Coral Reef Madness

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Coral Reef Madness
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The ocean’s coral reef is alive with many different fish and it is bursting with colorful coral.
A grumpy grouper keeps close to the brain coral; goofy clownfish swim in and out of the anemone.
Blue starfish creep along while the lionfish glides through the clear water.
Beautiful butterflyfish flutter by as a parrotfish sings his sweet song.
One Tuesday, a fish started tapping a funky beat with her fin.

The blue surgeon fish overheard her and began to boogie.

The fairy basslets joined in, humming an upbeat tune.
Slowly the entire coral reef was overcome with the need to twist, whirl, jive, and hustle. The shy hermit crab came out of his shell and even the grumpy grouper was getting down!
Soon the entire ocean floor was taking part in a massive dance party.

It became noisy as the fish began to holler and sing and shout.
They boogied down for five swanky days and five jazzy nights.
Everyone was dancing so much they bumped and broke the coral.
The dancers became too loud and frightened the butterflyfish away.

Even the parrotfish swam away to sing his sweet song some place quieter.
The partiers twisted, whirled, jived and hustled, kicking sand up off the ocean floor.

The water quickly became murky, gloomy, and brown blocking the sunlight.
Everything grew very dark, but everyone kept on dancing.
A tiny, yellow seahorse stopped dancing to look about the coral reef. The butterflyfish left. The coral was broken. The parrotfish was no longer singing. The water was dirty. It was a very sad sight indeed.

The small seahorse knew what he had to do.
At the very top of his very tiny lungs he shouted STOP!
The little seahorse's cry stopped all of the coral reef dancers immediately.
Then, quietly they looked around and saw that there were no butterflyfish fluttering or parrotfish sweetly singing. They only saw broken coral and dirty water.
Sad that their beautiful home was damaged, the dancers ended their party.

They waited for five quiet days and five silent nights.

Very slowly the water became clear.
Quietly the butterfly and parrotfish came home. Little by little, the coral grew back.
Together, the coral reef fish decided that they would never carelessly dance their home into a mess again.
But, every so often, on a Tuesday, you can still spot a funky fish enjoying a small twist, whirl, jive or hustle.
Our Earth and the Coral Reef

Today we are faced with an environmental conflict; we are fighting global warming, confronting an energy crisis, battling pollution of all sorts, even struggling to save trees from deforestation. The Earth is our home and it is our duty to defend her. It is vital that we share with our children the importance of a healthy relationship with our planet.

Like rain forests the coral reefs are in danger, but not from funky fish dancers. Coral reefs are invaluable resources for research, provide rich economic opportunities and they contain a large amount of our planet’s biodiversity. They face a number of threats including pollution, overfishing, climate change and coral bleaching. Let’s work together to protect these beautiful habitats.
Parents, check this out!

Activities to build a love of nature with your kids:

**Plant a Garden**

Growing a simple vegetable or flower garden can be a fun way to teach kids to appreciate the planet. Watching and caring for plants as they grow can be an exciting and a responsible task. Kids can even keep a journal to record, draw, or photograph the growth and journey of their plants lives!

**Give a Fish a Home**

Getting a fish can be an easy way for children to learn responsibility! A fish can be a simple first pet that requires only a small amount of attention. Together you and your family can build a home for a jazzy fish of your own.
Organizations

EPA
The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, leads the nation’s environmental science, research, education and assessment efforts. The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment. Since 1970, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.

CORAL
Coral Reef Alliance, or CORAL, is an international, nonprofit organization working specifically to save coral reefs. They are dedicated to protecting the reefs around the world for current and future generations. CORAL works to provide education, tools, and the inspiration to help local communities become passionate about these beautiful underwater worlds.

CRCP
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) supports effective management and sound science to preserve, sustain and restore valuable coral reef ecosystems.

www.epa.gov
www.coral.org
www.coralreef.noaa.gov