

Natural Recycling

In nature you see evidence of God's wonderfully balanced design. Let's take a look at two things as examples of God's handiwork.

Compost

Have you ever taken a walk through the woods with your family on a lovely autumn day? Did you hear the crunch of leaves under your feet and notice the sweet smell in the air? In some areas there can be quite a lot of fallen leaves, pine needles, and grass padding the ground. Have you ever pushed aside an area of leaves with your feet to dig down to the hard ground? Did you notice in between the top layer and the bare ground the "stuff" is thick, richly dark, and full of nutrients?



The thick, dark "stuff" (we call it compost) is organic matter—decaying leaves, grass, pine needles, etc.—which feeds the soil with the nutrients it needs to remain healthy. As the organic matter decays, teeny, tiny living things you cannot see with your eyes called microbes feed on the natural material and help enrich the soil too. And nutrient-rich soil grows healthy plants, trees, grass, and flowers. This whole process takes place naturally, designed by the Creator to nourish the soil.

Did you know we can learn from this process and intentionally compost to help care for our own garden and flowerbeds? Maybe your family already maintains its own compost pile, or maybe you would like to find out more about composting.

Earthworms

Along with a wonderfully designed process to enrich the soil of the earth through natural compost, the Creator designed the most amazing creature to help keep soil healthy—the earthworm. That's right, earthworms. As an earthworm crawls underground, it breaks up clumps of soil and makes miles of tunnels. These tunnels help soak up water in a downpour and help plants grow deeper roots in the soil. And as an earthworm eats the natural materials in the soil, it deposits castings, which then enrich the soil. Isn't it remarkable how the Creator designed everything with a purpose? Even earthworms have a purpose in helping maintain healthy soil, which in turn helps keep vegetation healthy.



You can learn from God's design and purpose for the earthworm and intentionally raise earthworms to benefit the soil in your gardens and flowerbeds. Plus, you could use your natural fruit and vegetable scraps in a purposeful way. You can compost with worms, called vermicompost. (You can learn more about earthworms and vermicomposting in the Bug Science class on SchoolhouseTeachers.com!)

In these two examples, do you see evidence of God's plan, purpose, balance, and tender care of the earth? What roles do people have in caring for God's marvelous creation? Let's investigate that next.

God Gives Man Authority Over All the Earth

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have [dominion](#) over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

—Genesis 1:26

When God created people, He gave them special responsibilities, including [governing](#) over “every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” It is our God-given responsibility to care for His creation and to be good stewards of what He has given us. What does it mean to be a good steward? Well, it means to manage and take excellent care of another’s property. And *everything* is the Lord’s ([Psalm 24:1](#)).

Where do we begin to be good stewards? First things first—we start with ourselves. With your parents’ instruction, you learn to govern yourself. Your parents help you practice *self-government*—being responsible for your thoughts, actions, and attitudes, and taking care of your responsibilities well. Let’s use the illustration below. As you learn to govern yourself well to honor and love the Creator ([Colossians 3:17](#)), you move outward to be a good steward of other things too, such as your personal belongings, your room, pets, your home, your land, etc. You continue to grow in good stewardship as you lovingly take care of all He has blessed you with.



Do you see others setting an example of good stewardship? What are things your parents, siblings, or grandparents do to be good stewards of their possessions? You can learn from the examples of those around you how to be a good steward, as well as learning from examples of people in history. Let’s take a look at the American pioneers and the example they set for us.

Fill in the Blanks

1. "The _____, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).
2. An _____ crawls underground, breaks up clumps of soil, and makes miles of tunnels.
3. Composting with worms is called _____.
4. A good _____ is someone who takes excellent care of another's property.
5. The American pioneer's wagon could carry _____ pounds of supplies.
6. Once the pioneers arrived at their new _____, they set to work building a shelter and preparing the land for crops.
7. Another name for a sod house is a _____.
8. When a person governs himself well, it is called _____.
9. _____, _____, _____, and glass are well-known recyclable items.
10. _____ matter is natural, decaying material like leaves, grass, and pine needles.