

Nesian Narratives Toolkit

Voyage 8: My Environmental Safety Tuvalu



A Pacific-Led Educational Resource for Kaiako Supporting Identity and Wellbeing of Tamariki Aged 4-5 in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Settings across Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Nesian Narratives Toolkit

Voyage 8: My Environmental Safety

Tuvalu

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1. About this topic

During this voyage, tamariki will explore how the natural world is connected and why protecting it is important. They will learn about rising ocean levels and how places like Tuvalu are affected, as well as the role of plants and trees in keeping ecosystems healthy. Through storytelling, art, and hands-on experiments, tamariki will discover simple ways to care for the environment and understand their responsibility in looking after the planet.

2. Learning Outcomes

Over time and with guidance and encouragement, tamariki will become increasingly capable of:

1. Learning and sharing interesting facts about Tuvalu, including its people, culture, history, geography, and values, to understand what makes it special.
2. Learning how to care for the environment by exploring the impact of rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu, while also finding out how to stay safe around water in their everyday lives.
3. Exploring how to care for nature and learn how to look after themselves during different seasons.

3. Curriculum Planning

1. Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

Principle:	Family and Community Whānau Tangata
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn and share interesting facts about Tuvalu, including its people, culture, history, geography, and values, to understand what makes it special.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) Island Explorers – Tuvalu Geography Discovery Table
- b) Tala o Tuvalu – Storytelling and Song Circle
- c) Fakaseasea Festival – Dress-Up and Cultural Showcase

2. Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they can explore real-world environmental challenges, ask questions, and develop their own ideas about how to care for the planet and stay safe around water.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore the impact of rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu and learn how to care for the environment and stay safe around water in their everyday lives.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) Tuvalu and the Rising Tide – Sensory Storytelling and Water Play
- b) Guardians of the Moana – Eco-Warrior Clean-Up and Nature Walk
- c) Safe by the Sea – Water Safety Role-Play and Song

3. Exploring How to Care for Nature and Themselves during Different Seasons

Principle:	Empowerment Mana Atua
Strand:	Wellbeing & Belonging Mana Atua & Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where their health is promoted and they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore how to care for nature and learn how to look after themselves during different seasons.

Planned Learning Experience:

- a) Seasons of Tuvalu – Nature Table and Seasonal Discovery
- b) Planting with Purpose – Garden Care and Seasonal Planting
- c) Sun, Rain, and Me – Seasonal Self-Care Role-Play

4. Connections to Curriculum

The topic of Environmental Safety aligns closely with both *Te Whāriki* and *Tapasā*, as both frameworks emphasise wellbeing, kaitiakitanga (guardianship), and collective responsibility for the environment and community safety (Ministry of Education, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2018).

1. Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts about Tuvalu

Te Whāriki: Fosters a sense of belonging Mana Whenua by encouraging tamariki to explore diverse cultures, traditions, and values. Learning about Tuvalu strengthens their connection to the wider Pacific community.

Tapasā: Supports educators in promoting Pacific identities by ensuring tamariki appreciate and understand the rich heritage of Tuvalu, deepening their knowledge of Pacific cultures and strengthening their identity.

2. Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

Te Whāriki: Encourages environmental awareness and practical safety skills, helping tamariki understand global issues like climate change and how to stay safe in their local environment.

Tapasā: Reinforces kaitiakitanga and the importance of water safety in Pacific communities, connecting learning to real-world experiences and cultural practices.

3. Exploring How to Care for Nature and Themselves During Different Seasons

Te Whāriki: Promotes wellbeing and self-care strategies, helping tamariki adapt to seasonal changes and understand their role in caring for the environment.

Tapasā: Acknowledges and embeds culturally responsive approaches to seasonal safety and environmental care, fostering resilience and collective responsibility.

5. Assessment and Evaluation

Kaiako can record and track tamariki's understanding of Environmental Safety using a range of methods aligned with *Te Whāriki*. These methods include, but are not limited to:

- Observations
- Learning stories
- Group discussions
- Portfolio/Diary entries
- Child-friendly self-assessment
- Quizzes (e.g., iPad)
- Group projects and presentations
- Parent and whānau feedback

6. Essential Facts for Kaiako

As kaiako, you play a key role in helping tamariki understand the impact of climate change and rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu. This is a real and urgent issue, and fostering their connection to it is essential. Teaching kaitiakitanga (guardianship) empowers tamariki to protect the environment—whether through small everyday actions like reducing waste or larger efforts such as advocacy. Water safety and seasonal awareness help ensure they remain prepared while looking out for their whānau and community. Here are some useful facts to support ways you can foster children’s understanding of environmental safety and Tuvalu.

1. Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

- **Culture:** Tuvaluan life is centred around community, storytelling, music, and dance. These traditions help tamariki understand the importance of identity and belonging.
- **History:** Tuvalu, formerly known as the Ellice Islands, became an independent nation in 1978. Learning about its journey helps tamariki appreciate Pacific resilience and pride.
- **Geography:** Tuvalu is made up of nine low-lying coral atolls in the Pacific Ocean. It is one of the smallest and most remote countries in the world.
- **Values:** Respect for elders, family, and communal living are central to Tuvaluan society. These values can be explored through shared stories and group activities.

2. Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

- **Rising Sea Levels:** Tuvalu is one of the countries most affected by climate change. Rising ocean levels threaten homes, food sources, and cultural sites.
- **Environmental Care:** Simple actions like picking up litter, planting trees, and recycling help tamariki understand their role in protecting the planet.
- **Water Safety:** Pacific children are at higher risk of drowning. Teaching tamariki to swim with an adult, wear life jackets, and recognise safe water areas is essential for their wellbeing.

3. Exploring How to Care for Nature and Themselves During Different Seasons

- **Nature Care:** Activities like gardening and nature walks help tamariki connect with the environment and understand how to care for living things.
- **Seasonal Awareness:** Teaching tamariki how to dress for the weather, stay hydrated in summer, and keep warm in winter supports their health and safety.
- **Self-Care:** Encouraging tamariki to notice changes in the environment and how these affect their bodies helps build independence and resilience.

7. Information to share with Parents and Caregivers

Supporting your child's learning about Environmental Safety

You can support your child's learning about Tuvalu, environmental care, and safety by engaging in simple, meaningful activities at home. These experiences help tamariki build knowledge, confidence, and a sense of responsibility for themselves and the world around them.

Family Contributions

- **Storytelling Sessions:** Read books or watch videos about Tuvalu's culture and geography. Talk about what makes Tuvalu special.
- **Cultural Sharing:** Share family stories, songs, or dances that connect to Pacific identity and values.
- **Gardening Together:** Plant herbs or flowers and talk about how plants help the planet.
- **Recycling and Waste Reduction:** Sort recycling together and talk about reducing rubbish.
- **Water Safety Practice:** Discuss safe swimming rules, practise putting on life jackets, and role-play emergency responses.
- **Seasonal Safety Checklists:** Create fun checklists for summer and winter safety (e.g., sunscreen, hats, warm jackets).
- **Nature Walks:** Go for walks and talk about how the environment changes with the seasons.
- **Healthy Habits:** Encourage tamariki to drink water, rest when tired, and dress for the weather.

8. Professional Development

To build confidence in teaching environmental safety, ECE educators/kaiako can engage in a range of professional development opportunities. These may include workshops, courses, and webinars focused on environmental education and early childhood pedagogy. Exploring online resources and joining professional learning communities offers valuable opportunities to exchange ideas and receive support from peers.

Hands-on experiences—such as nature walks, gardening, and practical environmental activities—help strengthen your ability to teach these concepts in meaningful ways. Deepening your understanding of *Te Whāriki*, enhancing cultural competency, and seeking mentorship from experienced colleagues all contribute to creating rich, relevant, and engaging learning experiences for tamariki.

9. Health, Safety and Quality Practice

In Aotearoa New Zealand, early childhood education (ECE) is guided by policies and regulations that ensure tamariki learn in safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive environments. The following guidelines support kaiako in delivering learning experiences that align with the three key outcomes: understanding Tuvalu, caring for the environment and water safety, and seasonal wellbeing.

1. Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

- **Cultural Safety:** *Tapasā* encourages respectful and inclusive teaching of Pacific cultures. When exploring Tuvaluan culture, history, and values, kaiako can foster a sense of belonging and identity for Pacific learners.
- **Safe Learning Environments:** Under the *Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008*, learning spaces must be free from hazards and culturally affirming. This includes ensuring that resources used to teach about Tuvalu are accurate, respectful, and age-appropriate.

2. Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

- **Environmental Safety:** The *Licensing Criteria for ECE Services* require that outdoor areas are well maintained and free from hazards. This supports safe participation in activities like gardening, nature walks, and recycling.
- **Supervision and Ratios:** Adequate adult-to-child ratios must be maintained, especially during outdoor and water-based activities, to ensure tamariki are safe and supported.
- **Water Safety:** Health and Safety policies emphasise the importance of constant supervision near water. Teaching tamariki about safe swimming areas, the use of flotation devices, and emergency responses is essential.
- **Excursion Safety:** Risk assessments are required for any off-site or water-related activities. Planning must include safety procedures, first aid, and clear communication with whānau.
- **Climate Awareness:** The *Education and Training Act 2020* supports teaching tamariki about environmental challenges like rising sea levels. Centres are expected to have emergency procedures in place for natural disasters, including flooding and storms.

3. Exploring How to Care for Nature and Themselves During Different Seasons

- **Seasonal Safety:** The *Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008* require that tamariki are protected from weather-related risks. This includes ensuring they wear appropriate clothing, stay hydrated, and are shielded from extreme temperatures.
- **Wellbeing Practices:** Teaching tamariki how to care for themselves during seasonal changes—like applying sunscreen or wearing warm layers—supports their health and independence.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Centres must have documented procedures for emergencies such as storms, earthquakes, and heatwaves. Regular drills help tamariki understand how to respond safely.

10. Island Nation Spotlight: Key facts about Tuvalu

1. Host / Guide

* Kaiako may wish to use the following character as a host or guide to lead tamariki through the voyage learning experiences, helping make the journey engaging, relatable, and culturally meaningful.

Te Pusi mo te Ali: In Tuvaluan mythology, the creation story of the islands involves te Pusi (the Eel) and te Ali (the Flounder). According to the myth, te Ali is believed to be the origin of the flat atolls of Tuvalu, while te Pusi is the model for the coconut palms that are vital in the lives of Tuvaluans

2. Animal/puppet

Pantropical Spotted Dolphin: The national animal of Tuvalu is the Pantropical Spotted Dolphin (*Stenella attenuata attenuata*).

This dolphin is known for its playful nature and is an important symbol of the marine life surrounding Tuvalu.

3. Landmarks

- **Funafuti:** The capital island of Tuvalu, Funafuti, is home to the country's only international airport and several important landmarks, including the Funafuti Lagoon.
- **Large Lagoon:** Funafuti boasts a massive lagoon, Te Namu, which is about 18 km long and 14 km wide. With its crystal-clear waters and vibrant marine life this is a large and beautiful lagoon perfect for swimming, diving kayaking, and snorkeling.
- **Airport landing strip:** The atoll consists of a narrow strip of land, ranging from 20 to 400 meters wide, encircling funafuti lagoon. With only one flight in and out each week, the unfenced runway transforms into a public park for the locals. People use it for playing sports like soccer and volleyball, riding motorbikes, and socialising, especially in the evenings when the temperatures are coolerl.
- **Fongafale:** The largest islet in Funafuti, Fongafale, is known for its historical significance and is home to the only airport in Tuvalu, established during World War II.
- **Marine Conservation Park:** Located in Funafuti, this park consists of six small islets and is a spectacular marine conservation area where visitors can snorkel and see colourful marine life.
- **Vaiaku Stadium:** Also known as Tuvalu Sports Ground, this stadium in Funafuti is used for various events, including football and rugby matches.

4. Famous people

- **Sir Toaripi Lauti:** A prominent Tuvaluan politician and statesman. He played a significant role in Tuvalu's political history. He served as the first Chief Minister of the Colony of Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands) from 1975 to 1978. Following Tuvalu's independence in 1978, he became the first Prime Minister of Tuvalu, serving from 1978 to 1981. Later, he served as the Governor-General of Tuvalu from 1990 to 19932. Sir Toaripi Lauti was instrumental in leading Tuvalu through its early years of independence and establishing its political framework.
- **Opetiaia Foa'i:** A renowned musician and composer, best known for his work on the soundtrack of the Disney movie "Moana".

5. Common phrases

Hello *Talofa*

Goodbye *Tofa*

Thank you *Fakafetai*

How are you? *E a koe?*

Please? *Fakamolemole?*

6. Cultural artefacts

- **Matau:** Traditional fishing hooks made from shells, bones, or wood. Fishing is an important aspect of Tuvaluan culture, and these artefacts reflect the skills and craftsmanship of the people.
- **Tanoa:** Also known as a kava bowl, it is used in the traditional preparation and serving of kava, a ceremonial drink made from the root of the kava plant.
- **Mats and Fans:** Woven mats (mats from pandanus leaves) and fans are significant cultural items used in daily life and during ceremonies. They are often beautifully decorated and demonstrate the weaving skills of Tuvaluan women.
- **Tapa Cloth (Siapo):** Made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree, tapa cloth is decorated with traditional patterns and designs. It is used in various ceremonies and as a form of traditional clothing.
- **Wooden Carvings:** Carvings made from wood depict various aspects of Tuvaluan life, such as animals, boats, and people. These carvings are often used in rituals and ceremonies.

7. Cultural practices

- **Weaving:** Weaving is a significant cultural practice in Tuvalu. Women often weave mats, fans, baskets, and other items from pandanus leaves. These woven items are used in daily life and during special ceremonies. Weaving is passed down through generations and reflects the intricate craftsmanship of Tuvaluan women.
- **Traditional Dances:** Tuvaluans have a rich tradition of dance, known as “fatele.” These dances are performed during celebrations, weddings, and community gatherings. Fatele dances are accompanied by rhythmic clapping, singing, and drumming, and they often tell stories or celebrate important events.
- **Tattooing:** Traditional tattooing, known as “te pe’a,” is an important cultural practice in Tuvalu. Tattoos often hold significant meanings and represent one’s identity, heritage, and social status. The designs are intricate and can cover large areas of the body.
- **Storytelling:** Oral storytelling is a vital aspect of Tuvaluan culture. Elders pass down myths, legends, and historical events through stories, ensuring that the community’s knowledge and traditions are preserved.
- **Fishing and Canoe Building:** Fishing is a fundamental part of life in Tuvalu, and traditional fishing methods are still practiced. Canoe building is another important skill, with men crafting canoes from local materials for fishing and transportation.
- **Kava Ceremony:** Similar to other Pacific cultures, the kava ceremony is a significant cultural practice in Tuvalu. Kava, a drink made from the root of the kava plant, is prepared and shared among participants during important gatherings and ceremonies.

8. Easy songs to learn

Pasifika Beatz Tuvalu Songs is a vibrant and educational playlist created by Loopy Tunes Preschool Music in collaboration with Whānau Āwhina Plunket, celebrating the beauty of the Pacific language through music. As part of the wider Pasifika Beatz project marking its 10th anniversary, this collection features 10 Tuvalu songs designed especially for young children. Each song pairs well-known melodies with Tuvalu lyrics to support language learning, strengthen cultural identity, and encourage joyful singing and movement. The project was proudly supported by the Ministry of Pacific Peoples.

Here are the 10 songs included in the playlist:

1. Tuvaluan Welcome Song
2. Ulu, Tuauma/Head, Shoulders (Tuvaluan)
3. Old MacDonald Had A Farm (Tuvaluan Animals)
4. Pukupuku (Tuvaluan Shapes)
5. Kena Is White (Tuvaluan)
6. Lima Little Ducks (Tuvaluan)
7. Tuvaluan Alphabet
8. Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star (Tuvaluan)
9. Aute (Tuvaluan)
10. Mataliki (Tuvaluan)

Access song resources:

Action videos for each song are available on [Whānau Āwhina Plunket's YouTube channel](#).

Lyrics and More Info: Visit the Loopy Tunes Preschool Music website. [Explore the songs here](#).

9. Cultural attire

- **Titi:** Women often wear a traditional skirt called a titi, made from pandanus leaves or other natural materials. These skirts are decorated with intricate patterns and are worn during traditional dances and ceremonies.
- **Teuga Saka:** This is a traditional top worn by women, often paired with the titi. It is also made from natural materials and is decorated with traditional designs.
- **Lavalava:** Both men and women wear a lavalava, which is a rectangular piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, similar to a sarong. It is commonly worn in everyday life and during special occasions.
- **Mother Hubbard Dress:** Introduced by Christian missionaries, this dress is a loose-fitting garment worn by women. It is often made from colourful fabrics and is worn during church services and other formal events.
- **Taupulega:** Men wear a woven band called a taupulega around their waist. It is often made from coconut fibres and is an important part of traditional ceremonies.

10. Cultural food

- **Pulaka:** Also known as swamp taro, pulaka is a staple crop in Tuvalu. It's used in many dishes and is an important part of the everyday diet.
- **Fekei:** This dish is made from grated pulaka mixed with coconut cream and steamed inside pulaka leaves. It's a traditional dish enjoyed across all nine islands of Tuvalu.
- **Coconut Crab:** These hermit crabs are a delicacy in Tuvalu. They are often cooked in coconut milk and served in various forms, such as coconut crab curry or grilled coconut crab.
- **Tulolo:** A popular dish made with pulaka and coconut cream. It's a favorite among locals.
- **Toddy:** Palm wine, known as toddy, is a popular alcoholic beverage in Tuvalu. It's made from the sap of palm trees and is enjoyed with meals.
- **Tuvalu Coconut Tuna:** This dish features freshly caught yellowfin tuna cooked with coconut milk, onions, ginger, chili peppers, and soy sauce.

11. Flag / Flag description

The flag of Tuvalu features a light blue field with the Union Jack in the upper hoist-side quadrant. On the fly side, there are nine yellow stars arranged to represent the nine islands of Tuvalu.

The light blue background symbolises the Pacific Ocean, while the Union Jack reflects Tuvalu's historical ties with the United Kingdom.

12. Sports

Traditional sports

- **Kilikiti:** A traditional sport similar to cricket, kilikiti is played with a wooden bat and a rubber ball. It is a lively and festive game often accompanied by music and dance.
- **Te Ano:** This unique version of volleyball is played with two hard balls made from pandanus leaves. The game is fast-paced and requires agility and teamwork.
- **Ula:** The art of spear throwing, ula, showcases the skills and strength of participants. It is an ancient game that was historically used to train warriors and hunters.
- **Fakana:** Another traditional sport that involves physical strength and skill.

13. Myths / legends specific to this island nation

- **Te Pusi mo te Ali (The Eel and the Flounder):** This creation myth is found on many of the islands of Tuvalu. According to the story, te Ali (the flounder) is believed to be the origin of the flat atolls of Tuvalu, while te Pusi (the eel) is the model for the coconut palms that are vital in the lives of Tuvaluans.
- **Telematua (or Telemaiatua):** On the islands of Funafuti and Vaitupu, the founding ancestor is described as Telematua, a giant from Samoa.
- **Tepuhi:** On the island of Nanumaga, the founding ancestor is described as Tepuhi, a spirit with the shape of a sea-serpent, who came originally from Fiji.

14. Proverb

- **“Fakaseasea te manava ko te i’a i te moana.”:** The beating of the heart is like a fish in the ocean. This proverb emphasises the constant movement and activity in life.
- **“Tala kua o ki te moana, fakaoti mai ki uta.”:** The story went to the ocean and returned to the land. This proverb suggests that stories and news spread widely and eventually return home.
- **“Ke nofo ko na lape o laukau.”:** Better to sit and be safe than to walk and be in danger. This proverb advises caution and prudence in one’s actions.
- **Mao se ‘a’an. maj heta”:** Lose the taro but you will get it back. This proverb signifies resilience and hope, suggesting that even if something valuable is lost, there is a possibility of recovering it or gaining something similar in the future.

15. Other Facts

- **Challenges:** Tuvalu faces significant challenges, including limited natural resources and vulnerability to climate change.
- **Religion:** Christianity is the predominant religion, with the majority of the population belonging to the Church of Tuvalu.
- **Relationship between Tuvalu and Samoa:** Samoa and Tuvalu have strong cultural and language connections because both countries are part of the Polynesian group within the Austronesian language family. Their languages, Samoan and Tuvaluan, are very similar, with many shared words and grammar rules.

16. References

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11. Additional Resources

Here are some helpful resources to support teaching about Environmental Safety and the island nation of Tuvalu. Please note that while many of these resources are free, some may require payment. We are not promoting these resources for commercial purposes, nor do we receive any benefits or endorsements from the providers listed. They are shared solely for educational support and reference.

Government Resources

Ministry for the Environment

Offers educational resources on biodiversity, climate change, and sustainability for students, teachers, and communities.

Website: <https://environment.govt.nz/> Email: info@mfe.govt.nz

Department of Conservation (DOC)

Provides curriculum-linked activities and resources for conservation education.

Website: <https://www.doc.govt.nz/> Email: info@doc.govt.nz

Environmental Issues, Awareness and Action: Audience Research 2023

A report on New Zealanders' environmental attitudes and awareness. Published by the Ministry for the Environment, this research explores how different audiences in Aotearoa perceive environmental issues and what actions they are taking in response.

Website: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/environmental-issues-awareness-and-action-audience-research-2023/>

Te Whāriki: Early Childhood Curriculum

New Zealand's foundational early childhood education framework, supporting sustainability learning. *Te Whāriki* is a holistic curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education, designed to reflect the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa and support children's learning through play, relationships, and exploration.

Website: <https://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/te-whariki/>

Pacific Maritime Safety Programme

A MFAT initiative promoting safe and sustainable maritime transport across Pacific nations. Led

by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) in partnership with Maritime NZ, this programme supports Pacific countries in improving maritime safety, compliance, and environmental protection through training, infrastructure, and policy development.

Website: <https://www.maritimenz.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/international-engagement/pacific-maritime-safety-programme/>

Local Resources

Enviroschools

An action-based education programme where young people plan and implement sustainability projects.

Website: <https://enviroschools.org.nz/> Email: info@enviroschools.org.nz

Auckland Council Sustainability Education Programmes

Different councils across Aotearoa New Zealand may offer their own sustainability education programmes tailored to their local environments and communities. For example, Auckland Council provides regional programmes through groups like Ark in the Park, EcoMatters, and Sea Cleaners.

Website: <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/environment/educationsustainability/Pages/sustainability-education-programmes.aspx>

Tiaki Tāmaki Makaurau | Conservation Auckland

This online directory connects educators, community members, and conservation advocates with hundreds of local conservation groups across the Auckland region. It's a valuable tool for finding collaboration opportunities, accessing support, and engaging with environmental initiatives.

Website: <https://www.tiakitamakimakaurau.nz>

Online Resources

WWF-New Zealand

Provides e-books, podcasts, videos, and toolkits on biodiversity, climate change, and marine conservation. WWF-New Zealand is part of the global World Wide Fund for Nature network, working to protect the natural environment and promote sustainable practices across Aotearoa.

Website: <https://wwf.org.nz/>

Science Learning Hub

Connects NZ scientists with schools and communities through resources and webinars. It is an initiative by the University of Waikato that aims to make New Zealand science more accessible and engaging for educators, students, and the wider public.

Website: <https://www.sciencelearn.org.nz/>

Kiwi Conservation Club (KCC)

Offers stories and resources to connect children with Aotearoa New Zealand's wildlife and wild places. KCC is the junior branch of Forest & Bird, designed to inspire and empower young people to care for nature through fun, educational activities and community involvement.

Website: <https://kcc.org.nz/>

Sustainable Seas National Science Challenge

Aotearoa New Zealand's largest collaborative marine research programme, focused on sustainable use of marine resources and ecosystem health. It brought together biophysical and social scientists, economists, policy experts, and mātauranga Māori practitioners to support ocean sustainability within environmental limits.

Website: www.sustainableseaschallenge.co.nz

International Resources

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional

Environment Programme (SPREP). SPREP is an intergovernmental organisation that supports Pacific Island countries and territories in protecting and sustainably managing their environment. Its work spans climate resilience, biodiversity, waste management, and environmental governance, offering technical support, policy guidance, and regional coordination.

Website: <https://www.sprep.org/our-work>

NASA Analysis on Sea Level Rise

Research showing Tuvalu will face at least 15 cm of sea level rise in the next 30 years, with maps and flooding scenarios. This analysis is part of NASA's Earth science efforts to monitor and model climate impacts globally, including vulnerable island nations like Tuvalu.

Website: <https://sealevel.nasa.gov/news/265/nasa-un-partnership-gauges-sea-level-threat-to-tuvalu>

UNDP – Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project

Uses LIDAR data to inform coastal adaptation, including creating 7.3 hectares of raised land. This project is led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to help Tuvalu build resilience against climate change through infrastructure and data-driven planning.

Website: <https://www.undp.org/pacific/projects/tuvalu-coastal-adaptation-project>

NASA–UN Partnership on Sea Level Threats

Provides scientific assessments and projections to support climate adaptation policy in Tuvalu. This collaboration between NASA and the United Nations aims to combine satellite data and global expertise to inform decision-making in climate-vulnerable regions. Website: <https://sealevel.nasa.gov/news/265/nasa-un-partnership-gauges-sea-level-threat-to-tuvalu/>

Academic Resources

The Role of Indigenous Knowledge in/for Environmental Education

A Master's thesis exploring how storytelling and indigenous knowledge enrich environmental education in South African schools.

Website: <http://hdl.handle.net/10962/d1003633>

Reference: Masuku, L. S. (1999). The role of indigenous knowledge in/for environmental education: The case of a Nguni story in the Schools Water Action Project (Master's thesis, Rhodes University, Faculty of Education).

VOYAGE 8.1

Planned Learning Experience: Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

a) Island Explorers – Tuvalu Geography Discovery Table

Principle:	Family and Community Whānau Tangata
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn and share interesting facts about Tuvalu, including its people, culture, history, geography, and values, to understand what makes it special.

Background:

This experience invites tamariki to explore Tuvalu's geography and cultural identity through hands-on play and storytelling. Using the Tuvaluan creation story Te Pusi mo Te Ali (The Eel and the Flounder), tamariki learn how the islands were shaped and how natural features like coconut trees and flat land connect to daily life. Through map-making, natural materials, and creative expression, tamariki discover that Tuvalu is made up of nine islands, where people live close to the ocean and rely on boats, fishing, and communal living.

This experience supports understanding of tausi te lalolagi—caring for the land and environment—as tamariki reflect on sustainability, connection, and cultural resilience. Note: External links and websites are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials:

- Story visuals (eel, flounder, coconut tree, island map)
- Natural materials (shells, sand, leaves)
- Drawing tools and paper
- Globe or Pacific map

Activity Steps:

- 1. Story Circle** - Share the simplified story using visuals and gestures. For example: see [Tuvalu \(Part 2\) – theworldbooktour](#). Discuss the characters and their choices: “Why did Te Ali want flat land?” “What did Te Pusi become?”
- 2. Show Tuvalu on a map and talk about its flat islands** – See: [Tuvalu Explained in 9 Minutes \(History And Culture\)](#) or [Tuvalu Facts for Kids](#). Invite tamariki to create their own island using natural materials.
- 3. Creative Expression** - Draw or sculpt Te Pusi and Te Ali. For example, see: [Image for Te Pusi mo te Ali](#). Create a group mural showing the land, ocean, and coconut trees.
- 4. Reflect and Connect** – Reflect: “How do stories help us understand the land?” Link to values of tausi te lalolagi (caring for the land) and lotou (care).

VOYAGE 8.1

Planned Learning

Experience: Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

b) Tala o Tuvalu – Storytelling and Song Circle

Principle:	Family and Community Whānau Tangata
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn and share interesting facts about Tuvalu, including its people, culture, history, geography, and values, to understand what makes it special.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki explore traditional Tuvaluan stories (tala) and songs through group storytelling and creative expression. They learn about Tuvaluan legends, cultural values such as fakafetai (gratitude), fakafetaimoe (respect), and lotu (spirituality), and the importance of unity and care within the community. Tuvaluan culture is deeply rooted in oral tradition, and by listening, responding, and retelling these tales, tamariki connect with ancestral knowledge, strengthen their language skills, and honour storytelling as a way of preserving history and identity. Note: External links and websites are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials:

- Mats or cushions for sitting
- Props (e.g., coconut shells, woven mats, fish puppets)
- Audio recordings of Tuvaluan songs or chants
- Drawing materials for story reflections

Activity Steps:

- 1. Storytelling** - Read a storybook about Tuvaluan culture to the tamariki, such as: [Tuvalu children's books – Reading Warrior](#). Discuss the characters, setting, and cultural elements in the story.
- 2. Music and Dance** - Play traditional Tuvaluan music and teach tamariki a simple dance. For example, [Aute | Tuvalu Kids Song | Action Song | Pasifika Beatz](#). Explain the significance of dance in Tuvaluan culture and how it is used to tell stories and celebrate events.
- 3. Participation** - Encourage tamariki to participate in the dance, using costumes or props if available. Allow them to express themselves and enjoy the cultural experience.
- 4. Reflection** - Discuss how dance and music are important parts of Tuvaluan culture and ask tamariki to share their thoughts on the activity.

VOYAGE 8.1

Planned Learning

Experience: Learning and Sharing Interesting Facts About Tuvalu

c) Fakaseasea Festival – Dress-Up and Cultural Showcase

Principle:	Family and Community Whānau Tangata
Strand:	Belonging Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they know they have a place.
Objective:	Tamariki will learn and share interesting facts about Tuvalu, including its people, culture, history, geography, and values, to understand what makes it special.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki participate in a mini Fakaseasea—a joyful Tuvaluan celebration of dance, dress, and cultural pride. They dress in traditional attire, learn simple dance steps, and share facts they’ve learned about Tuvalu with their peers. Through movement, music, and storytelling, tamariki celebrate what makes Tuvalu special—its people, traditions, and values—while building confidence, cultural understanding, and pride in sharing their learning.

Materials:

- Tuvaluan-style costumes (lava-lava, floral shirts, head garlands)
- Music for Fakaseasea dance
- Microphone or talking stick for sharing facts
- Display table with Tuvaluan artifacts or crafts

Activity Steps:

- 1. Prepare and Dress** - Invite tamariki to dress in Tuvaluan-style outfits: lava-lava, floral shirts, and head garlands. Talk about the meaning of Fakaseasea—a celebration of pride, unity, and culture. Set up a display table with Tuvaluan artifacts or crafts to spark curiosity and conversation.
- 2. Learn Simple Dance Steps** - Play traditional Fakaseasea music and teach tamariki basic dance movements. Practise together in a circle or line formation, encouraging rhythm, joy, and group connection. Emphasise that dance is a way of expressing pride and togetherness.
- 3. Share Learning** - Use a microphone or talking stick to invite tamariki to share facts they’ve learned about Tuvalu (e.g., island life, values, traditions). Support tamariki to speak with confidence and celebrate their knowledge.
- 4. Celebrate Together** - Host a mini performance for peers or centre staff, combining dance, dress, and storytelling. Encourage applause, smiles, and affirmations to build pride and cultural appreciation.
- 5. Reflect and Display** - Reflect as a group: “What makes Tuvalu special?” “How did we feel sharing our learning?” Display photos or drawings from the celebration to honour the experience and keep the learning visible.

VOYAGE 8.2

Planned Learning Experience: Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

a) Tuvalu and the Rising Tide – Sensory Storytelling and Water Play

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they can explore real-world environmental challenges, ask questions, and develop their own ideas about how to care for the planet and stay safe around water.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore the impact of rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu and learn how to care for the environment and stay safe around water in their everyday lives.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki listen to a simple story about Tuvalu and how rising ocean levels affect its islands and communities. They then explore water play to understand flooding and brainstorm ways to protect the land and people. As one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change, Tuvalu offers a powerful context for tamariki to develop empathy, environmental awareness, and a sense of global responsibility. Through storytelling and hands-on exploration, tamariki learn that caring for the earth is part of protecting families, cultures, and shared futures. Note: External links and websites are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials:

- Water trays or tubs
- Toy houses, trees, and people figures
- Sponges, rocks, and cloths to simulate flooding and protection
- Storybook or teacher-created tale about Tuvalu and the sea

Activity Steps:

- 1. Storytime Introduction** - Gather tamariki and read a simple story about Tuvalu and the rising ocean. For example, see: [Discover Tuvalu: The Tiny Island Nation in the Pacific Ocean](#). Use visuals or props to support understanding (e.g., map of Tuvalu, photos of island life). Discuss: “What happens when the sea gets too high?” “How might families feel?”
- 2. Water Play Exploration** - Set up water trays or tubs with toy houses, trees, and people figures to represent Tuvaluan communities. Invite tamariki to gently pour water and observe what happens when the sea rises. Use sponges, rocks, and cloths to simulate flooding and explore ways to protect the land.
- 3. Problem-Solving and Protection** - Encourage tamariki to brainstorm and test ideas: “How can we keep the houses dry?” “What helps protect the land?” Support collaborative thinking and experimentation with materials.
- 4. Reflect and Share** - Reflect together: “What did we learn about Tuvalu?” “How can we care for the earth?” Invite tamariki to share their ideas for protecting people and places from climate change.
- 5. Extend the Learning** - Create a group mural or drawing showing Tuvalu and ways to care for the land and ocean. Display the story and photos to keep the conversation visible and ongoing.

VOYAGE 8.2

Planned Learning Experience: Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

b) Guardians of the Moana – Eco-Warrior Clean-Up and Nature Walk

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they can explore real-world environmental challenges, ask questions, and develop their own ideas about how to care for the planet and stay safe around water.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore the impact of rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu and learn how to care for the environment and stay safe around water in their everyday lives.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki become “Guardians of the Moana” by going on a nature walk to collect rubbish and learn how pollution affects the ocean and Tuvalu’s marine life. They explore how Tuvaluan communities rely on the sea for food, transport, and cultural identity, and discuss ways to care for the environment and keep water safe. This activity supports tamariki to develop environmental awareness and stewardship, while embracing Tuvaluan values of fakamaoni (responsibility) and tausi te lalolagi (caring for the land and sea). Through hands-on action and reflection, tamariki build a sense of pride and purpose in protecting the natural world.

Materials:

- Gloves and small buckets for collecting rubbish
- Photos of Tuvaluan marine life (e.g., turtles, fish, coral)
- Sorting station for recyclables
- Eco badges or certificates for participation

Activity Steps:

1. **Introduce the Mission** - Gather tamariki and introduce the idea of becoming “Guardians of the Moana.” Show photos of Tuvaluan marine life (e.g., turtles, fish, coral) and discuss how the ocean supports life, culture, and identity in Tuvalu. Introduce the values of fakamaoni (responsibility) and tausi te lalolagi (caring for the land and sea).
2. **Nature Walk and Rubbish Collection** - Equip tamariki with gloves and small buckets. Go on a nature walk around the centre or local area to collect rubbish. Encourage observation and discussion: “What do you see?” “How might this affect the ocean?”
3. **Sorting and Reflecting** - Return to a sorting station and help tamariki separate recyclables from general waste. Talk about where rubbish goes and how it can end up in the sea. Reflect: “How did it feel to help the land?” “What can we do every day to protect the moana?”
4. **Creative Expression and Sharing** - Invite tamariki to draw or create posters about marine life and how to care for the ocean. Display their work to reinforce learning and pride in their role as guardians.
5. **Celebrate and Acknowledge** - Present eco badges or certificates to tamariki for their mahi. Celebrate with a group karakia or song that honours the ocean and their efforts.

VOYAGE 8.2

Planned Learning Experience: Learning How to Care for the Environment and Stay Safe Around Water

c) Safe by the Sea – Water Safety Role-Play and Song

Principle:	Holistic Development Kotahitanga
Strand:	Exploration Mana Aotūroa
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where they can explore real-world environmental challenges, ask questions, and develop their own ideas about how to care for the planet and stay safe around water.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore the impact of rising ocean levels on places like Tuvalu and learn how to care for the environment and stay safe around water in their everyday lives.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki practise water safety through role-play and song, learning how to stay safe near water, wear life jackets, and recognise safe swimming areas. Inspired by Tuvalu's deep connection to the ocean, tamariki sing a catchy tune that celebrates marine life while reinforcing key safety messages.

Living close to the sea is part of everyday life in Tuvalu, and this activity helps tamariki build practical skills while embracing the values of lotou (care) and fakafetaimoe (respect for nature and others). Through joyful movement and meaningful learning, tamariki grow their confidence and awareness around water safety. Note: All external websites and resources are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials:

- Life jackets, sun hats, and water safety signs
- Blue mats or fabric to represent the ocean
- Song lyrics with simple actions (e.g., “Stay close, stay safe, swim with a buddy!”)

Activity Steps:

1. **Introduce Water Safety** - Gather tamariki and show visuals of children playing safely by the sea. Discuss everyday life near the ocean in Tuvalu and why water safety is important. For example, see: [🔗 Water Safety for Kids | Staying Safe Around Water | Water Safety Awareness Week | Twinkl - YouTube](#). Introduce key safety concepts: staying close to adults, wearing life jackets, and recognising safe swimming areas.

2. **Role-Play with Props** - Set up blue mats or fabric to represent the ocean. Invite tamariki to dress in life jackets and sun hats. Use water safety signs to mark safe zones and guide role-play (e.g., “Where is it safe to swim?” “What do we wear near water?”). See: [Water Safety Code](#) or [Water safety » Whānau Āwhina Plunket](#)

3. Learn and Sing the Safety Song - Teach tamariki a simple, catchy water safety song with actions (e.g., “Stay close, stay safe, swim with a buddy!”). See: [Swim Safety Song for Kids | Learn How to Stay Safe in Water + More Nursery Rhymes and Kids Songs](#). Practise singing and moving together, reinforcing safety messages through rhythm and repetition.

4. Reflect and Share - Reflect as a group: “What helps us stay safe near water?” “How do we show care and respect?”. Encourage tamariki to share what they learned and how they might use these skills at the beach or pool.

5. Celebrate and Display - Celebrate tamariki’s learning with a group photo or drawing of “Water Safety Heroes.” Display the song lyrics and safety visuals to keep the learning visible and ongoing.

VOYAGE 8.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Exploring
How to Care for Nature
and Themselves during
different seasons

a) Seasons of Tuvalu – Nature Table and Seasonal Discovery

Principle:	Empowerment Mana Atua
Strand:	Wellbeing Belonging Mana Atua & Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where their health is promoted and they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore how to care for nature and learn how to look after themselves during different seasons.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki explore a nature table that changes with the seasons, learning about Tuvalu's tropical climate and how people adapt to wet and dry conditions. Through sensory play and seasonal observation, tamariki discover how Tuvaluan families care for their land and themselves—planting crops, preparing for storms, and practising everyday self-care. This activity builds seasonal awareness while reinforcing environmental responsibility and wellbeing, helping tamariki connect with the rhythms of nature and the values of care and adaptability.

Materials:

- Nature table with seasonal items (e.g., shells, leaves, rain gear, sun hats)
- Photos of Tuvalu in different weather conditions
- Clothing props for dress-up (e.g., sunglasses, gumboots, umbrellas)
- Weather chart and seasonal calendar

Activity Steps:

1. Introduce the Nature Table - Invite tamariki to explore the nature table, noticing items that reflect different weather patterns (e.g., shells for dry season, rain gear for wet season). Use photos

of Tuvalu to prompt discussion: “What do you see?” “What might the weather feel like?”

2. Learn About Tuvalu's Seasons - Introduce the concept of Tuvalu's tropical climate with two main seasons: wet and dry. Use the weather chart and seasonal calendar to show when each season occurs and how people prepare (e.g., planting crops, collecting rainwater, sheltering from storms).

3. Dress Up and Role-Play - Offer clothing props like gumboots, sun hats, and umbrellas. Encourage tamariki to dress for different weather and role-play daily life in Tuvalu: “What would you wear in the wet season?” “How do we care for ourselves when it's hot?”

4. Creative Expression - Invite tamariki to draw or collage scenes of Tuvalu in different seasons—what they see, wear, and do. Add their artwork to the nature table or seasonal wall display.

5. Reflect and Extend - Reflect together: “How do Tuvaluan families care for their land and themselves?” “What can we do to look after our environment in each season?”. Encourage tamariki to notice seasonal changes in their own environment and share ideas for self-care and sustainability.

VOYAGE 8.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Exploring
How to Care for Nature
and Themselves during
different seasons

b) Planting with Purpose – Garden Care and Seasonal Planting

Principle:	Empowerment Mana Atua
Strand:	Wellbeing Belonging Mana Atua & Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where their health is promoted and they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore how to care for nature and learn how to look after themselves during different seasons.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki plant seasonal vegetables or flowers and learn how to care for them, exploring how Tuvaluan communities grow food and protect the land. They discover how different seasons affect what can be planted and how nature provides for us when we nurture it in return. Gardening reflects Tuvaluan values of *tausi te lalolagi* (caring for the land) and *fakamaoni* (responsibility), helping tamariki build environmental awareness, patience, and respect for seasonal rhythms through hands-on care and observation.

Materials:

- Soil, pots, seeds (e.g., taro, tomatoes, flowers)
- Watering cans and gardening gloves
- Labels with Tuvaluan and English plant names
- Chart showing seasonal growth cycles

Activity Steps:

1. Introduce the Garden - Gather tamariki around the gardening area and introduce the idea of growing food and flowers like Tuvaluan

families do. Show the seasonal growth chart and talk about which plants grow best in wet or dry seasons.

2. Prepare and Plant - Invite tamariki to fill pots with soil and choose seeds (e.g., taro, tomatoes, flowers). Support them to plant carefully, using gardening gloves and watering cans. Introduce the values of *tausi te lalolagi* (caring for the land) and *fakamaoni* (responsibility) as they work.

3. Label and Observe - Help tamariki label their plants using Tuvaluan and English names. Encourage observation: “What do you notice today?” “Is the soil dry or damp?” Begin a simple plant care routine—watering, checking leaves, and noticing changes.

4. Reflect and Create - Invite tamariki to draw their plant and describe how they care for it. Add their artwork to a seasonal garden wall or journal.

5. Extend and Celebrate - Reflect together: “How does nature provide for us?” “What can we do to give back?”. Celebrate growth milestones with a garden walk or harvest moment, reinforcing pride and connection.

VOYAGE 8.3

Planned Learning

Experience: Exploring
How to Care for Nature
and Themselves during
different seasons

c) Sun, Rain, and Me – Seasonal Self-Care Role-Play

Principle:	Empowerment Mana Atua
Strand:	Wellbeing Belonging Mana Atua & Mana Whenua
Goal:	Tamariki experience an environment where their health is promoted and they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Objective:	Tamariki will explore how to care for nature and learn how to look after themselves during different seasons.

Background:

In this experience, tamariki practise self-care routines for different seasons through role-play, learning how to stay safe in the sun, dry in the rain, and warm in cooler weather. Tuvaluan life is shaped by the elements—from sunny days spent fishing to rainy seasons that require preparation—and this activity helps tamariki connect with those rhythms. Through playful scenarios and dressing for the weather, tamariki build awareness of how to care for themselves and others, while embracing Tuvaluan values of lotou (care) and fakafetaimoe (respect). Note: External links and websites are used solely for educational purposes; copyright remains with the original creators and rights holders.

Materials:

- Dress-up items (sun hats, raincoats, scarves)
- Sunscreen bottles (empty or pretend)
- Visuals of Tuvaluan children in seasonal settings
- Songs or chants about staying safe and healthy

Activity Steps:

1. Introduce the Elements - Show visuals of Tuvaluan children in different seasonal settings—sunny fishing days, rainy walks, cooler evenings. Discuss how the weather affects daily life: “What do people wear?” “How do they stay safe and comfortable?”

2. Explore Self-Care Props - Invite tamariki to explore dress-up items like sun hats, raincoats, and scarves. For example, see: [Sun Awareness and Safety Tips for Kids 🧐 | Sun Safety for Kids | Sun Protection Tips | Twinkl](#). Introduce sunscreen bottles and talk about why we use them. Encourage tamariki to match clothing and care routines to different weather types.

3. Role-Play Scenarios - Set up simple scenarios: “It’s a hot sunny day—what do we do?” “It’s raining—how do we stay dry?”. Support tamariki to dress appropriately and act out self-care routines with peers. Reinforce the values of lotou (care) and fakafetaimoe (respect) through gentle reminders and affirmations.

4. Sing and Move - Teach a seasonal chant or song about staying safe and healthy (e.g., “Hat on, sunscreen, ready to play!”). For example, [Summer Dance Songs for Children 🎵 Sunscreen Song with Lyrics | Kids Songs by The Learning Station - YouTube](#). Use movement and rhythm to reinforce self-care messages in a joyful way.

5. Reflect and Extend - Reflect together: “How do we care for ourselves in each season?” “What helps us show respect for our bodies and the environment?”. Encourage tamariki to notice seasonal changes.