



THE EARTH BOOK

Author: Todd Parr

Illustrator: Todd Parr

Jewish Value:

Do Not Destroy—*Ba'al Tashchit* בַּל תַּשְׁחִית

Additional Value: Repair the World—*Tikkun Olam* תִּקּוּן עוֹלָם

Enduring Understandings

- We are commanded to care for those who can't protect themselves, so we are responsible for taking care of the Earth and helping to save the home of all living things.
- We can help protect and repair the Earth when we reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Everyone is responsible for caring for the Earth.
- When we add each person's small acts together, they amount to a big difference.

Book Summary

The Earth Book, by Todd Parr, discusses the important subject of conserving Earth's natural resources. Using his signature colorful illustrations and whimsical storytelling, Parr empowers children and adults with ways they can help save the Earth by "going green": "I take care of the Earth because I know I can do little things every day to make a BIG difference." The book offers a practical list of simple activities easily understood by young children, followed by clear explanations of how those simple things can have a large impact on the health of our planet. Appropriately, this book is printed on recycled materials.

Be Inspired: Consider the ideas included as starting points, as you and your students explore, discover, and live the values. Be sure to elicit and encourage student and parent participation, consistently reinforcing the value being addressed. Allow lessons to authentically develop and change based on engagement and interests.



For the Educator Jewish Thought, Text, and Traditions

(For more information on Jewish values, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com.)

The *mitzvah* of *ba'al tashchit*—the commandment not to destroy or waste items from the natural world—is one of the most commonly mentioned *mitzvot* in contemporary Jewish social action circles. The source text for this *mitzvah* comes from the Book of Deuteronomy 20:19: “When you besiege a city for a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human, to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.”

The rabbis assert that we are not allowed to needlessly destroy the natural environment in a time of war, when resources are scarce and the primary focus is on ending the battle as quickly as possible. Therefore, we should be even more aware of *ba'al tashchit* when we are not at war and can make informed choices. For example, if we have to build a home (or, more realistic for most people, redecorating a home), we have the time to make an informed choice about which materials we choose to use, how we can reuse and recycle what trash we produce, etc.

Hence, we have the *mitzvah* of *ba'al tashchit* developed from a war-time prohibition against needless waste to a prohibition that covers every aspect of our lives. In almost everything we do, we can have an effect on the natural world. This *mitzvah* asks us to consider ways in which we can refrain from being wasteful. Today, Jews involve themselves with ecology by recycling, conserving energy, and helping to preserve the environment.

FROM OUR TEXTS

“The purpose of the *mitzvah* of *ba'al tashchit* is to teach us to love that which is good and worthwhile and to cling to it, so that good becomes a part of us and so that we will avoid all that is evil and destructive. This is the way of the righteous and those who improve society, who love peace and rejoice in the good in people and bring them close to the Torah, that nothing, not even a grain of mustard, should be lost to the world, that they should regret any loss or destruction that they see, and if possible they will prevent any destruction that they can.” -*Sefer Ha-chinuch, Mitzvah 529*

“When G-d created Adam, He took him around the trees of the Garden of Eden, and He said to him, ‘Look at My works! How beautiful and praiseworthy they are. Everything that I have created, I created for you. Take care not to damage and destroy My world, for if you damage it, there is no one to repair it after you.’” -*Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13*



For the Educator

Jewish Thought, Text, and Traditions

continued

“One generation goes and another generation comes; but the Earth remains forever.”
-Ecclesiastes 1:4

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Is enjoying something that requires resources necessarily wasting?
2. Do you think we should only partake in the simplest things, or should we be allowed to indulge in things that require more resources? Explain.
3. What are some non-wasteful ways to meet our needs and wants?
4. How can you implement the value of *ba'al tashchit* within the classroom?



Jewish Every Day

Incorporate Jewish Values

Create your own “Go Green Responsibility Chart.” Each child is assigned a “green” responsibility for the week, for example, turning off the lights, managing the class recycling, monitoring water usage, watering the plants, or collecting the compost. Periodically, remind students how they are helping to promote the Jewish value *ba'al tashchit*.



Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Copy of *The Earth Book*
- After the Story: recycle bins with craft materials to decorate each

TECHNOLOGY

- The “3 R’s” by Jack Johnson: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1yBQv1hLRY>
- Author sharing the book: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXnWUS_K0XQ
- Video *What Does it Mean to Be Green?*:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iyNPa37G_2s&feature=related



Sharing the Story

INTRODUCING THE STORY

For strategies for teaching vocabulary, see Appendix, Vocabulary Strategies.

Set up an environmentally wasteful classroom (for example, running water, trash on the floor, parched plants, too many lights turned on, etc.). Invite students to a meeting area and ask them, “What’s wrong in our classroom?” Take the students on a tour and help them make a list of the problems they find. Follow up by asking them what the solutions are.

Prepare to read the story by assessing prior knowledge concerning the 3 R’s—reduce, reuse, and recycle. Discuss questions such as, “What is recycling?” and “Why is recycling important?” Play the video featuring the “The 3 R’s” song by Jack Johnson. Encourage students to join in the chorus, “You’ve got to learn to reduce, reuse, recycle!”

- Show the front cover of *The Earth Book* and discuss what the students see (a drawing of the Earth with a heart in the center). Explain that the book helps us learn how adults and children can help save the Earth by “going green.” Give examples of “going green,” such as riding a bicycle to work instead of driving a car, using the same cloth bags over and over again when buying groceries, turning the water off while we brush our teeth, etc. What additional ways can students think of to “go green,” as we reduce, reuse, and recycle?

READING THE STORY

*Read the story aloud, stopping when appropriate to explore illustrations, address comments, clarify, predict, and guide students’ understanding of the story and the values **do not destroy**—ba’al tashchit and to **repair the world**—tikkun olam.*

Questions might include:

- Do you shut off the water when you brush your teeth?
- Do you turn off the lights when you leave a room?
- Do you reuse different materials (for example, using the back of a used piece of drawing paper to draw another picture)?
- Do you recycle glass, metals, and paper?

Reinforce students’ understanding of why it is important to reduce, reuse, and recycle with the following “I wonder ...” starters:

- I wonder why is it important to use both sides of paper.
- I wonder what paper is made of.
- I wonder what types of animals use trees for homes.
- I wonder why is it important to turn the water off when brushing my teeth.
- I wonder who needs clean drinking water.



Sharing the Story

continued

AFTER THE STORY

Revisit some of the illustrations and ask students, “How do you think this boy or girl felt when they were being environmentally responsible rather than wasteful?”

Use the poster at the end of the book as a review of the environmental concepts. Add additional “go green” ideas, and place the poster in the classroom as a reminder for the students to be conscious of the Jewish value do not destroy—*ba’al tashchit*. Assign various “green activities” to different students each week. (See Jewish Every Day.)

Bring in recycle bins and use student art to decorate them. Discuss the types of materials that go into each bin and model the way in which students can recycle. Sort recycled materials and have students count the number of items in each bin. To extend learning, discuss which bin contains the most and least.



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

COMPOST PROJECT

SCIENCE

Create a classroom compost bin or pot. Each day invite students to recycle their leftover lunch and snack food, which over time, will become compost to fertilize a school garden. For information on creating your own classroom compost bin, visit http://www.ehow.com/how_5566061_make-classroom-compost-bins.html.

IMAGINATION STATION

SCIENCE, CREATIVE PLAY

Give students the opportunity to use and reuse items from the recycle bins they create. For example, let them imagine all the various things they can make from a plastic water bottle. Encourage them to create “works of art” using materials collected in some of the recycle bins. Display them proudly as wonderful examples of *ba'al tashchit*—do not destroy.

BIODEGRADABLE JARS

SCIENCE

In a baby food or small glass jar, add moist soil, small pieces of orange peel, banana peel, plastic, and Styrofoam. Ask students to predict which will “disappear,” or biodegrade. Write their predictions down, and with students, observe the jars for a few weeks and discuss what they see happening. After a few weeks, when the students notice that the Styrofoam and plastic still remain, revisit the importance of recycling and reusing these materials.



Music

(Access all songs at www.JewishLearningMatters.com/music.)

“Tikkun Olam” by “Miss” Emily Aronoff Teck
Track # 7 from *Good Choices, Volume 1*

“TIKKUN OLAM” ACTIVITY

This is a “zipper” song, which means that the lyrics can change each time the song is shared to reflect the ideas of the people who are singing. Help students brainstorm the ways that they want to help fix the world before sharing the song so that they are ready when it is their turn to sing.

LYRICS

CHORUS

Tikkun olam, tikkun olam, tikkun oh-la-la-la-lam (x 2)

Tikkun olam, means we’re gonna fix the world

To fix the world, _____(fill in child’s name) is gonna _____(child finishes the line)
(x4)

CHORUS

ADDITIONAL MUSIC CONNECTIONS

To access additional Jewish and secular songs from a variety of traditional and contemporary artists that reinforce and teach these values, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com/music.



Evidence of Learning

Students will be able to verbalize the importance of protecting the Earth and suggest ways they can help by using the 3 R's—reduce, reuse, recycle. Students can articulate and / or illustrate ways not to waste resources.

Observe how students independently follow the “go green” ideas.



Home and Community Connections

Encourage families to learn more about the values and reinforce the concepts with their children visiting www.jewishlearningmatters.com.

“GREEN” ARTS AND CRAFTS

Send home a request for parents to donate reusable materials for arts-and-crafts projects and classroom storage (for example, plastic baby wipe bins, baby food jars, tissue boxes, etc.).

THE RECYCLING TREE

Invite each family to participate in a recycling tree. Send home a leaf template. Ask each family to create a leaf out of recycled materials, such as a cereal box or newspaper, and on the leaf describe their family’s commitment to conservation or helping the Earth (for example, to drive less, ride bikes more, carpool, plant a garden, conserve water or electricity, and other ways to reduce, reuse, recycle, etc.). Once you’ve collected all of the leaves, have the students help to create a class tree.

ADOPT-A-SPOT

Encourage families to care for a particular piece of the Earth. This can be done by planting a garden, watering plants, or organizing a local beach or park clean-up.

CREATE AN AT-HOME GO GREEN CHART

Send home a chart (see attached sample) for parents to use to motivate children and acknowledge their efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle. In the left column are suggested ways that children can help protect the Earth.

- Encourage parents to add additional ideas. Suggest that parents put a star, happy face stickers, or earth stickers on the chart when their children demonstrate a green action. A variety of stickers can be purchased at <http://www.zazzle.com/earth+stickers>.
- Have students share what they did during the week at home to show how they have “gone green.”



Literature Connections

Title	Author(s) and Illustrator(s)	Summary
<i>Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth</i>	Mary McKenna Siddals Ashley Wolff	This recipe-style book guides readers through the compost ingredients, from A to Z, in our everyday lives.
<i>Our Class Is Going Green</i>	Kindergarten Students of the Oak Park Elementary School	Children write and illustrate their ideas for “going green.”
<i>We Planted a Tree</i>	Diane Muldrew Bob Staake	This multicultural story shares how two families, in different parts of the world, each planted a tree, and how the trees gave and gave to the world around them.
<i>Something from Nothing*</i>	Phoebe Gilman	A modern adaptation of this favorite Jewish folktale describes how the blanket grandfather had made for young Joseph is transformed over the years into a jacket, a button, and, ultimately, a story. The grandfather demonstrates creative and meaningful recycling.

*PJ Library Book



Thematic Connections

Tu B'shevat

Earth Day

Community helpers

Creation

Trees and plants

LESSON CONTRIBUTORS

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The Earth Book

Go Green Chart

Child's Name:

I Love my World

I reduce, reuse and recycle when

Add your own ideas to empty rows.

Go Green Activities	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6	Wk 7	Wk 8
I switched off the light when I left the room.								
I drew or wrote on both sides of the paper.								
I turned off the tap when I brushed my teeth.								
I recycled paper.								
I reminded a grown up to "go green."								

Use an earth shaped stamp, a eco-friendly sticker, or a green marker to mark your progress