

# Show God's Love by Taking Care of Planet Earth

(Psalm 24:1)

**Objective:** The students will discover because planet earth belongs to God, we can show others that we love God by taking care of our environment properly.

**Materials:** Bibles, cooking oil, four cups, paprika or turmeric, four spoons, four bowls of water, four marbles, four feathers, four small pieces of paper; four paperclips, four spatulas or large tongue depressors, four pieces of cotton or wool, dishwashing detergent, a bowl full of scraps of paper, masking tape, a toy, slips of paper with number 1, 2, 3, or 4 on them in box.

**Before Class:** Mark off four squares (4 by 4 feet) with masking tape. Label each square 1, 2, 3, or 4. In different areas of your room, set up four centers with these items in each: cooking oil, cup, small amount of paprika or turmeric, spoon, one bowl of water, marble, feather, small piece of paper, paperclip, spatula or tongue depressor, piece of cotton or wool, and dishwashing detergent.

Set the toy, Bibles, bowl of scrap paper, and box of numbers at the front of the room so they will be accessible to you. As students arrive, have them draw a slip with a number on it from the box. Have them sit in the square with their corresponding number.

## Introduction

What are some things that you possess or own? (Bike, computer, toys, games, books.) How can you make these things last longer? (Take care of them; put them away when finished; use them gently.)

[Teacher, show the children a toy.] Someone let me borrow this toy. How would they feel if I brought it back broken? (Sad, mad, disappointed.) Do you think they'd lend me another toy? (No, probably not; maybe with some rules.) People expect us to take care of the things they own when we use them.

That's how God feels about His possessions, too! Today we're going to learn how God wants us to take care of the environment around us.

## Opening Prayer

Lord, I marvel at Your beautiful creation. The mountains are so magnificent and the oceans are so big! I love the trees and streams. thank You for creating this beautiful world that we live in and allowing us to enjoy it so much. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. (Psalm 24:1)*

## Lesson Review

We've been learning about how to show God's love to others.

1. In our first lesson we learned that God's love is everywhere and that He wants us to love Him back with all of our heart, mind, and soul.
2. In last week's lesson, we learned that God knows all about us. He always knows where we are and what we're doing and what we're thinking and feeling. And, even so, He still loves us completely. In the same way, He wants us to love others, even people who do wrong to us and don't deserve our love. Because that's the way He loves us.

## Lesson

Who owns the earth we live on? (People, everyone, all creatures both plant and animals, God.)

[Introduce the Memory Verse.] God owns the earth and everything on it! That means we are God's guests on earth. When you are a guest in someone's home, how do you treat that person's belongings? (Carefully!)

How should we treat God's possessions? (With respect; care for it; keep it nice.)

What are some ways that people mistreat God's earth? (Throw trash on the ground; dump things in rivers; dirty the air with fumes.)

### **Litter, Litter, Everywhere**

Let's do an activity that will help us understand how God must feel when we do these things!

[Distribute the scraps of paper on the floor evenly among the four squares. Have the students stand around the outside of their squares.]

Pretend that your group owns the square you're standing around. Your goal is to keep your area the cleanest. You can only get rid of your scraps by putting them in other squares. At the end of one minute, the group with the cleanest square wins.

[Give students a 15-second warning before you say, "Stop." Have groups clean up their squares and sit down.]

What kind of feelings did you have while trying to keep your square clean? (Excited because our group kept it clean; sad, frustrated because other people kept throwing paper in our square.)

God is probably disappointed too when we mistreat the earth we live on. Let's find out what God says in the Bible about some of the things He owns.

In Psalm 104 David praises God for His mighty power displayed in His creation. David starts his song to God this way:

Psalm 104:1

*Let all that I am praise the Lord. O Lord my God, how great you are! You are robed with honor and majesty.*

Then he goes on to express his appreciation to God for each part of His creation.

I'm going to assign you a verse and I want you to tell me which of God's possessions on earth this verse is telling us about and some ways that we can take care of these things for God.

[Teacher, Give each group a Bible. Assign each group one verse to report on to the class. Have kids think of ways they could help care for this part of God's creation. Give groups a few minutes to work.]

Verse	God's Possession	Ways to Care
Psalm 104:14	Grass and plants	Water them; not pave over all of them; plant more
Psalm 104:16	Trees	Don't waste paper; replant the ones we cut down; set aside forest areas
Psalm 104:17-18	Birds and animals	Don't kill them unnecessarily; provide them areas to live; don't throw trash in rivers or lakes
Psalm 104:25	Ocean and fish	Don't dump things in the water; clean up oil spills; clean up beaches.

## Psalm 104:14

*You cause **grass** to grow for the livestock and **plants** for people to use.  
You allow them to produce food from the earth.*

## Psalm 104:16

*The **trees** of the Lord are well cared for—the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.*

## Psalm 104:17-18

*There the **birds** make their nests, and the storks make their homes in the cypresses. High in the mountains live the wild **goats**, and the rocks form a refuge for the hyraxes.*

[A hyrax, also called a coney, is a rabbit-sized mammal of Africa and South West Asia. It has a squat, furry body, with short slender legs. It looks like a rodent with hoofs.]

## Psalm 104:25

*Here is the **ocean**, vast and wide, teeming with life of every kind, both large and small.*

**Clean It Up**

Did you know that up to six million tons of oil is dumped in our oceans every year? This oil comes from boats or factories on shore. Oil spills mess up our oceans.

Let's see how hard it is to clean up an oil spill.

[Have the groups follow these step-by-step instructions. Don't go on to the next point until all groups have finished the one you're on.]

1. Put a couple of spoonful's of cooking oil in a cup. Add paprika or turmeric to color it.
2. Pour the colored oil into the bowl of water. This is our oil spill.

3. Drop in the marble, feather, piece of paper, and paperclip one at a time. Then carefully remove them.

The marble is like a smooth fish. The feather is like a bird. The piece of paper is like our beaches that are homes to animals. The paperclip is like a plant.

- What happened to them? (They are all coated with oil)

Birds can be blinded from oil, get waterlogged and poisoned. Fish and other animals are poisoned. The oil also cuts down their supply of oxygen.

Now let's try cleaning up our oil spill.

4. Use your tongue depressor to skim the oil off the top.
5. Now try absorbing the oil with your cloth.
6. Add a spoonful of detergent. Beads will form and make it easier to clean up.

You can see how hard it is to clean oil off water. Imagine if hundreds of miles of water were covered with oil. It can take up to ten years to clean an oil spill from the ocean. It is one of the most serious killers of life in the ocean.

## Colossians 1:15-16

*Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, (16) for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.*

The Bible says everything created on earth was created for the pleasure of God. We can show our love to God by caring for His earth. Let's brainstorm some ways we can take care of the earth around our community.

- Plan a community clean-up day
- Plant trees
- Plan an alternative transportation day. (Have everyone walk, bike, or use public transportation that day.)
- Determine ways that you could use less water. (Take shorter showers or baths; turn water off when brushing teeth; watering grass less, etc.)
- Adopt a stream, river, lake, or walking path and help clean it up.
- Cleanup a park, empty lot, or roadside.

Now decide on one way you will care for God's earth this week.

## Closing Prayer

Father, Thank You for allowing us to live and have fun on Your earth. Help us to take good care of it. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

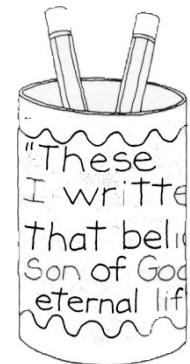
#### *Trash Craft*

This activity will recycle six-pack yokes and help our planet, too!

Collect the plastic yokes around soda six-packs so that each child has one. Use a toaster oven or regular oven set at 350 degrees F. Twist the six-pack yokes into balls. Place them in a Teflon-coated muffin cup or cookie sheet. Place the pan in the oven for approximately 3 to 4 minutes or until the yokes have melted. Remove the pan. Plastic will cool and harden within 30 seconds. Then use craft paint, beads, and dangles to decorate. Glue a magnet or pin on the back side.

### **Pencil Holders**

Make a pencil holder out of old tin cans. Have children cut paper to wrap around the can. (Writing the verse on the paper will reinforce it in their minds as they work.) Decorate the space around the words with bright stickers. Wrap around can and glue or tape in place. Provide one or two new pencils to put into the holder.



### **Game Center**

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

#### **Review Questions:**

1. How do people expect you to take care of their things?
2. Who owns the earth we live on? (The Lord!)
3. What are ways some people mistreat God's earth? (Throw trash on the ground; dump things in rivers; dirty the air with fumes.)
4. Why should we take good care of the environment around us?
5. What are some ways we can take care of the earth around our community?

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