

## SEL Activity

# Feed the Soil



grades 3-5



20-25 minutes

### Objectives

- Students learn what composting is.
- Students learn how composting can help our environment.
- Students take action to try composting for themselves.

### Essential Questions

- What is composting?
- What are the benefits of composting?
- How can composting help our community?

### Vocabulary

**Compost:** verb; to collect and store plant material so it can decay and be added to the soil.

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### Before you Begin

(Optional) Prepare two-liter bottles, dirt, shredded paper, leaves, water, and some food for composting.

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### Program Connections

This activity focuses on caring for the environment—a theme that runs through our core programs. To learn more, visit our [PROGRAMS](#) page.

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#### MATERIALS + MEDIA

Video: [Composting for kids](#) (5:56)  
(Digging Deeper) Video: [Making a homemade composter](#) (2:53)

#### SEL CORE COMPETANCIES

Responsible decision-making  
Self-management  
Self-efficacy

# THINK • GIVE

## What is Composting and How Does it Work?

Watch: [Composting for Kids](#) (5:56). In this video, students learn about composting, how to separate food scraps effectively, and the importance of closing the loop in their food system.

### Discuss:

- Have you composted before? If so, when and where?
- What goes in compost? What goes in the trash?
- How can composting help the Earth?
- What are some of the challenges when starting a composting project?
- What is a small step you could take towards being someone who practices composting? If you're already a composter, how could you help others to start?

## DIGGING DEEPER

Watch: [Making a homemade composter](#) (2:53).

Explain: Now that we have learned about composting, let's start a compost bin at home, at our school, or in our classroom. Although the process is slow, we are helping create new life! Steps:

- Cut off the top of the bottle and use a push pin to poke holes in the bottom.
- Add dirt, paper, leaves, and food to the bottle.
- Pour some water into your bottle and leave it in the sunlight (use bottle top as a cap).
- After seeing your compost turn into dirt, go outside and spread it around to help plants grow.

### Discuss:

- How is composting a cycle? (what comes from the ground can go back into the ground)
- Can we use composting in our everyday lives?
- How can composting help us?

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# CONNECT + CLOSE

### Discuss:

- Can you inspire your family to think about composting at home?
- Can you find and join a composting program in your town?
- Could you talk to someone about starting a composting program at your school?
- Could you make a presentation at a school meeting? Could you make posters to spread the word?

## ACTION

Explain: Take a step towards being a composter at home, and/or take an action to inspire someone else! Try to make one of the ideas you heard when discussing how to begin composting and try to make one a habit.

## REFLECTION

Lead a discussion or allow students to journal. Use the following questions as a guide:

- What items did you put in the compost bin?
- What was challenging about composting?
- How can composting help the environment in the short term? In the long-term?