



ACTIVITIES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Evolution of Community Gardens over time

Narrative Activity

Everyone's vegetable gardens: a story of nature, friendship and the city

Once upon a time there was a group of friends: Lara, Marco, Sara and their dog Briciola. They lived in a big, noisy city full of tall buildings and busy streets. Lara often complained:

‘Why don't we have trees and lawns to play in? Everything is grey and sad here!’

One day, while taking a walk, they discovered a special corner: a small garden with many green seedlings. A kind gentleman called Grandpa Carlo was picking tomatoes.

‘Welcome to my garden!’ he said, smiling. ‘Do you know that once upon a time almost everyone had a garden? Now I will tell you a story...’

The birth of community gardens

Many years ago, when people lived in villages, cultivating the land was normal. Families helped each other and sharing the fruits of labour was a way of being friends. Then came the industrial revolution: cities grew, factories sprang up like mushrooms and people moved there. But life in the city was hard. There were no meadows, trees or flowers, only houses and grey streets. People felt sad and tired. It was then that someone thought: ‘*Why not bring the gardens back to the city?*’

‘In England,’ Grandpa Charles continued, ‘workers grew vegetables to feed their families. In Germany, a doctor called Dr Schreber discovered that working the land was good for your health, so they created small gardens called ‘Schrebergarten’. Even during wars, the gardens saved people from starvation! They called them ‘Victory Gardens’.’

A brilliant idea

Lara raised her hand like at school. ‘What about today? Can we make a garden too?’



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‘Of course!’ replied Grandpa Carlo. ‘Today urban gardens are everywhere, even here in Italy. People of all ages are growing salads, tomatoes and carrots in parks, on balconies and even on roofs!’

Sara, intrigued, asked: ‘But what are gardens for today? Can't you buy everything at the supermarket?’

Grandpa Carlo nodded: ‘True, but a garden is for much more. Cultivating the land teaches us to care for nature, brings us together and reminds us how nice it is to harvest something we planted with our own hands.’

Their first garden

The children were enthusiastic. With Grandpa Carlo's help, they started to turn a small piece of land near their house into a garden. They dug with their hands (and Briciola's paws!), planted seeds of carrots, tomatoes and sunflowers. Every day they went to check their seedlings.

After a few weeks, the first shoots began to sprout. Lara smiled: ‘Look, we did it!’ Marco added: ‘And it's not just a garden. It's a place where we can be together, have fun and do something good for our neighbourhood.’

A message for everyone

Grandpa Carlo looked at the satisfied children. ‘Remember, little gardeners: even in a big city we can find space for nature. Every seed you plant is a gesture of love for our planet.’

From that day on, the children's garden became a special place. Not only did they grow vegetables, but they invited their neighbours to join them, telling the story of gardens around the world. Every time they planted something new, they thought about how many people in the past and present had done the same.

And who knows, maybe you too, reading this story, feel like creating your own garden, whether big or small. Because the earth is magical and always knows how to make us smile.





Illustrations to be created

1. The beginning: the grey city and the children	Description of the illustration: A big city full of grey buildings and busy streets. The children (Lara, Marco, Sara and the dog Briciola) are sitting on a pavement, with a sad expression, looking at the lack of trees and lawns. Special detail: A small colourful bird watches the children from the top of a lamppost, as a symbol of nature hidden in the city.
2. Grandpa Carlo's garden	Description of the illustration: Grandpa Carlo standing in his garden, surrounded by green plants. There are red tomatoes, lettuce and colourful flowers. The children listen to him attentively as he holds a rake. Special detail: A small ladybird on a leaf near the children, adding a touch of natural life.
3. Gardens in the past	Description of the illustration: A page divided into three historical scenes: Workers in the 1800s growing vegetables near brick houses. A family working in a 'Victory Garden' during the war, with a sign saying 'Grow for Victory!'. Liz Christy and the 'seed bombs' dropped on an abandoned plot in New York, with tiny sprouts sprouting. Special detail: Each scene has a slightly different style, as if it were a window on the past.





4. Children creating their own Garden	Illustration description: Lara, Marco and Sara dig the soil, plant seeds and water. Briciola enjoys digging next to them, making a bit of a mess. In the distance, some neighbours look on curiously. Special detail: A colourful pot with a sign handwritten by the children: 'Our Garden'.
5. The magic of the first sprout	Illustration description: A close-up scene of the ground with a small sprout sprouting. The children are kneeling around, with expressions of wonder. The sun shines above them. Special detail: A bee flies near the sprout, symbolising the importance of pollinating insects.
6. The flourishing garden and the party with the neighbours	Illustration description: The garden is full of ripe vegetables and colourful flowers. The children and neighbours pick the fruits, while Crumb runs between the plants. In the background, a table with a small picnic: bread, freshly picked tomatoes and slices of watermelon. Special detail: A garland made of flowers and leaves hung between two wooden poles near the garden.
7. The final message	Description of the illustration: The children are in front of their vegetable garden, with a large sign saying: 'A small garden for a big smile!'. Next to them, Grandpa Carlo and the neighbours are smiling. Special detail: A view of the city in the background, with other small gardens and trees growing here and there.

