

Sam & Charlie (and Sam Too!) Help Save the Earth

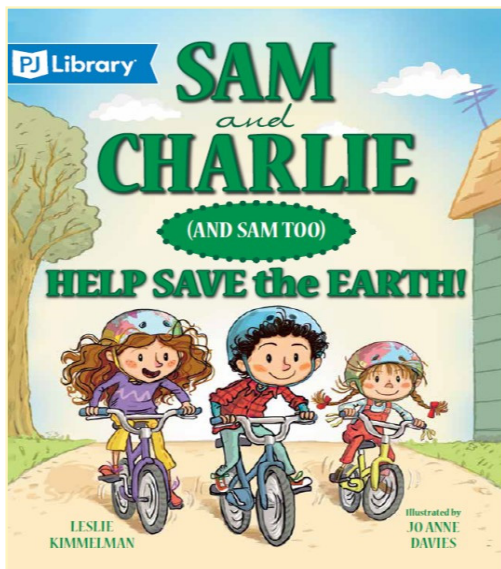
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How can we take care of Earth?



HANDS ON!

Make Earth Helmets

Sam and Charlie (and Sam Too) paint their bike helmets to look like Earth, sending the message that riding your bike is healthy for the planet. If you have an old bike helmet at home, you can do this, too – but don't be like Charlie and Sam Too and forget to ask your parents first. After all, respecting your parents is one of the Ten Commandments.

Supplies:

Bike helmet (preferably one that's already scuffed up)

Acrylic paint (in green and blue)

Paint brushes

Newspaper

Spread newspaper over your work surface. Paint the outside of your bike helmet to look like Earth, using the shape of the continents and oceans as your guide. Don't worry about getting them just right; from far away, the green and blue will make your helmet look like our planet. The next time you go for a bike ride, you'll be a real Earth head.

Big Little News!

Welcome, baby Leo! Sam's newborn brother is, as Sam puts it, "gigantic, but also tiny." Maybe that's partly why planting a tree to mark a baby's birth is an enduring Jewish tradition. Trees can be gigantic, too, even if they start as tiny seeds, and each one makes a real difference to the planet. As children grow into adults and marry, another Jewish tradition is to make a chuppah (wedding canopy) from branches cut from each partner's "birth tree." To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/samandcharliesavetheearth.

Ten Extra Commandments

Sam and Charlie (and Sam Too) are "Earth heads," so on Shavuot, the holiday that marks the gift of the Ten Commandments, they write ten earth-friendly commandments. They call these "extra," but Jewish tradition actually has many earth-friendly commandments, including: don't waste natural resources (bal tashchit), let crop fields have a "year of rest" (shmita) every seventh year, and wait three years before picking fruit (orlah) to help a fruit tree grow and thrive. Jews have a long history of being Earth heads.

Thanks-Giving

The Jewish people has deep roots in the land, especially in the Land of Israel. In ancient times, Jews would visit the Temple in Jerusalem twice a year to give thanks for the fruits of the earth. On Shavuot, it was customary to bring the first fruits of one's wheat crop as a ritual offering. A few months later, on Sukkot, they would bring part of their fall harvest to the Temple, too. The Temple is long gone, but the holidays of Shavuot and Sukkot endure, giving us an opportunity to show gratitude for all the wonderful things that grow from the earth.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHAT gifts do you get from the earth? How do you show thanks for it?

SAM and Charlie and Sam Too write ten more commandments. If you were to write a new commandment, what would it be about?

SAM and Charlie love to eat blintzes (crepe-like pancakes filled with cheese) on Shavuot. What foods do you like to eat on Jewish holidays?