectors rinsed the container before filling;
 - whether they washed hands or not;
 - whether they put leaves on top or not;
 - whether their hands touch the water during transport or not.
- In class, help the children enter their observations into an overall table (example below).
- Use the assignment to facilitate a group analysis and draw conclusions on the characteristics of water collectors and safe and risky collection behaviours. Some sample questions:
 - What type of persons did you see most often collecting water?
 - What may that mean for the lives of these persons?
 - Did most collectors use safe practices? What do you see in the table?
 - What kind of person(s) used safe practices?
 - What do you conclude about hygienic water collection in our village?
 - Do the observations give the true picture or may it be different at other times?
 - What could the users have done better?
- Use the data also for arithmetic (adding, percentages, etc.).
- Ask the children to work out, individually or in small groups, the totals of safe and unsafe water practices for each group and write these down in a table such as the one on the next page.

No. of persons	Male	Female	Child	Adolescent	Adult	Elderly	Rinse		Leaves		Touch	
							Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
1	x			x				x		x		x
2		x		x				x		x		x
3		x			x		x		x			x
4		x		x				x		x		x
5		x	x					x		x		x
		x										
TOTAL	1	5	1	3	1	0	1	4	1	4	0	5

Learning indicators:

- The children can list containers that are safer and less safe to transport water.
- Children can describe ways in which water contamination can take place.
- Older children can critically observe, record and analyse water collection behaviour on health and social aspects.



Demonstration of school children in Gujarat for better hygiene
(Photo: Kathleen Shordt, IRC)

Competence:

Safe water chain