

Earth Day

GET READY!



#protecttheplanet

What is Earth Day?

Earth Day has been promoting environmental awareness and protection since its launch by the United Nations in 1970, and is celebrated globally on April 22nd every year. With World Human Values Day following shortly after on April 24th, there is an opportunity to commemorate both occasions through activities that honour Sathya Sai Baba's life and His message on the reverence and care for Mother Earth.

Why does it matter?

Increasing pollution and waste, resource exploitation, loss of biodiversity, and deforestation, are having a detrimental impact on Mother Earth and all of creation. Of great significance is climate change, as growing levels of carbon dioxide are driving the Earth's temperatures up, leading to rising sea levels, flooding and erosion of coastal regions, erratic and extreme weather patterns, an increased risk and spread of certain diseases, and reduced water quality, among other challenges.

Many leaders throughout time have spoken about the importance of caring for our environment.

"The five elements – ether, air, fire, water, and earth – are the vesture of God, as well as of man. Use them moderately and with wisdom, with fear and humility." – Sathya Sai Baba (Sathya Sai Speaks (SSS) 07.43: November 24, 1967)

"Today the world is losing its ecological balance as man, out of utter selfishness, is robbing Mother Earth of her resources like coal, petroleum, iron, etc. As a result, we find earthquakes, floods and such other devastating natural calamities. Human life will find fulfillment only when ecological balance is maintained. Balance in human life and balance in Nature, both are equally important." – Sathya Sai Baba (SSS 36:15)

"We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees." – Qwatsinas (Hereditary Chief Edward Moody), Nuxalk Nation

The Great Spirit is in all things: he is in the air we breathe. The Great Spirit is our father, but the earth is our mother. She nourishes us; that which we put into the ground she returns to us." – Big Thunder (Bedagi) Wabanaki Algonquin

"May the relationship between man and nature not be driven by greed, to manipulate and exploit, but may the divine harmony between beings and creation be conserved in the logic of respect and care."— Pope Francis, 22 April 2015

"As stewards of God's creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family. When we destroy our forests, ravage our soil and pollute our seas, we betray that noble calling." — Pope Francis, 18 January 2015

"Treat the earth well. It was not given to you by your parents—it was loaned to you by your children." – American Indian proverb

"Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty." – Albert Einstein

"A clean environment is a human right like any other. It is therefore part of our responsibility toward others to ensure that the world we pass on is as healthy, if not healthier, than we found it." – Dalai Lama

Where do we fit in?

Each one of us interacts with the environment every single day -- both directly and indirectly. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, how we travel, our use of electricity and water, how much air transport we use, the amount of waste we produce, the thoughts we have, all impact our environment. In every action, we can choose to be more conscious and act in a way that cares for our environment.

To learn how many planets are needed to support our lifestyle, feel free to try out this interactive [Ecological Footprint Calculator](#).

What can we do?

Sathya Sai Baba has warned us of the dangers of pollution and degradation of nature, but he has also suggested ways and means to restore the natural balance, so that man and mother earth can coexist in peace and harmony:

"But because there is deforestation to an alarming extent, the extent of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has considerably increased. Therefore, the remedy for this situation is intensive afforestation, growing more trees everywhere and protecting the existing trees without destroying them for other purposes." – Sathya Sai Baba, (SSS 26:03)

"Earlier, people used pitchers, plates, and pots made of clay by local artisans. After some time, stainless steel utensils replaced the clay utensils. But now plastic pitchers, plates, and pots have come into vogue. These plastic articles have exposed man to great dangers. The plastic bags and other articles have created enormous waste material which is not biodegradable." – Sathya Sai Baba, 22 August 2007

"On account of the stupendous temperature in the core of the sun, enormous quantities of hydrogen, several million tons, get transformed into helium every second. By this process, which began with creation and will go on for aeons of time, a tremendous quantity of energy is radiated from the sun. If even a tiny fraction of the solar energy that reaches the surface of the Earth were to be put to use, intelligently and diligently, the needs of the human race would be met in adequate measure." – Sathya Sai Baba, 4 March 1993

"If you constantly chant the name of God, the polluted atmosphere would automatically get purified. The divine vibrations originating from the chant of the divine Name mix with the atmosphere and spread everywhere, indeed throughout the world." – Sathya Sai Baba, Summer Showers 2000, Page 34

There are a number of ways we can appreciate and care for Mother Earth, some of which are listed below. Please note that these may need to be adapted to your community's needs

Education:

- Conduct and/or attend spiritual education classes or workshops on environmental topics. Sample lesson plans are available [here](#) for classes that can be conducted with children
- Deliver presentations or inspire children to deliver presentations to raise environmental awareness and appreciation towards Mother Earth

Spiritual:

- Pray for the health of our planet and dedicate devotional songs to Mother Nature
- Conduct **study circles** on environmental topics in outdoor settings
- Offer poems, art, or music on Mother Earth as an act of reverence and appreciation

Service:

- Use non-disposable plates, napkins, cups and silverware and segregate waste during events, so that as much as possible can be recycled or washed and re-used. Please refer to guide on hosting environmental friendly events, available [here](#)
- Participate in environmental-related service activities, such as having an e-waste collection drive, cleaning up parks or waterways or planting trees. There are many existing Earth Day initiatives taking place around the world which individuals and groups can participate in

Lifestyle Changes:

- Reduce meat and dairy consumption (farming dairy cattle uses 5% of the global water footprint; and is a significant contributor to methane, a greenhouse gas)
- Opt for public transport or carpooling or walking
- Carry your own reusable water bottle, cup or container for take-away coffee or food
- Switch from plastic to reusable bags made of cloth or other sustainable materials for your next trip to the grocery store/shopping centre
- Reduce energy consumption by switching to more energy-efficient appliances and electronic devices, installing LED or CFL bulbs, adding or upgrading insulation, turning off lights, and switching off appliances instead of leaving them on standby
- Reduce water consumption directly (e.g. by taking shorter showers, or washing full loads of laundry) or indirectly (buying less products, consuming less meat and dairy)
- Reduce waste going to landfills by composting organic waste, reusing, recycling and consuming less

We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. – Mother Teresa

Inspiration from around the world



Young adults in Australia paint their own cloth bags



Waste segregated & meals served on reusable dishes in USA



Environmental activities: clean-ups, community gardening for meal service, garden acre service, gleaning, planting, cleaning station for reusable dishes, raising awareness at Walk For Values

The above are examples of projects being undertaken by Sathya Sai Organisations around the world. To learn more about projects that have been undertaken, click on the following:

- Beach Clean Up near Santo Domingo
- Cleaning the Forest & Coast in Russia
- Service to Animals in the USA
- River Bed Clean Up in Croatia
- Walk for Values in Suriname
- Tree Planting in Australia

Please share pictures/videos/stories of environmental activities you participated in during Earth Day and World Human Values Day, via e-mail at servetheplanet.ssio@gmail.com

