

Living with Ed: Meet the Begley's

TV and movie actor Ed Begley, perhaps the “greenest” man in Hollywood, rides his electric car to the Academy Awards and powers his home with the sun and his stationary bike. But Living with Ed and his environmentalist passion isn't always a walk in the park for wife, Rachelle. This first-of-its-kind reality green show chronicles life with an earth-friendly fanatic with humor and heart.

About this Episode

In this episode, students will meet Ed and Rachelle Begley. Ed is an actor and passionate environmentalist. Rachelle is an actress and not quite as enthusiastic about the environmentally-conscious lifestyle they lead. Students will be introduced to the Begley's home, which is completely energy efficient, including solar panels, a solar-powered oven, appliances powered by Ed's bicycle, a woodworking studio, and organic food grown in their yard.

Vocabulary

- Biodegradable
- Compost
- Energy efficient
- Environmentalist
- Organic
- Recycle
- Solar-powered

Discussion Questions

1. Have students share what they know about current environmental issues including global warming, pollution and overcrowding. What are their personal responsibilities to these issues? Which issues would they want to learn more about? Do students consider themselves to be environmentally conscious and/or responsible? Have them explain their answers.
2. One of the main themes of “Living with Ed” is how Ed and Rachelle must compromise about their different views and priorities. Have students identify examples of how the Begley's must compromise in this episode. How would the show be different if one of the Begley's refused to compromise? How do students and their family members currently compromise? Is it easy or difficult?
3. “Living with Ed” stars a well-known television actor. What other well-known personalities and newsmakers do students identify with environmental issues? (Examples include Leonardo DiCaprio, Cameron Diaz, Matt Damon, Vice President Gore and Brad Pitt). What are students' thoughts about well-known people getting involved in such causes? Does it make people pay more attention? Why or why not? Do students feel that celebrities have a responsibility to align themselves with causes and charities?

Suggested Activities

Change, Change, Change! (Science, Language Arts)

Have students list the steps Ed and Rachelle take in this episode, as well as the home features they've designed, to help the environment. Have them put a check mark next to the ones they would be willing to try. Compare answers. Which initiatives would mean minor changes to their lives? Which would be major? What challenges might they face in trying some of these initiatives? Discuss ways to overcome some of these challenges. Then have students bring their lists home and repeat the activity with family members. Challenge students and their families to initiate at least one behavioral or structural change that benefits the environment.

A Day in the Life (Science, Language Arts)

It has been said that each small personal change can make a big difference for our environment. That is the theme of the book, 50 Simple Things You Can Do To Save the Earth that Ed references in the episode. Students can read a summary of the 50 simple things at http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1167112. Challenge students to record their personal activities for one day, listing both what they do that helps the environment (ride a bike, recycle, carpool, turn off lights, buy recycled products, compost waste) and what they do that adversely affects the environment (waste energy, throw away recyclables, take long showers, ride in the car instead of a bike). Have students share lists with other students and estimate their own impact, while finding ways to reduce damage to our environment. Then have them develop a class list of "50 Simple Things Our Class Can Do To Save the Earth."

Our Town, Our World (Social Studies, Science, Language Arts, Performing Arts)

Ask students to identify environmental issues that specifically impact your town or community. They can use local newspapers and Web sites, the library, local environmental groups or town leaders to help them with this task. Then have student groups select one issue to learn more about. Their research should include a description and history of the issue, what's currently being done to help, possible solutions that have not yet been implemented and the consequences if the issue is not addressed. Finally, have students imagine your city or town 25 years from now, both if the issue improves and if it gets worse. Have them draw pictures, write a news article or write a two minute newscast that illustrates their research and 25 year predictions.

Dear Ed (Language Arts, Science)

Have students identify an environmental issue they'd like to learn more about directly from the show's star himself! Have them formulate a question about their topic and then go to <http://www.livingwithed.net/asked.asp> where they can e-mail Ed a question and learn more about the issues that interest them.

Extensions

Have student groups develop a list of questions to ask your principal regarding environmentally-conscious school initiatives. Challenge each group to create a proposal for one or more initiatives the school could implement that would help the environment. Their proposal should include the initiative's impact, challenges or cost of implementing, and the potential consequences of not implementing it. Have groups present these ideas to your principal and, if s/he approves, create an action plan for moving forward.