



Soil *makes life possible*
Church Leaders Guide

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship and Education Committee 2008

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Soil Stewardship Week 2009 April 26 to May 3, 2009

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship Week is one of the largest conservation-related observances. The 3,000 conservation districts that make up NACD, manage soil and water conservation programs in virtually every community in the United States. Since 1955, NACD has sponsored the national Stewardship Week program by selecting a theme and developing materials for schools, communities and churches of all denominations. **Stewardship Week, celebrated annually between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May**, reminds us of our personal responsibility to care for the natural resources which we all depend upon. The celebration and observance of Stewardship continue throughout the year not for just one week. The concept of Stewardship involves personal and social responsibility. We have a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely. By doing this we can achieve material and spiritual growth in our own lives, and leave a rich legacy for future generations.

Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District to see how you can become more involved in conservation activities in your local community.

Visit www.nacdnet.org "about NACD" section for state contacts.

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About NACD

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The association was founded on the philosophy that conservation decisions should be made at the local level with technical and funding assistance from federal, state and local governments and the private sector. As the national voice for all conservation districts, NACD supports voluntary, incentive driven natural resource conservation programs that benefit all citizens.

NACD maintains relationships with organizations and government agencies; publishes information about districts; works with leaders in agriculture, conservation, environment, education, industry and other fields; and provides services to its districts. NACD is primarily financed through voluntary contributions of its member districts and state associations.

The association's programs and activities aim to advance the resource conservation cause of local districts and the millions of cooperating landowners and land managers they serve.

To learn more about conservation districts visit your local conservation district office.



Soil....the Scoop on it!

Soil – it nurtures life and death; under girds cities, forests and oceans; and feeds all terrestrial life on Earth. It is a substance that few people understand and most take for granted. It is arguably one of the Earth’s most critical natural resources.

Soil makes up the outer layer of the earth’s surface, it nourishes the plants we eat, the animals we use for food and fiber and the thriving underground kingdom of bacteria, fungi, protozoa, earthworms and other microbes that are critical to the planet’s food web.

Soil scientists have identified over 70,000 kinds of soils in the United States. Soil directly and indirectly effects agriculture production, water quality and climate. Thanks to the earths soils, most of the rainfall hitting the planet is trapped and absorbed, watering plants and replenishing aquifers, rivers, lakes and streams.

Topsoil is the most productive soil layer and the layer that is the first lost due to soil erosion. Erosion occurs naturally because of wind, water and ice acting on any exposed rock or soil surface. Human activities are responsible for 60-80% of all erosion. A single rainstorm can wash away centuries old accumulations of soil from damaged, neglected or badly managed ground. In many places, soils are eroding faster than they can be rebuilt. Though soil is a renewable resource in theory, soil forms slowly. For all practical purposes, the soil we lose to erosion will never be replaced in our lifetime.

When soil erodes, much of the displaced sediment - as well as pollutants that are mixed with it such as pesticides, oil, grease and excess nutrients wash into streams, rivers and eventually the ocean. This in turn effects water quality and disrupts the health of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s the protection of soil from erosion and degradation has greatly increased through the formation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and many state and federal agencies. These Conservation agencies equipped with their highly skilled conservationist assist landowners and the general public through education and technical assistance as to the importance of the soil and how to properly manage the thing that humans literally owe their very existence.

For more information on Soils visit:

Smithsonian Institution - <http://forces.si.edu/soils/>

Soil Science Society of America – www.soils.org

Natural Resources Conservation Service – www.soils.usda.gov

Environmental Protection Agency – www.epa.gov/gmpo/edresources/soil

On Good Soil

Written by: **Gina DeMarco**

District Manager, Northern Rhode Island
Conservation District



Stewardship Week was established by the National Association of Conservation Districts, an organization that was founded to direct programs that protect renewable natural resources after the devastation to agriculture in the United States as a result of the Dust Bowl. Stewardship Week has been celebrated annually since 1955.

The Dust Bowl refers to a decade of drought which began in 1933. The drought impacted 75% of the United States, but was most devastating to portions of Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas. These states lost the production of crops on approximately 100 million acres of land. Most of the farms were small, family-owned pieces of land. Landowners were forced to mortgage their property to the full value. Eventually the banks claimed rights to the land and small farmers were forced off their land. Many headed west to what they thought was the land of milk and honey of California.

John Steinbeck captures our hearts in The Grapes of Wrath as we read about the injustice of this time - children starving and families watching while wealthy landowners incinerated oranges. They dumped truckloads of potatoes in the river, hiring guards to make sure the starving people couldn't net them out. And over 6,000,000 pigs were destroyed and buried in the US in order to stabilize the pricing on these products. There was public outcry and, as a result, the Federal Surplus Relief Corporation was established. Excess crops and canned meat were then distributed through local relief efforts. Out of something evil, something good was born.



Many believe had the farmers and landowners chosen to band together and implement proper agricultural practices,

demonstrating good land stewardship, the devastation of the Dust Bowl could have been

somewhat diminished. The good news is that Americans have learned from the past, and since the 30's there have been severe droughts, but the same devastation has not been repeated because good stewardship practices have been taught, learned and implemented on the land.

Stewardship is a recurring Biblical theme. Actually, it is also a Biblical mandate. It is the first act of service that God directed of Adam in Genesis 2:15, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." It raises the question, how was Adam to take care of the land? And likewise, in what manner has God directed mankind to implement stewardship in his care for the earth? A clue can be observed in Genesis 1:26, "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.'" Since humans are created in the image of God, we can therefore look to our Creator and mimic his style of ruling. God rules in an orderly fashion, with mercy and loving kindness. He rules in justice, benevolence and righteousness, and so it is these principles that we can apply to our method of stewardship.

This year, soil is the theme for our Stewardship celebration. Soil is one of the basic building blocks of life. Within soil lies a miracle. Out of good soil combined with a seed, sun, and water, can grow a great Redwood tree, a thin blade of grass, a creeping luscious grapevine, or a vibrant red tomato plant to bring food and shelter to man and beast! Within good soil lie the nutrients of life for the physical realm.

As a master teacher, Jesus linked the character of the human heart to qualities and types of soil.

Our text is Matthew 13:1-9 and vs. 23 (NIV):

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among the thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell **on good soil**, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Jesus later explains the parable in verse 23 of the same chapter and states, “But the one who received the seed that fell **on good soil** is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”



While there is much to be extrapolated from this passage of scripture, we benefit most from understanding the value of good soil, for it is the man who hears the Word and understands it who has a heart that Jesus compared to good soil. This is the only soil that will be productive. It is clear that the good soil produces a crop, but what makes the soil good? It is the conditions for categorizing soil as “good soil” that will produce bountiful crops and are compared with the conditions of the heart.

Good soil must be protected by roots. That is a fundamental lesson of the Dust Bowl. The land was stripped of all vegetation, and without roots to hold it in place the winds blew away an estimated 850 million tons of topsoil from the Southern Plains alone. Roots are essential for

good soil. The Word of God must take root in good soil to produce stable Christianity. Christians need to establish roots. Some who were impacted by the Dust Bowl believed the theory that “rain follows the plow.” This theory was popular in the American West and Australia, and led people to believe that the climate would change as they began homesteading the land. The rain would actually follow them as they moved into dry areas and established their farms. Trends of culture change and Jesus warns that in the last days good will be called evil and evil good. God’s Word is good seed and does not change with the trends of society. “Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” John 12:26 Being grounded in the unchanging Word of God and staying rooted in traditional Christianity provide roots for our spiritual well-being. There is a mirage in the desert, just as there is a mirage in chasing temptation, but neither have lasting value.

Good soil must have nutrients that will be supplied to the vegetation that grows on it. Jesus called Himself the bread of life. He is referred to as the Word in the first letter of John, the same Word that spoke creation into existence. We need to feed on the Word of God regularly –studying it, digesting it, and letting it take hold in our hearts. This will sustain us.



Good soil must have moisture in order to sustain thriving crops. In addition to natural rainfall, irrigation methods have been established as good farming practices. Christians need the Holy Spirit, which the Bible often symbolizes as water. The Holy Spirit will fill us, lead us and direct us. Just as water is refreshing to our crops and our thirst, so the Holy Spirit comes and refreshes the weary. Jesus said, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” John 7:37-38.

Good soil must be softened, plowed under, and have air pockets so that plant roots have room to grow and establish. The soil of our hearts must be broken and humble. Hosea admonishes Judah in chapter 10:11-12, “Judah must plow, and Jacob must break up the ground. Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.” And Paul instructs the Church in Philippians 2:5-8: “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!”

Good soil is alive. It contains organic matter – consisting of living organisms. God’s people must be alert, alive, and ready to serve. Jesus says we must die to live. John 12:24-26 “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” This is a paradox worth pondering. In The Grapes of Wrath, Steinbeck writes, “And this you can know - fear the time when Man self will not suffer and die for a concept, for this one quality is the foundation of Man self and this one quality is Man, distinctive in the universe.”

Good soil must be abundant and unified. An individual soil particle cannot sustain life, but when surrounded and unified with millions of other particles it can produce abundant crops. Acts 2:42-45 speaks of the unification or fellowship that occurred among the early believers. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.



In a speech in 1937, while America was in the midst of the Dust Bowl, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated, “I see one third of the nation ill-housed, ill clad, ill nourished...The test of our progress is not whether we add more abundance to those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.” It is with this sentiment – that of FDR, Steinbeck and the early church – a change from me to we – that a refuge can be formed that will weather the toughest storm.

Good soil produces fruit. John 15:5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” And Jesus says that by their fruit you will recognize a true Christian: “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.” Matthew. 7:18. He then explains that it is “he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven,” that will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus came to do His Father’s will:

- To seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10
- To heal the sick. Matthew 10:8
- To loose the chains of injustice, set the oppressed free, to share food with the hungry, provide the poor with shelter, to clothe the naked, to care for family, to visit those in prison. Isaiah 58:6-7 & Matthew 25:31-46.

And when He ascended, He left us with His mission.

When Christ began His work in us, we became redeemed and we are to share in His work of redeeming the world, both the human and the earthly creation. As we submit to Christ, the King of Creation, we are living in the kingdom now; yet the Kingdom of Heaven is also a time of future

blessings and future judgment and will not be fully established until He reigns in fullness and Satan has been destroyed. So the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. Romans 8:19-21. It awaits redemption as we establish stewardship principles and, like our Creator, care for it in His image, although it will not be fully released from oppression, just as we will not, until Christ returns to reign in the Kingdom of God.

The new redemptive nature we take on in the Kingdom of God empowers us to be more like Christ. This is expressed in uplifting the human handiwork of God: loving our neighbor, the oppressed, those bound by racism, abuse, loneliness and poverty. It is also expressed in how we treat the variety of creatures and natural resources created by God. All of creation should rejoice when His Church rises up in the same Spirit and power that raised Christ from the dead, to continue His mission. Such Christ-like behavior will require sacrifice, but our eternal reward will far outweigh any cost. And joy will be ours when we no longer have to struggle with the eternal questions, “who am I and why am I here?” We may say together, “I am a child of God and I am here to glorify Him and reveal His glory.”

**Other Scriptures to be used in Soil Stewardship
Related Sermons**

**Written by: Michael L. Lyle, Senior Minister
Washington Street United Methodist Church**

Genesis 1 & 2
Deuteronomy 26:1-15, 24:19-22
Several Psalms have earth/creation related themes
(8, 24, 89, 95, 96, 98,104, 136)
Isaiah 6:3, 37:16, 65:17
Jeremiah 23:24
1 Corinthians 10:26 and 15:47
2 Peter 3:13
Revelation 21:1

Hymns and Traditional Selections:

How Great Thou Art, written by: Carl
Gustave Boberg, translated to English by:
Stuart K. Hine

The Trees of the Field by: Steffi Rubin
and Stuart Dauerman

Battle Hymn of the Republic by: Julia
Ward Howe (Grapes of Wrath)

The Solid Rock by: Edward Mote

Make me a Channel of your Peace by:
Sabastian Temple

**Music
Selections
Provided by:
Gina
DeMarco**

Therefore the Redeemed

If the Same Spirit that Raised Christ from the
Dead Dwell in You

He Brought Me Out by: Henry J. Zelle

Contemporary Selections:

God of Wonders by: Caedmon's Call

We Bow Down by: Twila Paris

His Love Endures Forever by: Michael W.
Smith

Soils Litany
Written by: Gina DeMarco

Leader: Out of the soil, God shaped the form of a man and breathed life into Adam. (Genesis 2:7)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)*

Leader: Out of the soil, God produced the first stewardship responsibility for Mankind, to work and take care of the earth in the Garden. (Genesis 2:15)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Leader: Out of the soil, injustice cries out for the spilt blood of the innocent. (Genesis 4:10)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His mercy endures forever.*

Leader: As the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations. (Isaiah 61:11)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Leader: Into the soil spilt the atoning blood of Jesus, forever taking root and never to lose power. (John 19:34)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Leader: Into the soil of our hearts a tiny seed is scattered, producing fruit with eternal value. (Matthew 13:23)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Leader: Out of the mud and mire the Lord lifted me, He set my feet upon a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. (Psalm 40:2)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord who alone does great wonders, who made the heavens, and spread out the earth upon the waters. (Psalm 136:4-6)

People: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.*



Gina DeMarco is the District Manager of the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District she is also a Deaconess and Lay Adult Minister at the Glad Tidings Community Church in Chepachet, Rhode Island. Gina has a Diploma in Urban Minister from the Gordon Cornwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts.

Prayer:

Written by: **Michael L. Lyle, Senior Minister**
Washington Street United Methodist Church

We rejoice, O God, that you are ever planting gardens.

You called the dry land earth and caused it to put forth plants yielding seed and fruit of every kind. You plant within us, anew, each moment, seeds of hope that can only grow in the fertile ground of your love.

You formed us from the dust of the ground and you raise us from the dust of despair.

You help us to see the degradation, but also the limitless possibility of your good earth.

You give us sensitivity, vision and courage to act righteously in behalf of all creation.

God of all the people of earth, every plant and animal, every plot of life-giving soil, all rain and wind, send your life-renewing Spirit to blow over, within and around us anew, that we might join ever more fully with you in celebration of, and advocacy for, our shared creation.

Thanks and praise be to you O God. Amen.

Referenced in Sermon “On Good Soil”

Placed in Order of Reference (NIV)

Provided by: Gina DeMarco

Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

Matthew 13:1-9 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among the thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Matthew 13:23 “But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Isaiah 40:31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary the will walk and not be faint.

John 12:26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 7:37-38 If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

Hosea 10:11-12 Judah must plow, and Jacob must break up the ground. Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to see the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

Philippians 2:5-8 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!



John 12:24-25 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

Acts 2:42-45 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Matthew 7:18-21 "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

Luke 19:10 "For the son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Matthew 10:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Isaiah 58:6-7 "Is this not the kind of fast I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry, and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Matthew 25:37 – 40 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' Then the King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'."

Romans 8:19-21 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.



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Responsive Reading

Written by: Michael L. Lyle, Senior Minister
Washington Street United Methodist Church, VA

Leader: You are the hope of all that lives Lord God, from the rich soils of earth and the creatures and plants within, to the windswept mountain peaks and all that lies between or soars above.

People: *Renew us Lord, like you renew your good creation, from moment to moment.*

Leader: Like earthworm, mole and beetle . . .

People: *Help us to fully appreciate the earth and the life it contains.*

Leader: Like plants rooted in the fertile soil of your love . . .

People: *Help us to keep our arms and faces turned to you, and our feet rooted in you.*

Leader: As you taught ancient people never to harvest their fields to the limits, but always to leave something for the traveler and the displaced . . .

People: *Renew in us the rightness of limited consumption and careful management, that there may always be enough for all.*

Leader: You, O God, are always planting gardens. From Eden unto this present moment, you plant beautiful things for the sustenance and pleasure of all.

People: *Plant your vision of new creation so deeply within our hearts that we become, with you, not just partakers, but co-creators of all that gives life, sustenance and beauty to the world, now and always.*

All: Amen.



Soil and Similar Words in Scripture

By: Gina DeMarco

Soil

- **Genesis 4:2 NIV**
Later she gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the **soil**.
- **Genesis 4:3 NIV**
*In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the **soil** as an offering to the Lord.*
- **Genesis 9:20 NIV**
Noah, a man of the **soil**, proceeded to plant a vineyard.
- **Exodus 23:19 NIV**
*"Bring the best of the first fruits of your **soil** to the house of the LORD your God. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.*
- **Exodus 34:26 NIV**
*"Bring the best of the first fruits of your **soil** to the house of the LORD your God. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."*
- **Leviticus 26:20 NIV**
*Your strength will be spent in vain, because your **soil** will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of the land yield their fruit.*
- **Leviticus 27:30 NIV**
*"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the **soil** or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.*
- **Numbers 13:20 NIV**
*How is the **soil**? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees on it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)*
- **Deuteronomy 26:2 NIV**
take some of the first fruits of all that you produce from the **soil** of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name.
- **Deuteronomy 26:10 NIV**
*and now I bring the first fruits of the **soil** that you, O Lord, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him.*
- **1 Kings 18:38 NIV**
Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the **soil**, and also licked up the water in the trench.
- **2 Chronicles 26:10 NIV**
*He also built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the **soil**.*
- **Job 5:6 NIV**
For hardship does not spring from the **soil**, nor does trouble sprout from the ground.
- **Job 8:19 NIV**
*Surely its life withers away, and from the **soil** other plants grow.*
- **Job 14:8 NIV**
Its roots may grow old in the ground and its stump die in the **soil**.
- **Job 14:19 NIV**
*As water wears away stones and torrents wash away the **soil**, so you destroy man's hope.*
- **Job 21:33 NIV**
The **soil** in the valley is sweet to him; all men follow after him, and a countless throng goes before him.
- **Psalms 37:35 NIV**
*I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in its native **soil**.*
- **Psalms 105:35 NIV**
They ate up every green thing in their land, ate up the produce of their **soil**.
- **Song of Solomon 5:3 NIV**
*I have taken off my robe-- must I put it on again? I have washed my feet-- must I **soil** them again?*
- **Isaiah 28:24 NIV**
When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and harrowing the **soil**?

- **Isaiah 30:24 NIV**
The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel.
- **Isaiah 61:11 NIV**
For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.
- **Ezekiel 17:5 NIV**
He took some of the seed of your land and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a willow by abundant water.
- **Ezekiel 17:8 NIV**
It had been planted in good soil by abundant water so that it would produce branches, bear fruit and become a splendid vine.
- **Matthew 13:5 NIV**
Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.
- **Matthew 13:8 NIV**
Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.
- **Matthew 13:23 NIV**
But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.
- **Mark 4:5 NIV**
Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.
- **Mark 4:8 NIV**
Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times."
- **Mark 4:20 NIV**
Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a



crop--thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown."

- **Mark 4:28 NIV**
All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.
- **Luke 8:8 NIV**
Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown." When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
- **Luke 8:15 NIV**
But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.
- **Luke 13:7 NIV**
So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, "For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?"
- **Luke 14:35 NIV**
It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Dirt

- **2 Samuel 16:13 NIV**
So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt.
- **Zechariah 9:3 NIV**
Tyre has built herself a stronghold; she has heaped up silver like dust, and gold like the dirt of the streets.
- **1 Peter 3:21 NIV**
And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Mud

- **2 Samuel 22:43 NIV**

I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like **mud** in the streets.

- **Job 30:19 NIV**
*He throws me into the **mud**, and I am reduced to dust and ashes.*
- **Job 41:30 NIV**
His undersides are jagged potsherds, leaving a trail in the **mud** like a threshing sledge.
- **Psalms 18:42 NIV**
*I beat them as fine as dust borne on the wind; I poured them out like **mud** in the streets.*
- **Psalms 40:2 NIV**
He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the **mud** and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.
- **Isaiah 10:6 NIV**
*I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like **mud** in the streets.*
- **Isaiah 57:20 NIV**
But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and **mud**.
- **Jeremiah 38:6 NIV**
*So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only **mud**, and Jeremiah sank down into the **mud**.*
- **Jeremiah 38:22 NIV**
All the women left in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the

officials of the king of Babylon. Those women will say to you: 'They misled you and overcame you-- those trusted friends of yours. Your feet are sunk in the **mud**; your friends have deserted you.'

- **John 9:6 NIV**
*Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some **mud** with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes.*
- **John 9:11 NIV**
He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some **mud** and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."
- **John 9:14 NIV**
*Now the day on which Jesus had made the **mud** and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath.*
- **John 9:15 NIV**
Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put **mud** on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."
- **2 Peter 2:22 NIV**
*Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the **mud**."*

Other words referring to soil:

Dust – Dust is relevant for this study. There are 100 verses in the Bible using the word dust.

Ground – Ground is relevant to this study. There are 303 verses in the Bible using the word ground.

For additional information please visit <http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship/>

The educators guide on soil will give you wonderful ideas for Bible School and other outreach activities with youth and adults.

Visit the NACD Marketplace store for additional products at: www.nacdstore.org

Community Outreach Projects

Soils Theme

Submitted By: Gina DeMarco

Plant a Riparian Buffer

Riparian buffers are vegetated areas next to water resources that protect water resources from nonpoint source pollution and provide bank stabilization and aquatic and wildlife habitat. Nonpoint source pollution is defined as the entry of substances such as toxic chemicals, nutrients, bacteria or other viruses into water from diffuse origins. If you have a stream or water body in your community that is subject to soil erosion and pollutant loading because there is no or little vegetation abutting the water resource, planting native plants in the area can be of great benefit to soil and water resources. You can do a search on the web for specific details. Make sure you use native plant species.

Plant a Community Rain Garden

A rain garden is a bowl shaped depression in the ground that is about 4 – 8 inches deep, and the size varies in length and width. It collects storm water run-off from areas like roofs, parking lots, streets, sidewalks or fertilized lawns. A significant amount of local water pollution is caused by storm water runoff. Storm water run-off can contain: automotive fluids, animal waste, fertilizers and pesticides from gardens, debris from roof shingles, sand and salt from de-icing, etc. The storm water run-off flows into the lowest part of the garden. The garden helps filter out the pollutants and it also helps with flooding. Always use native species of plants in your rain garden. To learn more about how to plant a rain garden go to:

www.nricd.org or

www.iaswcd.org/district_tools/pwq/home.html

Plant a Community Vegetable Garden

You can have the various members make a plot for their personal use or you can donate the harvest to your local food bank. This is becoming very popular. It can help children

understand where their food comes from, bring together generations of people working on the project and provide sustenance for the hungry in your community.

Learn about nonpoint source pollution and ideas for your community.

Visit these websites:

www.landwaterconnection.org

www.epa.gov/greenskapes/

Community Outreach Programs – Submitted By: Michelle Gudorf, VT

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs offer locally grown, seasonal products like flowers, vegetables, meat and dairy products and breads. Members purchase a share of the crops or products produced at the farm (or Co-op of farms), the members often participate in the farming experience by picking/ harvesting the produce. The collection of food offered each week is the freshest available. CSA's are a good program as they offer discounts off the retail price in exchange for members buying upfront and agreeing to take what is available. Co-ops often offer recipes that include the produce and product offered each week. To find your closest CSA or for additional information about the CSA model visit the Northeast Organic Farming Association of -Vermont website at www.nofavt.org. This information was received from *Agriview* a publication of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

