Mālama Story

1. Read the story aloud
2. Discussion questions
   a. Why would Laʻakea throw small fish back into the ocean?
   b. What does mālama mean?
   c. Is it akamai (smart) to practice mālama? Why?

Once there a young boy named Laʻakea who enjoyed to spend time with his dad. One of his favorite things to do with his dad was fishing. Laʻakea learned a lot about the Hawaiian culture from his dad including things like understanding the value of mālama. His dad explained to him that to mālama means “to take care of” or “to nurture things.”

Laʻakea’s dad told him that they mālama the ocean just like their ancestors: they release the small fish they catch. His dad explained that their ancestors also practiced mālama by only taking the fish they needed to feed their families. Ancient Hawaiians knew that practicing mālama would protect the ocean and its many resources, insuring that there would be plenty of fish for many years to come. Laʻakea was impressed by how akamai (smart) his ancestors were.

Laʻakea’s dad explained to him that it was important to practice the value of mālama in other ways as well. It was important that every member of the family take care of each other and mālama themselves so that they didn’t get sick. His dad used the example of people who use alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. When they do this, they are not practicing the value of mālama, making it impossible to experience ʻokaha; they lack balance, unity, and, harmony with everyone and everything around them.