

What Can You Do about Plastic Pollution?

IN 1907, a man named Leo Baekeland made a discovery that changed our world forever. He figured out how to use chemicals to make plastic. This new product was so useful that people began using it for all sorts of things. Today plastic is everywhere—in your home, in your family's car, in your clothes, and in your toys. But a lot of that plastic ends up where it doesn't belong. Because plastic doesn't decompose, plastic pollution is a big problem. But it's a problem you can help solve!

Plastic by the Numbers

There are more than **7 billion** people on Earth, and almost all of us use plastic. Half of all the plastic in the world is used to make things we use only once and then throw away. These are "single-use plastics."

- » We use **2 million** plastic bags every minute.
- » We use **half a million** plastic straws every day.
- » We drink water from **50 billion** plastic bottles every year.

Sadly, lots of that plastic trash ends up in lakes and oceans, where it harms fish and wildlife. In the Pacific Ocean, somewhere between California and Hawaii, there's a floating "island" of plastic trash that's twice the size of the huge state of Texas. Much of that trash comes from single-use plastics.

Try This at Home!

Try this experiment. For one week, collect all of your family's plastic trash in a bag. Try to collect every single piece of plastic, no matter how big or small it is. (Wash out your plastic food containers so your trash collection won't smell.) At the end of the week, count how many

pieces of plastic are in the bag. Are you surprised by how much plastic you used? If your city or town offers recycling, be sure to recycle all that plastic trash after your experiment.



Use Less

Our job is to take care of God's creatures and creation. Reducing our use of plastic is an important part of that creation care. Here are three easy ways to **use less** throw-away plastic.

- » Put your lunch in reusable containers instead of sealed plastic bags.
- » Use a refillable metal water bottle instead of drinking bottled water.
- » At the grocery store, encourage your parents to choose fresh food or food that comes in boxes or cans instead of food that comes in plastic containers.

Can you think of more? Write them down and then share them with your family. 



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