Lather Up!

This activity center is part of the **Water Conservation** theme.

What's the purpose of this activity?

To illustrate how we take for granted hot, running water that we use for showers and to show how to conserve water when showering.

Key Messages:

- We have a limited amount of water that is drinkable and we must learn to conserve it.
- All showers should be retrofitted with water-saving showerheads and we should take shorter showers.
- Pioneers used water much differently then we do today. We are more wasteful.

Materials

Permanent:
- 2 shower stalls, 2 stoppers
- 2 hoses
- splitter (Y-shape)
- rain coats with hoods, rain pants, rubber boots

What will I be doing?

You will be explaining how to save water while showering in the way that we shower. We can also decrease the waste by using a water-saving showerhead.

Important: THE DISCUSSION MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE STUDENTS GO INTO THE SHOWERS in order to have their attention.

(Ask for a show of hands*) How many of you had a shower yesterday or today? How many of you had a bath?* In pioneer days, about 150-200 years ago, people used to have to take baths in a bathtub like this (old-fashioned one). *Do you see any pipes leading to this bathtub?* No. *Where did the water come from, then?* They used to have to haul the water from the well, from a pump in the ground that was pumped by hand or from a river or lake.

Once you have the water, *would you want to use it right away? Would it be warm or cold?* It would be cold and we would have to heat it over a wood stove. It would take a long time to heat enough water to fill a bathtub just once. *How about if everybody in the family had to have baths, that's a lot of water to haul and heat, isn't it?*

What do we do with the water after our bath is done? We just pull the plug and the water goes down the drain. *What would you do with the water after your bath in the old-fashioned bathtub?* After your bath, you had to carry the used bath water back outside to drain it! That's a lot of work! And, because it was so much work the whole family would often use the same bath water over and over.

Most people only had a bath once a week, on a Saturday night. *Does anybody know why it would be on a Saturday night?* (If they have been to the activity center "Doing the Laundry" they will know why.) That's because on Sunday they would wear their "Sunday Best" clothes to go to church and they would want to be clean and presentable.

Nowadays, we don't just take a bath once a week anymore. Imagine if we had to haul the water and heat it up every time we wanted to take a bath and then carry it back outside to pour it out.

If we had to do all this for a bath would we take a bath every day? No, it would be a lot of work. Lucky for us, we have water that is piped into our homes and is heated up before it comes out of the tap. What do you think kids who lived in pioneer days, 150-200 years ago, *would say if they could see the running water we have now?* Encourage the students to give creative answers.

Water is readily accessible to use for showers, right? We just turn on the tap and there it is. *Does anybody know how much water the average person uses during a 5-minute shower?* 15-20L per minute means that most people use at least 75-100L per shower. In fact, 35% of all the water that we use in a house each day is for showers and baths.

Now, we use 100L per day for showering alone. *Does anybody know how much water the average Canadian,*
just like you and me, uses each day for everything? 340L, that's enough to fill 5 bathtubs full of water! In Europe, people live like we do, but each person there only uses 140L in a day. *What are we doing wrong?*

Do you need to take a 20 minute shower? Let's try something; imagine you just got into the shower and you know you have to be as efficient with your use of time and water as possible. Gravity can help us! Get your head wet first and get your shampoo in there as soon as you can. (get everyone to do a scrubbing motion). What's happening to the rest of your body while you wash your hair? It's getting wet, so now you can 'lather up' from the top down. Now it's time to rinse, so let gravity help you again, rinse your hair, and then your body from top down.

Sometimes it's easy to waste water because it's so simple and it seems inexpensive to get. We just turn on the tap and it's there. But we need to save water. *What are some reasons why we should save water?* All of the water we use from city systems has to be treated to drinking water standards and that's expensive to do. Lots of chemicals are put into the water.

What are some ways to save water? Turn off the taps when brushing teeth, don't wash off driveways with a hose, don't run the sprinkler during the day when most of the water will evaporate, fix leaky faucets, etc.

Let's get back to our shower. Another way to save water inside your home is to use a *low flow* showerhead. Let's see the difference between a regular showerhead and a low flow one.
Is this a good way for us to reduce the amount of water that we use so Canadians stop becoming water wasters? Yes! They can suggest other ways, too.

Measure the water in each shower stall by using the buckets we provide to the activity centre. Run the water for five seconds and measure the amount of water that comes out in that time.

2 students put on raincoats and one stands in each shower stall. A volunteer runs the two showers for 2 or 3 minutes, timed by a stopwatch. There is NOT enough time for every kid to try the shower. Don't forget to pretend to wash from your head down.

Which shower used more water? The regular showerhead used more water. By using a low flow shower head (only 9.5L or less per minute), we save almost 50%. That could be 1000L a week!

Background Information:

Recent changes to plumbing codes in Canada mean that in the near future water-waster showerheads will no longer be sold. Low flow showerheads & low flow toilets will be the only ones sold.

Some municipalities will *retrofit* your home for free. This means that they will replace existing fixtures (like shower heads and toilets) with water-conserving versions to help you save! Contact your local municipality to find out how you can change over to water saving devices.

Clean Up Procedures:

Place all materials in the activity crates provided. If the shower stalls are dirty, rinse them out in order to leave them clean for the next day.