

Think Before You Throw

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*God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.
Genesis 1:31*

1. God gave us this good green earth to care for
With water, trees, and lots of air to breathe
It's the only home we have, so therefore,
I have one request to ask you please . . .

Refrain

Don't throw your trash around
Don't let it hit the ground
Do your part to help the flowers grow
Don't let it leave your hand
Go find a garbage can
Show you care and think before you throw! [2nd time to bridge]

Ending

Be a steward! Think before you throw!
Let's all stop and think before we throw!

2. God put us in charge of His creation
He made it all and then said it was good
We are His stewards with an obligation
To treat the earth like it's our neighborhood [to chorus]

Bridge

If you make a mess . . . ***clean it up!*** (shout)
If you drop a wrapper . . . ***pick it up!*** (shout)
If it blows away . . . ***round it up!*** (shout)

That's what good stewards do!
God made us stewards – me and you! [to refrain]

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Teaching Resources

Background

On a warm Sunday afternoon in February, I decided to go out for a walk along the country road where we live. I knew I would likely find some trash along the way, so I took a garbage bag with me. I didn't get very far before my garbage bag was bulging with trash! I had to cut my walk short because the bag was getting too heavy to carry!

As I picked up each piece of trash, I became more and more angry because it was obvious that most of the items were lying there on the ground because someone had thrown them out window of a vehicle. In other words, 99% of the trash was totally preventable. The trash was there simply because someone didn't care. I was angry because I (and other people) have to work, play, travel through, and look at the spaces where some people carelessly throw their trash, creating ugliness and unsanitary conditions for everyone.

When I got back home, I started thinking about our responsibilities to care for God's creation. From the book of Genesis, it is clear that the earth and all its creatures is part of God's created order. It is also clear that God values His creation and characterizes it as "very good" (see Genesis 1:31). As I thought about our role as caretakers, or stewards, of God's creation, this song started ringing in my mind.

As Christians, we do not worship the earth, and we understand that God has placed us in a position of dominion over the earth and its creatures (see Genesis 1:26-28). We do worship the creator of the earth, and we are obligated to fulfill God's expectation that we care for this marvelous earthly home He has given us.

Children should be mindful that their earthly home is a gift from God, its creator. They should behave in ways that show their respect and gratitude for the earth God created for them. That's the goal of this song . . . for children – and all of us – to stop and think before we throw our trash around God's beautiful earth!

Preparing Activities

1. Read the account of creation described in Genesis.
2. Question for conversation: Have you ever created or made something special? How did you feel about that item? How would you feel if someone mistreated that item or destroyed it? What

does that tell us about how God might feel about His creation and how we abuse it with our trash?

3. What is a steward? What does it mean for humans to be “stewards” of God’s creation? What are some specific actions we can take to be good stewards of the earth?
4. What is the meaning of the word, “obligation?” What are our “obligations” as stewards of God’s creation?

Extending Activities

1. In Genesis 1:26, we read that God made man in His likeness to “have dominion (or rule) over” the earth. As “rulers” over the earth, does that mean we can do anything we want to the earth and other creatures that inhabit the earth? How can we “have dominion” and be good “stewards” at the same time?
2. Sign up your kids to participate in an “Adopt a Highway” (or something similar) program to provide an opportunity to be stewards of a specific area where they live.
3. Create a neighborhood clean-up (similar to a “neighborhood watch”) program. Mobilize children to help get their neighbors to commit to taking turns watching for litter and cleaning it up.
4. Have children create colorful posters to place around their neighborhoods encouraging people to refrain from littering and to “think before they throw.”
5. Locate a particularly “messy” area in your region and take your kids there to clean it up.

Related Scripture

- Genesis 1:1-31
- Psalm 24:1-2
- I Corinthians 10:26