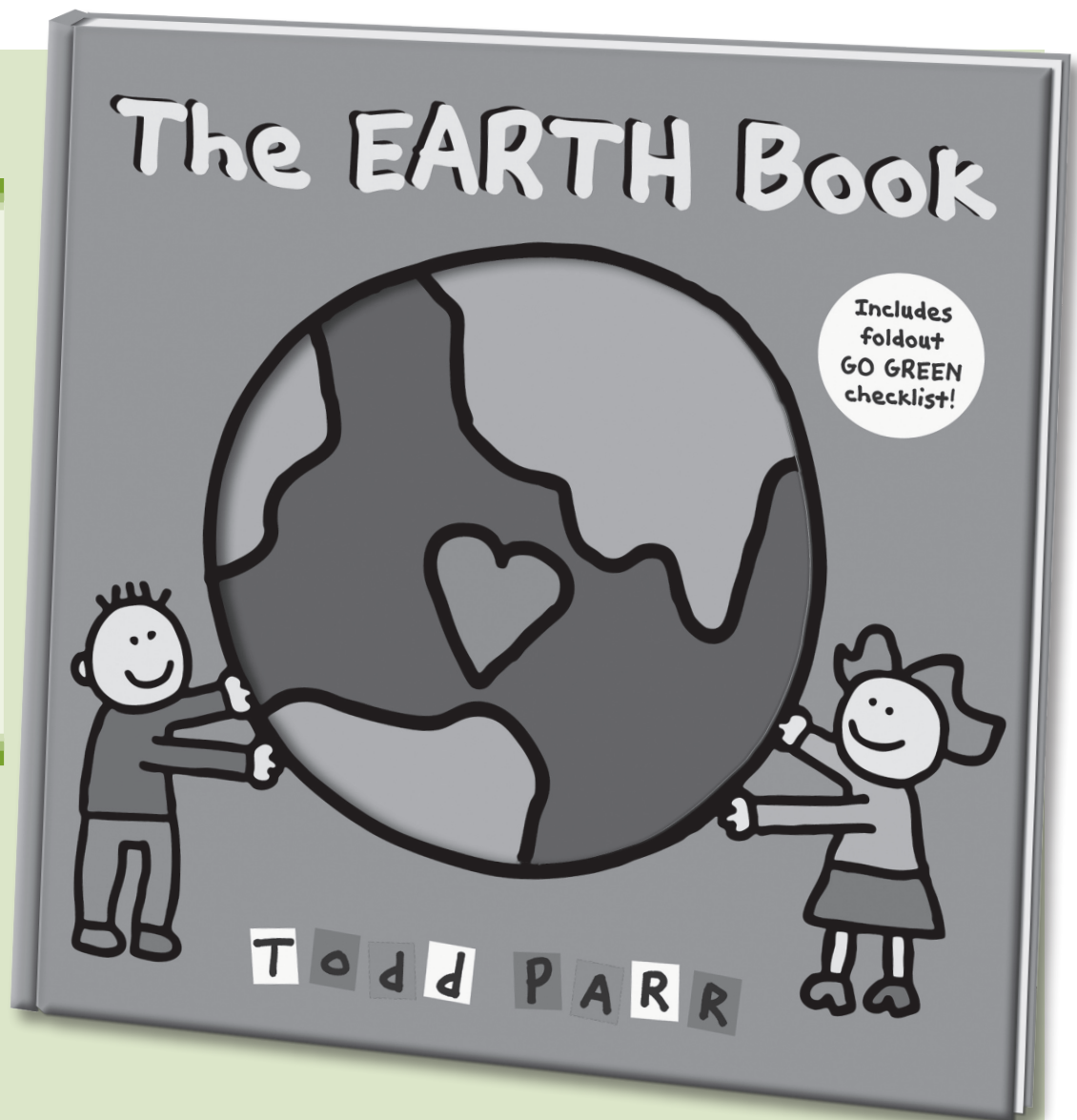


# THE EARTH BOOK

## Curriculum connections

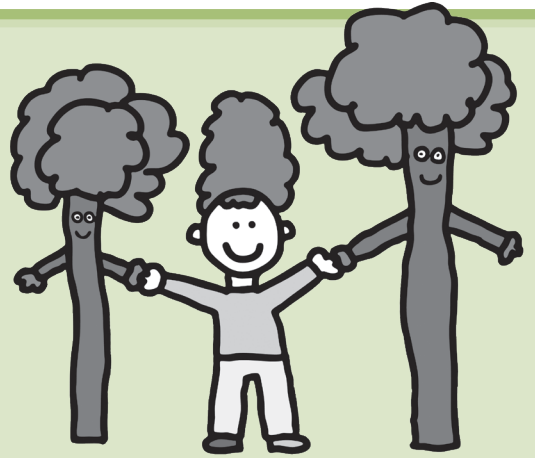
- ❖ Science
- ❖ Art
- ❖ Movement
- ❖ Mathematics

Ages 3 – 6



by Todd Parr

In *The Earth Book*, his celebration of our wonderful planet, Todd Parr presents practical activities that help children lessen their ecological footprint. This educator's guide is designed to carry that message into the classroom and the everyday lives of young people. Use it to encourage your students to become aware of the Earth and their own special relationship with it. Enjoy the process!



## COMPREHENSION

### Building Background & Definitions

Your students will grasp environmental concepts at their own level. Introduce them to new vocabulary words. Be a model for good environmental behavior: set up recycling areas, reuse grocery bags, conserve electricity and water. Live lightly on the planet and your students will do the same. Before reading the book with your class, invite students to share their thoughts about the Earth.

### Summarize

Some of the concepts in *The EARTH Book* may be new to your students. Younger children learn best from concrete experience, even if they aren't ready for the complexity of the bigger issues. Older children can begin to understand the principle of cause and effect. For example, turning off unnecessary lights saves energy and saving energy helps keep the Earth clean.

### Visualize

Imagine a better world. Lead your class through a visualization exercise on ways to care for the planet, such as removing litter, planting flowers and trees, and cleaning ponds, lakes, and streams.

### Synthesize

How would the Earth look if everyone used water and other precious natural resources more carefully? Have your children to describe and then draw a picture of their ideal Earth.

### Vocabulary words

footprint  
green  
recycle  
re-use  
energy  
conserve  
environment  
natural resources  
air  
water

Discuss the multiple meanings of some of these words. For example, "green" signifies the color but it can also mean plants in general or the concept of a healthy planet. After defining these key words, make a chart of the ideas your students have for protecting the planet. This would be a wonderful circle time activity. Use the same format that Todd Parr employed in *The EARTH Book* and encourage students to illustrate their ideas.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

There are cultures that are celebrated for their awareness of the relationship they had with the Earth and its resources. The Native Americans are admired for using everything from nature with care; they use all parts of plants and animals. This may be introduced with older children, but may be beyond the understanding of the youngest students.

## SCIENCE

Start a worm farm to explore how worms transform garbage into enriched soil.

### Supplies

12" x 14" plastic bin, preferably not clear, with a lid; 5 lb bag of dirt or a bucket of dirt from a garden (do not use potting soil); garden trowel; newspaper; spray bottle; egg shells; vegetable and fruit scraps; and worms. The worms can be dug from a garden or commercially purchased.

### To prepare the worm farm

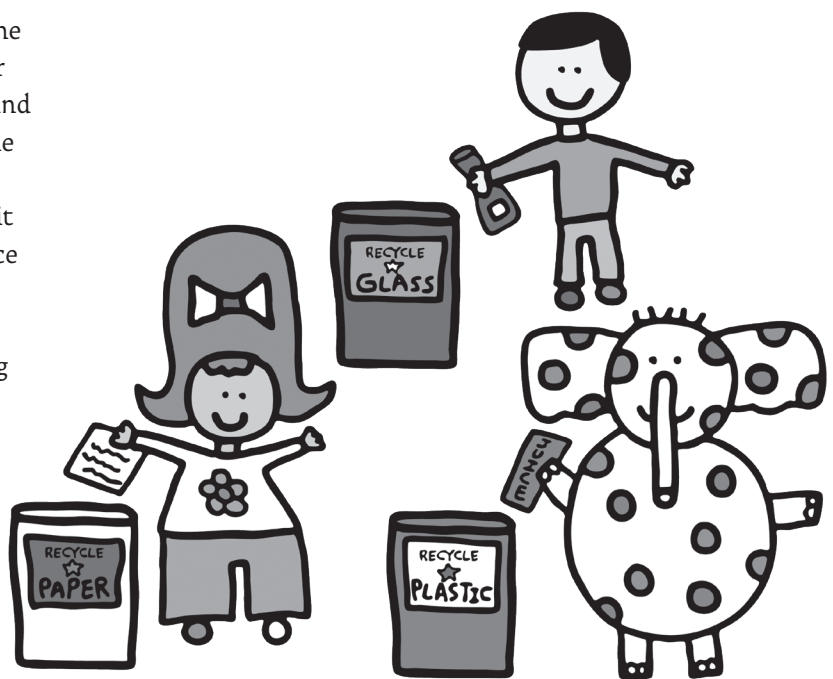
Have students shred paper and moisten but not soak it; misting it with a spray bottle works well. Along with the dirt, the paper will be the bedding for the worm farm. Fill the empty plastic bin with the bedding material; it should cover just under half of the depth of your bin. Add the soil, fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, and finally the worms. Leave the lid off during the day; the worms need oxygen. They prefer darkness and will stay in the bin without the lid, but cover it overnight. Worms do not like vibrations, so find a quiet place for them that is not too hot or too cold and not by a sunny window. Don't over feed the worms; the food scraps will rot, but check that some food scraps are still visible. Misting the worms with water once a week is fine; do not soak the bedding. The worms will eat, reproduce, and create a rich, composted soil that is great for potted plants in the classroom or as enrichment for outdoor gardens.

## MATH

### Sorting / Matching

Preschoolers love sorting and matching, so make recycling into a learning game. Set up four recycling bins: one each for metal, glass, paper, and plastics. Use visual clues to indicate what belongs in each bin (for example, a picture of a soda bottle for the plastics bin). Fill another box with aluminum cans, bottles of various shapes and sizes, plastic containers, papers, cardboard boxes, and bags. If this is done as a group activity, each child takes an item from a sample box and then "sorts" it into the right bin. If this is done as an individual activity, the child sorts each item from the sample box into the appropriate recycling bin.

This activity also has a very practical benefit: children who learn how to recycle at school will help out with recycling at home.



## MOVEMENT & GAMES

There are countless ways to move in synch with the planet! Encourage your students to use their creativity. Here are few imaginative scenarios to get things rolling:

### Flying With the Wind

Students start out by standing still. Tell them to imagine that the wind is blowing softly, barely moving them. The wind gets stronger, the children move faster, eventually spinning. The wind softens gradually and the children slow, until they stop moving together.

### Rolling in Gravity

Stretched out on the floor, students feel the pull of gravity holding them. They roll a little bit to one side and roll a little bit to the other side. Then they roll their heads from side to side, roll their hands in a circle, and roll their feet around and around, until they slow to a stop.

### Dancing in a Running Stream

Students start out by standing still. Tell them to imagine a stream running over them, pushing them around the room, sideways, forward, then backward, spinning them around, until they are pushed to shore, where they are still.

### Light On-Light Off

Students start on the floor, curled up like a ball, waiting to spring up. Ask them to pretend to be light bulbs. When the lights go on, they jump up and explode with energy. When the light goes off, they fold back into a ball on the floor and are very still. Either switch your classrooms lights on and off, or just call out “light on” and “light off.”

## MUSIC

Introduce and play the songs *This Land Is Your Land* by Woody Guthrie and *America, The Beautiful* words by Katherine Lee Bates, or use them as background music during art projects. Both songs celebrate the beauty of our land and share a sense of wonder about its bounty. Encourage your students to share their favorite own songs about the natural world.

## ART

Reduce trash — and model creative reuse for your students — by making art with recycled newspaper, recycled magazines, pine cones, sand, or scraps of yarn. Use buttons for beads or decorations, bottle tops for individual paint pots, socks for puppets, and old puzzle pieces for collages.

### Recycled Paper Book

Collect sheets of 8 ½" x 11" paper that have been used only on one side or on just a small portion of each sides Be sure to have four sheets for each student. If a die cut machine is available, prepare shaped pages; perhaps a leaf, book or tree design, although any shape could be used. Otherwise, fold the paper into quarters, making each book sixteen pages.



Use recycled magazine covers to create book covers. Tear the old magazines into small collage pieces. Paste or glue the collage pieces onto a page, and let it dry. For a matching back cover, repeat the process.

Put together each book’s pages and cover. Be sure the pages are straight and properly aligned. Using a paper punch, make two holes about two inches apart on the left side of the book.

String precut yarn pieces, twelve inches long, through the punched holes. (Students may need help with this, depending on their eye–hand coordination.) Once the yarn has been strung through both holes, tie the two ends into a knot. There will be enough yarn left to make a bow, if so desired.

Each finished book is a unique creation and can be given as a gift.

## Folded Fan

Collect colorful magazines covers (glossy home and garden magazines work especially well). Turn the paper so the shorter side is at the bottom, and the longer side is the vertical edge. Show your students how to make half-inch accordion folds across each cover. When the folding is complete, make a handle by turning the bottom edge up one inch. Spread open the folds to reveal a homemade fan, perfect for eco-friendly cooling on warm days.

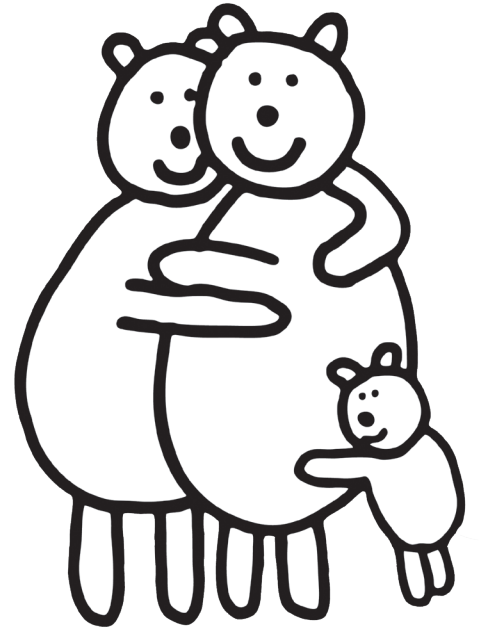
## Puzzle Pieces Tree

Transform old puzzles into new trees. Collect small puzzle pieces in vivid colors, or ask your students to paint bright fall hues on the backs of pieces. Using heavy brown construction paper or brown butcher paper for a background, create a tree trunk with bare branches at its top. Glue on “leaves” (the puzzle pieces). Fill the tree with brilliant foliage. Use additional pieces to make falling leaves or leaf piles.



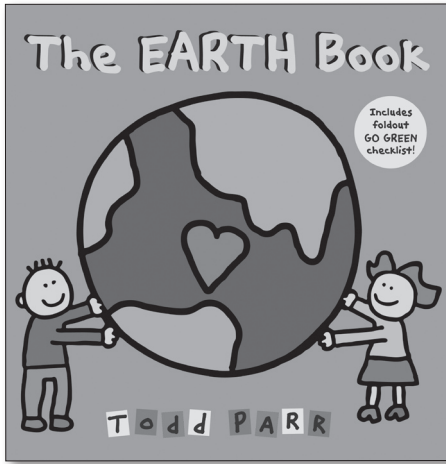
## CHARACTER EDUCATION

Even the youngest children can learn how to care for the Earth. On the reverse side of the *The EARTH Book*'s dust jacket, Todd Parr lists concrete steps that children can take to protect their environment, such as reusing and recycling, composting, and conserving water and electricity. Older children can contribute to discussions about natural resources. They can also participate in group efforts like recycling drives, tree planting days, or community gardens. Encourage your students to see that it is everyone's job is to care for the Earth and that every day is Earth Day.





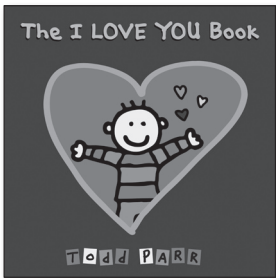
## about the book



With his signature blend of playfulness and sensitivity, Todd Parr explores the important, timely subject of environmental protection and conservation in this eco-friendly picture book. Featuring a circular die-cut Earth on the cover, and printed entirely with recycled materials and nontoxic soy inks, this book includes lots of easy, smart ideas on how we can all work together to make the Earth feel good – from planting a tree and using both sides of the paper, to saving energy and reusing old things in new ways.

***The Earth Book***  
By Todd Parr  
978-0-316-04265-9

## also by Todd Parr



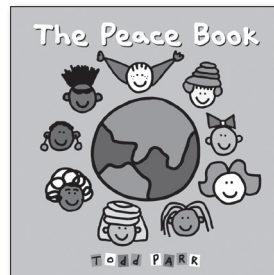
***The I LOVE YOU Book***  
978-0-316-01985-9



***READING Makes You Feel Good***  
978-0-316-16004-9 HC  
978-0-316-04348-9 PB



***It's Okay to Be Different***  
978-0-316-15562-5 HC  
978-0-316-04347-2 PB



***The Peace Book***  
978-0-316-83531-2 HC  
978-0-316-04349-6 PB

## about the author



Todd Parr likes to paint because it makes him feel good. He grew up in Wyoming and was always an art lover, despite failing his high school art class. After moving to San Francisco, where he still lives, he began showing his art at Wolfgang Puck's restaurants and creating merchandise for Macy's. He began his publishing career in 1998. His books include *The I LOVE YOU Book*, *It's Okay to Be Different*, and *Reading Makes You Feel Good*. His favorite colors are yellow, red, green, and blue.

You can visit him online at  
<http://www.toddparr.com/>



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY  
BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS

[www.lb-kids.com](http://www.lb-kids.com)  
Educator's Guide prepared by Joann Jonas