

## Grade 2: It's All About the Sun!

**Objective:** Students will learn that sunlight gives life to all living things on earth. The energy cycle that starts with sunlight is what makes life on earth possible. Students will review the process of photosynthesis: How plants transform the energy from sunlight into chemical energy by taking carbon dioxide from the air and breaking apart the molecules in water to produce oxygen and sugar to make the plants grow. Photosynthesis maintains atmospheric oxygen levels and supplies all of the organic compounds and most of the energy necessary for life on Earth.

Students will learn the proper way to transplant a sunflower seedling and how to plant large sunflower seeds and broadcast sow smaller sunflower seeds.

**Materials:** Book: Living Sunlight  
Sunflower seedlings and seeds to plant in the garden

### Procedure:

**15 minute Intro:** We have discussed how ancient cultures used religion, storytelling and folklore to explain the environment in which they lived and the natural phenomena they witnessed. The sun and its energy that gives life to all living things on earth has been revered (honored) all throughout history by many different cultures. In Greek mythology, Helios, is the sun god. He is often identified with Apollo, but many believe they were two separate gods. The legend of Helios is that he was drowned in the ocean by the Titans then he was then raised to the sky where he became the luminous sun. Every morning Helios emerged from the east, dressed in a sparkling gauze and wearing a golden helmet, riding in a golden chariot drawn by winged dazzling white stallions that breathed flames from their nostrils. As god of light, Helios saw everything and knew everything.

Read book: Living Sunlight and discuss the process of photosynthesis. Talk about the activity planting sunflower seeds. The name "sunflower" *Helianthus annuus* originates from the Greek *helios* meaning "sun" and *anthos* meaning "flower," since these flowers always turn towards the sun. Annuus means annual. Sunflowers actually come from Central and South America, not Greece, and were grown more for their usefulness than their beauty. In South America, the natives of the ancient Inca Empire worshipped a giant sunflower as a sacred image of their sun-god. In Spanish, the word for sunflower is girasol. Sol, means sun. Girar means to turn.

Break into two groups: **10 minutes**

Group One: Transplant sunflowers and broadcast sunflower seeds.

Group Two: Find edibles in garden to munch on: spinach, lettuce. Visit the onions planted last month.

Switch groups: **10 minutes**