

A Delicate Balance

An activity for one or more classes

Preparation:

Tape one piece of candy onto a paper plate. Staple two paper plates together so that the bottom of each plate is facing outward. This is your plate pair. Gather together crayons.

Procedure:

Divide your class into several groups. Give each group about ten prepared plate pairs. Instruct each group to discuss various ways our earth's atmosphere can be harmed. Try to get the students to be as specific as possible. Students in each group should write and draw sketches on each plate pair to depict the problems their group discussed.

Tell the class that each group is now a team in a relay race. The team will race to a designated place at least 10 feet from the starting line. One at a time, each team member will place a plate pair down and race back to touch the next team member. This team member will then race to the tower to put their plate pair on top of the others. The first team to pile all their plate pairs in a tower and sit down is the winning team. This is why it is important to tape a piece of candy between the plates in the plate pair. You want it to be challenging (impossible) for the plates to be steady enough to form a tower.

Follow Up:

Allow the teams to struggle with the task and then have a discussion. Talk about what this game illustrates about a delicate balance. You may even want to ask each team to write about why this game is called "Delicate Balance." Share the ways the atmosphere can be harmed and elicit from the

students what this activity showed about the importance of each of us doing our part to ensure clean air.

When you drive places that you could walk, this puts pollutants into the air.