



# 10 THINGS I CAN DO TO HELP MY WORLD

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*Taking care of the world may feel like a very big job, but even very little people can help. From turning off lights to using both sides of a piece of paper, this book offers easy reminders for all of us to help protect our planet.*

## JEWISH CONCEPTS

Believe it or not, when we do things like turn off the lights or use both sides of a piece of paper, we are following very old Jewish commandments. Environmentalism isn't a new concept; Jews have been protecting the environment for thousands of years.

*Bal tashchit* (“do not destroy”) is a commandment in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) that forbids soldiers from harming fruit trees when invading a city. Scholars later interpreted this to mean that we are forbidden to destroy or waste any natural resources. Commentary from 13th-century Spain says “nothing, not even a grain of mustard, should be lost to the world.”

*Tikkun olam* (“repairing the world”) is the principle that humans are God’s partners in bringing healing to a broken world. We can do this by bringing more kindness and justice into existence, and by protecting the environment for future generations.

Kids and adults alike can save water and electricity, recycle, and keep our planet beautiful – and in so doing, practice important Jewish concepts like *bal tashchit* and *tikkun olam*. Caring for the earth is not just a good thing to do, it's a biblical commandment!

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

This book focuses on things to do at home, but you also can do fun things with your child to make a difference in the community. *Bal tashchit* (“do not destroy”) and *tikkun olam* (“repairing the world”) are commandments that follow you wherever you go.

Organize a neighborhood clean-up on your street or at a local park, to pick up litter and keep your area beautiful. Even very young children can help pick up trash (wear gloves!), and the activity helps remind them not to throw garbage on the ground themselves.

Support local agriculture by shopping at a farmers’ market or farm stand. Meeting farmers in real life can help children make the connection between the earth and the food supply. Encourage your children to ask questions about how the food they eat is grown. You can talk to your children about why shopping local matters: “When food is grown nearby, it isn’t shipped on a plane or a truck, which saves fuel,” and “When food doesn’t have to be stored for a long time in a cold refrigerator, that helps save electricity.” When young children understand where their food comes from, the importance of taking care of the earth becomes easier to appreciate.