

# PARENTAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR HELPING LIL SPROUTS: WORMERY

- MATERIALS:
  - Glass jar or cup
  - Dirt (any kind)
  - ¼ of gravel or small pebbles
  - leaves/grass (natural decomposables)
  - Sand
  - Water
  - Worms
- Give your lil sprout the gardening collection checklist. Tell them that this is how we make food for our plants!
- Why is compost good for plants? It's got good nutrients, it helps them to 'drink' their water better, and it helps fight disease so they don't get sick!
- Take your lil sprout outside with a basket or container, a checklist, a clipboard (optional), and a marker to check off what they find.
- Encourage your lil sprout to find the things on their own! If you do not have all of these things in your own yard, take a treasure hunt journey to find everything you need.
  - Only a handful of rocks, gravel or small pebbles are needed, and can be found easily along the street, in large landscaping around public areas, scattered across the sidewalk, etc.
  - Sand may have to be purchased, but again, can be found around the neighborhood in dry areas.
  - For grass, leaves, and dirt, anything will do!
  - For worms, there are a few options:
    - Purchase bait at your local gas station (not recommended, you only need 3 or 4 worms, so you'll have to set the rest free)
    - Take a walk after it rains and choose your worms off of the sidewalk
    - Equip yourself with a spoon or small shovel and go digging! Any plot of ground with moist soil should have plenty of worms to find.
- Now that you have materials, grab your jar or container. Have your lil sprout layer their handful of pebbles along the bottom, only until the bottom of the jar is covered. [this is a good place to talk about how worms breathe/worm body parts. Ask if they notice a worm-covered sidewalk after it rains...explain that worms breathe through their skin, and if the dirt has too much water in it, they can't

breathe! Then they climb out of the soil for more air. Say that putting rocks on the bottom help the dirt from getting too wet. This video helps to explain! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWb6HLBhkfQ>].

- Once the pebbles are in, place the sand and dirt in alternating layers, a handful of each until the jar is half full! (Three handfuls of each if it's a lil sprout's fist we're talking about). Add about 3 inches of dirt for the worms to get started working their magic.
- Sprinkle the grass and leaves on top. Tell your lil sprout that the worms are gonna start mixing all the ingredients around to make an amazing compost!
- Ask your lil sprout to make a journal drawing
- Place the jar in a cool, dark place. Tell your lil sprout to check it every couple of days to see the differences.