



parenting CHRISTIAN kids

April 2018



Teach Children to Care for God's Creation

POWER SOURCE

ASK GOD:

1. Thank God for his amazing, diverse creation.
2. Ask God to show your family how to take care of his earth.
3. Ask God to remind you to worship him, not his creation.

The word “stewardship” often has a financial connotation. But Jesus calls his followers to be wise, faithful stewards of *everything* he blesses us with, including our planet and its natural resources.

Although the yearly celebration of Earth Day in April isn't based in Christianity, its focus is something we can encourage. When God created the world—which he repeatedly called “good”—he told us to care for it and for all the creatures in it. That doesn't mean we worship nature; instead, we make an effort (sometimes involving sacrifices) to protect our earthly home.

And we do that not just to preserve the world for future generations. As author Tim Mascara writes, “Earth Day

matter, not because of some cliché saying that it belongs to our kids and we are just borrowing from them. It doesn't belong to my kids any more than it belongs to me.” He adds, “We are just stewards. But that sells it short also. We are not just stewards. We are the Creator's stewards. We are his stewards.”

When your family takes steps to recycle and “go green,” remind children about the reasons behind those efforts. Also let kids know that small actions play a big role in caring for the environment. Remember to set a good day-to-day example as you shop, make transportation decisions, do indoor and outdoor chores, and so on.

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Become Stewards of the Earth



News about a changing climate and its consequences can be scary for people of all ages. Protect toddlers and preschoolers from distressing images as much as possible. If you show concern and anxiety, children will become fearful, too. By kindergarten, children realize that outside events affect them and their families but still may have trouble distinguishing between reality and fantasy. Don't belittle their fears; instead, assure them of God's love and protection. By ages 7 to 10, kids are interested in news about the world around them. Answer their questions starting at a simple, basic level. Preteens begin to understand long-term implications of events, such as environmental issues. Present relevant facts, prepare for back-and-forth discussions, and remind kids that God is always in control.

The World God Made As you read aloud Genesis 2:15-20, have family members act out the account. Then ask: "What do you think the Garden of Eden was like? What job did God give Adam?" Explain that when people sinned, God made them leave the garden, and now we have God's whole world to take care of. Discuss how well you do that as individuals and as a family.

Favorite Things Hand out paper and crayons or markers. Read aloud Psalm 104:24. Have family members each divide their paper in half. On one half, have them draw a picture of their favorite thing from nature. On the other half, have them draw or write one thing they'll do this week to help take care of God's wonderful world. Afterward, share what you all drew and wrote.

Hug a Tree Go to an area with several trees. One at a time, blindfold family members, spin them around, and lead them to a tree. Have them carefully feel the tree to learn about it. Then lead them back to the starting point, spin them again, and remove the blindfold. See if they can identify the tree they touched. Discuss how trees are a gift from God, who put them in the first garden he made.

Nature Seekers Prepare a nature-related scavenger hunt, and have family members and friends pair up to search for all the items.

Litterbug Chase Visit a littered field or park. Race to collect the most cans, the oldest paper item, and the biggest piece of trash. Create wacky stories about how a piece of trash ended up where it did. Then choose a few unique items to create a garbage sculpture. Display it as a reminder to keep God's earth clean.

Crafty Recyclers As a family, make fun crafts using a variety of recycled items. Get started with the five ideas posted here:

childrensministry.com/articles/5-earth-day-crafts-using-recycled-material/

Read All About It For family devotions or bedtime reading, choose some books about God's world and how to care for it:
All Things Bright and Beautiful by Cecil Alexander (ages 0-5)
Let's Explore God's World by Debby Anderson (ages 3-5)
God Made It for You! by Charles Lehmann (ages 4-8)
I Love God's Green Earth by Michael Carroll (ages 9-12)