



***Guide to the Healing Earth* Introduction**

Part 5 Action

[LS 13: "Young people demand change".]

[LS 161: "The effects of the present [environmental] imbalance can only be reduced by our decisive actions, here and now."]



As stated in the *HE* Introduction:

If we reach greater understanding of the structures and processes of the natural world, make ecologically sound ethical choices, and develop deep spiritual gratitude for nature, but fail take action for the good of the Earth, then we are still a step away from solving our environmental problems.

The goal of *HE* is to "act effectively". **Education in the Integral ecology calls us to help our students gain a sense of their own agency in the world and *act* for the good of the Earth.**

[LS 19: "Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what we can do about it."]

If you are a seasoned educator, you have likely guided students in ways to act for the protection and healing of the environment. As you know, there are many things a student can do:

- Change personal habits that degrade the environment.

[LS 209: “An awareness of the gravity of today’s cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits.”]

[LS 211: “There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions . . . Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us, such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can be reasonably consumed, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights, or any number of other practices.”]

- Discover, research, and respond ‘hands on’ to a local environmental problem.

[LS 179: “. . . local individuals and groups can make a real difference.”]

- Participate in an already existing local effort to solve an environmental problem.
- Discover, research, and support public policies at the local, state, national, or international level that aim at healing the Earth.

[LS 26: “There is a urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced . . . “]

[LS 176-177, 179: “Unless citizens control political power-national, regional and municipal--it will not be possible to control damage to the environment.”]

- Participate in local, state, national, or international social movements that aim at healing the Earth.

[LS 13: “Particular appreciation is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest.”]

[LS 14: “The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organizations committed to raising awareness of these challenges.”]

[LS 206, 211: “. . . ‘ecological citizenship’ . . . “]

We can assist our students in each of these five activities.

Change Personal Habits that Degrade the Environment

There are many resources available on the web that focus on practical actions we can take in our daily lives that protect and repair the environment. [Here is one site](#) that you may find helpful to discuss with your students.

Discover, Research, and Respond to a Local Environmental Problem

Possibly your students do not need to go any farther than their own school to discover, research, and respond to an environmental problem. Is there a source of significant energy waste in their school? Cafeteria food waste? Water waste? Can the school function more sustainably? Is it possible to create more green space on school property?

For environmental problems beyond their school, invite students to walk through their communities and observe conditions that may be fragmenting habitats, degrading natural resources, wasting energy, polluting or wasting water, degrading or wasting food, contributing to global climate change.

The *HE* Introduction lists and explains four common ‘action steps’ that you can discuss further with your students:

- See a problem.
- Gather information and analyze the problem.
- Develop possible responses, imagine outcomes, and select an action.
- Perform the action and monitor results.

[LS 185: “In any discussion about a proposed venture, a number of questions need to be asked in order to discern whether or not it will contribute to genuine integral development. What will it accomplish? Why? Where? When? How? For Whom? What are the risks? What are the costs?”]

Participate in Already Existing Local Efforts

Here you can help students learn how to access information about local environmental action via print media, social media, community organizations, etc.

Research and Support Public Policies in favor of the environment at the Local, State, National, or International Level

Here you can help students learn about the formal and informal political processes that bring efforts at healing the Earth from ideas to policy proposals to laws. These processes can be explored at any level--from how the students’ local community develops environmental rules,

to how this is done at the state, national, or international level. Depending on the country you are in, informative websites exist on how these processes work at various levels.

For example, [this pdf](#) shows how a bill becomes a law in the United States. At the international level, [this website](#) discusses environmental policy formation in the United Nations.

Participate in Local, State, National, or International Social Movements

Here you can help students learn about environmental activism in the form of social movements. There are many environmental movements around the world. Students can learn how to participate in these movements locally and nationally. [Green Wiki](#) provides an excellent list of government organizations and non-governmental organizations and movements dedicated to healing the Earth.

[LS 166: “Worldwide, the ecological movement has made significant advances, thanks also to the efforts of many organizations of civil society.”]

Students can also be encouraged to form local movements of their own or join an existing movement in their community. Here is an opportunity for students to learn community organizing strategies. There are many resources on the web to guide you and your students in this area of environmental action. Check out resources from [350.org](#).

Concluding Remarks on Action

HE has been created by women and men who are concerned about the Earth and are working for a cleaner and healthier planet. The authors believe that understanding must be connected to action, for the benefit of both. Thus, we urge you to work with your students to help find ways they can become agents for environmental change in the 21st century.

Select Background Resources for This Section

Catholic Climate Covenant. <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/>

Franciscan Action Network. <https://franciscanaction.org/>

International List of Environmental Organizations.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_environmental_organizations

Jesuit Refugee Service. <http://en.jrs.net/index>