Scanning the Bookshelf: Fun stories to inspire kids to â€˜go greenâ€™

by Lee Littlewood

Tots may wonder what "being green" means. These new environmentally-friendly books and DVDs introduce the youngest children to basic "green" topics including recycling, conserving and protecting Mother Earth.

"We are Extremely Very Good Recyclers" by Lauren Child; Dial/Penguin; 32 pages; $16.99.

"We are Extremely Very Good Recyclers" by Lauren Child; Dial/Penguin; 32 pages; $16.99.

"Easy to Be Green" by Ellie O'Ryan; illustrated by Ivanke & Lola; Little Green Books/Simon & Schuster; 32 pages; $4.99. "True Green Kids: 100 Things You Can Do to Save the Planet" by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin; National Geographic; 144 pages; $15.95.

"Peter Rabbit Naturally Better" series; from Beatrix Potter and Frederick Warne/Penguin; $6.99 to $14.99.

Children's popular Charlie and Lola, now starring in their own TV series, return to book form in this enjoyable ode to recycling. Big brother Charlie tells Lola that recycling is "a way that people can reuse old things in a different and new-ish way," sending Lola off to recycle nearly everything she owns. Most importantly, though, Lola wants to win a new tree to plant; she must do so by winning a recycling contest.

Smart and funny pages show Charlie introducing Lola to a paper recycling plant and encouraging his school to start a student-wide recycling program.

Funny sketches and collage backgrounds beg for repeated readings and viewings. Also included is a "completely useful and good recycling poster."

"Easy to Be Green" by Ellie O'Ryan; illustrated by Ivanke & Lola; Little Green Books/Simon & Schuster; 32 pages; $4.99.

Simon Scribbles' new line of earth-friendly books aims to get little ones excited about going green. This affordable activity book, made from recycled material and printed with vegetable-based inks, contains coloring pages, Earth-saving tips, fascinating faces and easy activities and crafts â€” fun and informative for ages 4 to 10.

Others in the series include "Little Panda," "Little Monkey," "The Polar Bears' Home," "I Can Save the Earth" and new books starring popular licensed characters.

"Save the Tree!" featuring "The Wonder Pets!" is one of the collaborative "green" efforts between Nickelodeon's "The Big Green Help" and Simon & Schuster's "Little Green" series. In this book, also printed on recycled paper, the series' animals fly through the sky on a mission to rescue a sad little tree in a dirty city lot.

Besides the cute tale, the book encourages preschoolers to help nature, just like the Wonder Pets.

"True Green Kids: 100 Things You Can Do to Save the Planet" by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin; National Geographic; 144 pages; $15.95.

A smart guide for kids of all ages, "True Green Kids" is packed with 100 fun, easy and practical activities to do to green-up homes, schools and communities. Also printed on recycled paper, the book encourages lots of quick ideas that don't cost anything. Kids can persuade family members to turn off the TV and take four-minute showers; they may also swap clothes with pals and try to eat more fresh food, since edible packaging saves on waste.

A great way to subtly promote environmental friendliness, "True Green Kids" is also entertaining, with clear and energetic photographs, easy-to-follow Web references and amusing activities certain to empower kids.

"Peter Rabbit Naturally Better" series; from Beatrix Potter and Frederick Warne/Penguin; $6.99 to $14.99.

Introduce Baby to a "green" life with this new eco-friendly series of Potter's Peter Rabbit books. The "Peter Rabbit Snuggle" book is a cotton cloth book that's beautifully designed, super soft and packaged with recycled materials. "Peter Rabbit Baby Book" is a lovely first-year scrapbook â€” made with paper from responsibly managed sources that are chlorine-free and acid-free and dyed with vegetable inks.

Several more books are available, including "I Love You," a board book with two heart-shaped picture frames. Babies can gaze at the ones they love while enjoying the artwork based on Beatrix Potter.

KIDBITS

A bevy of Earth-friendly adventures on DVD include: Disney's "Handy Manny: Manny's Green Team" and "Disney Presents ABC's Schoolhouse Rock! Earth."

Sesame Street's "Being Green," starring Paul Rudd as Mr. Earth, is jam-packed with songs, ideas, suggestions and entertaining fun. Elmo is even dyed green in this informative DVD.

Copyright 2009 Creators Syndicate, Inc.

Scanning the Bookshelf: Fun stories to inspire kids to â€˜go greenâ€™ by Lee Littlewood