

Older Elementary Craft

The Incredible Self-Watering Seed Starter

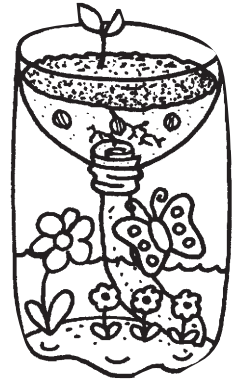
(20–30 minutes)

Preparation

Draw a line evenly around each bottle with permanent marker, about 5 inches (12.5 cm) from the top. Use craft knife to make a 1-inch (2.5 cm) slit along line. Pour potting soil into large tub or container.

Instruct each child in the following procedures:

- Use scissors to cut bottle in two. Begin at slit and cut along marker line (image a).



Materials

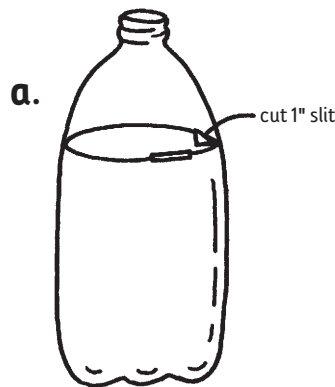
- permanent marker
- potting soil
- large plastic tub or container
- variety of paint markers
- pitchers of water
- easy-to-grow seeds (sunflower, bean, nasturtium, etc.)

For Each Child

- one 1- or 2-liter clear plastic soda bottle with label removed

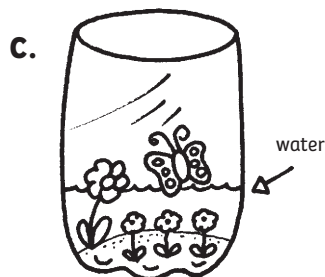
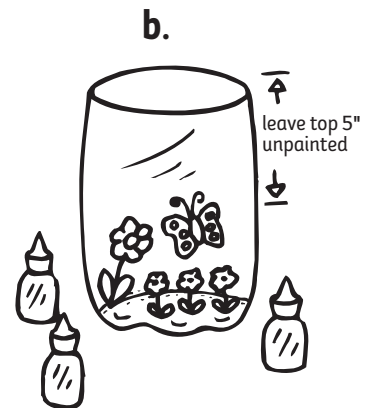
Standard Supplies

- craft knife
- ruler
- scissors
- paper towels

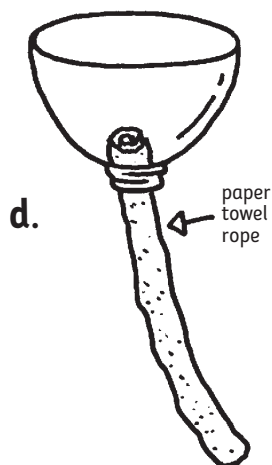


- Use paint markers to draw designs on the bottom portion of the bottle. Draw a natural design of plants, bugs and butterflies or other creations that God has made. Leave the top 5 inches (12.5 cm) undecorated (image b).

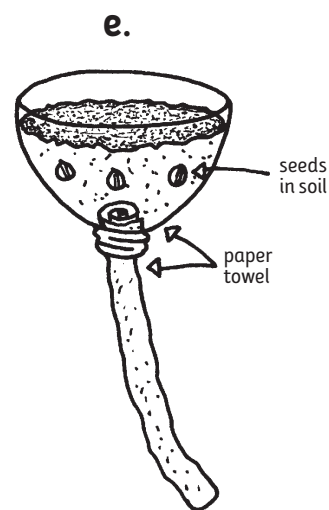
- Fill one-third of bottle with water (image c). Set in a place away from work area.



- Cut a paper towel in half. Tightly roll one half into a rope.
- Turn top portion of bottle upside down, like a funnel, and insert one end of rolled paper towel into the mouth of the bottle (image d).



- Stuff other half of paper towel into the mouth of the funnel, around the paper towel rope, to block the opening and hold rope in place.
- Fill the funnel with soil.
- With fingers, push a few seeds into the soil next to the funnel sides so you can see the seeds through the plastic (image e).
- Carefully set the funnel in the top of painted bottle bottom, being careful not to touch wet paint. The paper towel rope should extend into the water in the bottle.
- Pour a little water into the soil to dampen seeds.
- Allow paint on bottle to dry before taking home.



Conversation

You invented a way of watering your seeds automatically. How do you think your seeds receive water? (The paper towel rope hangs in the water below. The water is absorbed through the paper towel and travels up to the soil, which absorbs the water.) **If you keep enough water in the bottom of your planter so that the paper towel is always wet, you can go a week or more without watering your seeds or plants. As you watch your seeds sprout, have fun observing how God has created plants to grow!**