

# Mother Earth

Everyone knows that an education begins at home. So, we teach our children ABCs and 123s as early and as often as possible. We Catholics begin sharing our faith from the time our babies are baptized. An additional part of our moral belief system we should teach our children is what it means to be environmentally responsible citizens.

I recently spoke with an environmental educator who gave me a few pointers on teaching my boys how to take care of the Earth. She said to start by comparing our planet to their playground. Ask them to consider how they'd feel if someone dumped a whole bunch of stuff on it, polluting their environment. It would make it hard to play, just as our destructive environmental habits could make it difficult to live on Earth.

For older kids, she recommends focusing on protecting animal habitats. Or, make it a game: competitions in recycling and other eco-friendly activities will add excitement to a good cause. This generation, according to the educator, won't even have to think about recycling, going paperless, and eco-friendly modes of transportation. Living green will just be part of their daily routine. But we have to get them there.

Collin is even learning about the environment in school. Last week, his class made a *gigantic* robot out of recycled materials. We made a laptop at home with bottle caps, a pizza box, a few odds-and-ends and *The Baltimore Sun*. The process helped Collin to learn about the role paper and plastics play in the recycling process. It was also a fun opportunity for us to work on a family project.



We were also fortunate enough to participate in Aberdeen's Earth Day Festival on Saturday where there was music, food, vendors and nearly a dozen games to play, all made from recycled materials. Laundry detergent caps tumbled out of a bucket

and onto a playing surface where the furthest one ahead took first prize. Cane chairs without seats were painted colorfully and arranged so that multicolor-speckled recycled Frisbees could make their way through the holes. And in Collin's favorite game, "cars" made of hard hats and old lawnmower tires raced down a ramp, across a track, and (if you're lucky!) into a weighted soda bottle. Collin was so close! But we had fun, learned, and enjoyed the nature walk we took to the park.

Earth Day may be over, but the sentiments celebrated by the occasion needn't be forgotten. According to my educator friend, "Nothing is going to change unless people do something about it." We are those people and so are our children.