



I Love God's Green Earth

**Devotions for Kids Who Want to
Take Care of God's CREATION**

**Michael & Caroline
CARROLL**



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site for kids at www.tyndale.com/kids.

TYNDALE is a registered trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Tyndale Kids logo is a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

I Love God's Green Earth: Devotions for Kids Who Want to Take Care of God's Creation

Copyright © 2010 by Michael and Caroline Carroll. All rights reserved.

Cover photograph of earth © by Masterfile Corporation. All rights reserved.

Cover image of butterfly © by Dmitry Remesov/iStockphoto. All rights reserved.

Cover image of turtle © by Kitigan/iStockphoto. All rights reserved.

Cover image of bird © by Portia Remnant/iStockphoto. All rights reserved.

Interior illustrations by Ruth Berg and Jennifer Ghionzoli. Copyright © by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Interior WC Roughtrad font © by WC Fonts. All rights reserved.

Designed by Jennifer Ghionzoli

Edited by Stephanie Voiland

Published in association with the literary agency of WordServe Literary Group, Ltd., 10152 S. Knoll Circle, Highlands Ranch, CO 80130.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

For manufacturing information regarding this product, please call 1-800-323-9400.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Carroll, Michael W., date.

I love God's green earth : devotions for kids who want to take care of God's creation / Michael and Caroline Carroll.

p. cm.

"Tyndale kids."

ISBN 978-1-4143-3179-9 (sc)

1. Human ecology—Religious aspects—Christianity—Juvenile literature.
2. Christian children—Prayers and devotions. I. Carroll, Caroline, date. II. Title.

BT695.5.C373 2010

261.8'8—dc22

2009042428

Printed in the United States of America

16 15 14 13 12 11 10

7 6 5 4 3 2 1



To Harriet & Arne Truman,
the original repair/reuse/recycle/reduce organic gardeners

GOD'S GREEN EARTH AND YOU

- 2 **DAY 1:** What Started All the Chaos
- 4 **DAY 2:** Made in God's Image
- 6 **DAY 3:** To Serve and Protect
- 8 **DAY 4:** The Starfish
- 10 **DAY 5:** The Real Creator
- 12 **DAY 6:** What Do You Love?
- 14 **DAY 7:** Love One Another
- 16 **DAY 8:** How Big Is Your Footprint?
- 18 **DAY 9:** Get Connected: A Chat with a Professor

GOD'S AMAZING RECYCLING PLAN

- 20 **DAY 10:** Renewing from the Ground Up:
How God Recycles the Rocks
- 22 **DAY 11:** Exploding Recyclers
- 24 **DAY 12:** Earth: The Only Game in Town
- 26 **DAY 13:** What Goes Around Comes Around,
Part 1: The Water Cycle
- 28 **DAY 14:** What Goes Around Comes Around,
Part 2: The Oxygen Cycle
- 30 **DAY 15:** What Goes Around Comes Around,
Part 3: The Soil Cycle
- 32 **DAY 16:** The Seasons

NATURAL DISASTERS THAT CHANGE OUR WORLD

- 34 **DAY 17:** A Hot Time in Yellowstone
- 36 **DAY 18:** The Strongest Storms on Earth
- 38 **DAY 19:** A Rocky Slip 'n' Slide
- 40 **DAY 20:** Surf's Up!
- 42 **DAY 21:** Explosive Disasters
- 44 **DAY 22:** Powerful Twisters

A CHANGE IN THE AIR

- 46 **DAY 23:** Is the Earth Getting Warmer?
- 48 **DAY 24:** Spotting the Trends
- 50 **DAY 25:** The Little Ice Age

LEARNING FROM OUR MISTAKES

- 52 **DAY 26:** Bug Spray Gone Bad
- 54 **DAY 27:** A Spill That Took 20 Years to Clean Up

- 56 **DAY 28:** The Disappearing Lake
- 58 **DAY 29:** Air Pollution Solutions
- 60 **DAY 30:** Vanishing Forests

SMART ENERGY

- 62 **DAY 31:** Do You Have a Dinosaur in Your Tank?
- 64 **DAY 32:** Disneyland's Green Train
- 66 **DAY 33:** New Ideas for New Energy
- 68 **DAY 34:** Cool Cars, Part 1: Put Some Crops in Your Gas Tank
- 70 **DAY 35:** Cool Cars, Part 2: Hybrids
- 72 **DAY 36:** Cool Cars, Part 3: Electric Cars
- 74 **DAY 37:** Wind Power
- 76 **DAY 38:** Sun Power
- 78 **DAY 39:** Power from Weird Places
- 80 **DAY 40:** Fission: Atom-Splitting Energy
- 82 **DAY 41:** Happy New Year!

SOUNDS LIKE SCI-FI

- 84 **DAY 42:** Energy from Moonbeams
- 86 **DAY 43:** Fusion: Atom-Joining Energy
- 88 **DAY 44:** Helium-3: More than Just a Funny Voice
- 90 **DAY 45:** Catching the Energy Wave
- 92 **DAY 46:** Magnets of the Giants

ANIMALS BEHAVING BADLY

- 94 **DAY 47:** Wild Experiences
- 96 **DAY 48:** Goose Patrol
- 98 **DAY 49:** Monkeying Around
- 100 **DAY 50:** Close Encounters of the Creature Kind

ANIMALS HELPING OUT

- 102 **DAY 51:** Why You Should Love Bats
- 104 **DAY 52:** Kudzu Catastrophe
- 106 **DAY 53:** Dolphins to the Rescue
- 108 **DAY 54:** Dogs That Serve
- 110 **DAY 55:** Horse Power

DISAPPEARING ACTS

- 112 **DAY 56:** Animals in the Danger Zone
- 114 **DAY 57:** Vanishing Varmints
- 116 **DAY 58:** Dinosaurs: Mega and Mini
- 118 **DAY 59:** The Largest Land Mammal in the World
- 120 **DAY 60:** Sumatran Tiger



- 122 **DAY 61:** Whales and Other Olympic Swimmers
- 124 **DAY 62:** Not Your Average House Cats
- 126 **DAY 63:** A Whooping Success Story
- 128 **DAY 64:** Modern-Day Noah's Arks

PEOPLE AND TRASH

- 130 **DAY 65:** Bottled Water Everywhere
- 132 **DAY 66:** Glass Act
- 134 **DAY 67:** Here a Can, There a Can, Everywhere
a Soda Can
- 136 **DAY 68:** The Mystery of the Triangles
- 138 **DAY 69:** Paper or Plastic?
- 140 **DAY 70:** Down in the Dumps

SIMPLE THINGS TO DO AT HOME

- 142 **DAY 71:** Clean and Natural
- 144 **DAY 72:** Down the Toilet
- 146 **DAY 73:** New Life for Old Stuff
- 148 **DAY 74:** Water Thieves and Energy Gobblers

GOOD NEWS: CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

- 150 **DAY 75:** The Dark Side of Paper
- 152 **DAY 76:** Energy Vampires
- 154 **DAY 77:** Caring for Our Pets
- 156 **DAY 78:** Have a Green Christmas
- 158 **DAY 79:** A Match Made in Heaven
- 160 **DAY 80:** Broccoli and Tea Bags
- 162 **DAY 81:** More than You Need
- 164 **DAY 82:** Solar Ovens
- 166 **DAY 83:** Heroes in Your Garden

A GREEN COMMUNITY

- 168 **DAY 84:** Trees and Rivers: From Genesis to Revelation
- 170 **DAY 85:** Don't Forget to Mow the Roof
- 172 **DAY 86:** A Bed-and-Breakfast Goes Green
- 174 **DAY 87:** Backyard Edens
- 176 **DAY 88:** reCHARGE!
- 178 **DAY 89:** You Can Change the World!
- 180 **DAY 90:** Good News about a Bridge

- 182 *Top 10 Tips for Creation Care*
- 183 *Acknowledgments*
- 184 *About the Authors*

Introduction

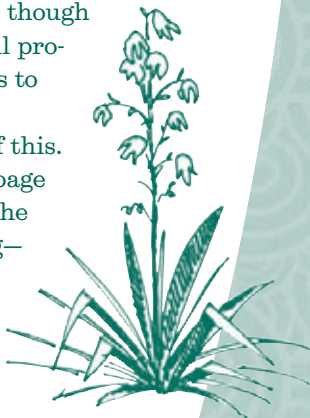
Sing a new song to the LORD! Let the whole earth sing to the LORD! . . . Let the heavens be glad, and the earth rejoice! Let the sea and everything in it shout his praise! Let the fields and their crops burst out with joy! Let the trees of the forest rustle with praise before the LORD!

PSALM 96:1, 11-13

P **PSALM 96 TELLS US** that God created a world of celebration. He wants us to live a life of joy. Part of our joy here on Earth comes from spending time outdoors in the beauty of the world he made. Many people in the Bible went out into the deserts, hills, and mountains so they could get away from distractions and connect with God. John the Baptist, David, many of the Old Testament prophets, and even Jesus went to wild and quiet places to talk with God. Spending time in nature brought them closer to him. They kept their lives in balance by being in touch with God and his creation.

The Garden of Eden was created in perfect balance, and Adam and Eve were there to take care of it. But Adam and Eve chose not to follow God's instructions, so God sent them out of his Garden and into a world filled with thorns, weeds, droughts, and storms. Even though we live outside of the Garden now, God still provides a beautiful world for us and wants us to take care of it.

People haven't always done a good job of this. Carbon dioxide pumps into the sky, garbage fills up the land, and chemicals pour into the rivers. Some scientists say global warming—a rise of temperatures all over the world—will create massive droughts and cause



food to run low. Are these scientists right? And should we be scared, or should we be excited to help change things? The fact is, scary news is not the reason we should care for the world. We should take care of the Earth because that's our job, because we love others, and because it makes God happy.

Joy comes when life is in balance. But some parts of our world are out of balance. In this book, we'll find ways to help bring balance to God's creation. As we do, we'll understand more about God's design for the universe, and we'll learn about our role in his plan for Earth.

EACH DEVOTION INCLUDES:

Scripture: A verse or passage that reflects God's love and care for his world or describes the part you can play in "creation care."

Facts: A section on the scientific facts surrounding the day's topic.

Connection: This section links the scientific facts with the biblical truth from that day's Scripture passage.

What Can I Do?: Each devotion will include an action you can take, which may include tips on how to **reuse** stuff, **recycle** stuff, **reduce** the amount of stuff you use, **rethink** the way you use stuff, **respect** God's world, **reflect** on new ideas, or **relay** your thoughts to God.

Fun Stuff: jokes, riddles, or factoids that tie in with the theme of the day.

In learning these things, we'll get closer to our Creator.
Now *that's* cause for celebration!



We want to hear from you. If this book gives you any cool thoughts or ideas about how you can take care of God's world, please send us an e-mail and tell us about it. We will write you back.

Our e-mail address is
cosmicart@stock-space-images.com.





DAY
1

What Started All the Chaos

The LORD God called to [Adam], "Where are you?"

GENESIS 3:9

THINGS WERE PRETTY peachy in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had the best salad bar in history, and they lived in peace with God's creatures and his creation. Everything worked just right together. God asked only one thing of the first humans: don't eat fruit from this one tree. Guess what? They did. When Adam and Eve disobeyed, everything stopped working together. Four things happened:

1. Humans were separated from God.
2. Humans were separated from each other, and they began to disagree and argue.
3. Every human was separated from himself or herself. People no longer felt good about themselves (Adam and Eve were ashamed). They were confused about their own thoughts and feelings.
4. Humans were separated from God's creation. They no longer lived in peace with it.

Then God did an amazing thing. He sent his Son, Jesus, to build a bridge between himself and us. Even though our sin has separated us from God, Jesus died so that we could reconnect with God. When we follow Jesus and let him be in charge of our lives, God's bridge reaches all the way from him to us.

 **Connection**

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were without shame until they sinned and stopped following God's plan. Then Adam was so ashamed that when God came to see him, as he did every day, Adam hid (see Genesis 3). Adam was no longer close to God. Jesus provides a way for us to get close to God, and as we learn more about God and get closer to him, we become more like Jesus. Love becomes the way we operate in life as the separation between humans and God (#1 on the list) is mended. This doesn't happen all at once; it's a lifelong journey that begins to heal the separation of humans from each other and from themselves (#2 and #3). The last separation, between God's creation and us, is what this book is all about. Like with #2 and #3, the healing of this one takes time. But with God's help, we can reconnect not only with him but also with his creation.

**What Can I Do?**

Relay your thoughts to God. We stay close to God by talking with him and listening to him. He speaks to us through his Word. Sometimes he shows us the way through events and circumstances that happen to us. Stay close to God, and he will help you make wise decisions about his garden, the world.

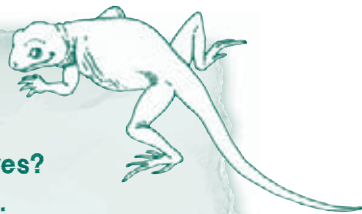
Garden Grins

Q: Why do potatoes make good detectives?

A: Because they keep their eyes peeled.

Q: What vegetable do you need a plumber for?

A: A leek.



DAY
2

Made in God's Image

God created human beings in his own image.
In the image of God he created them.

GENESIS 1:27

WE ARE MADE in God's image. That means that we have free will and that we have the ability to make choices. He has given us the ability to know what is right and what is wrong. We can live a life that reminds people of God by showing others love, patience, and kindness.

Knowing that we're made in God's image, how should we live? How should we treat his world? Let's think about God's qualities as they relate to his creation:

- God creates; he does not destroy.
- God cares for the weak.
- God rescues the helpless.
- God renews instead of "using up."
- God brings beautiful order, not disorder.
- God restores the damaged and broken.

Here are some names of God found in the Bible: the Shield, the Healer, the Gardener, my Helper, my Song, my Source, the Spring of Living Water, our Resting Place. These names of God show us that he wants the best for us and the rest of his creation, and that he protects and loves us.



Connection

As we learn in the first chapter of Genesis, Creation is designed for us to enjoy and care for, working hand in hand with God. He has desired a relationship with us ever since the beginning of the world. He's saying, "Work with me, people!"



What Can I Do?

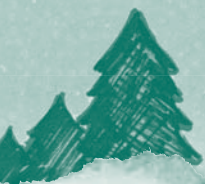
Reflect on who God is. Think of some of the things you appreciate most about God, such as his patience with you, his willingness to forgive you, or his constant love. Ask him to make you more like him in those areas.



Amazing Facts:

- No one knows for sure how many different kinds of creatures God has created, but there are 1.5 to 1.8 million different kinds that have been named. Each species, or kind, has its own unique characteristics. About half of all species are insects.
- There are more than 300,000 different species of beetles.
- There are about 4,500 species of mammals. Scientists have found more than 400 new species of mammals over the past 15 years.





DAY
3

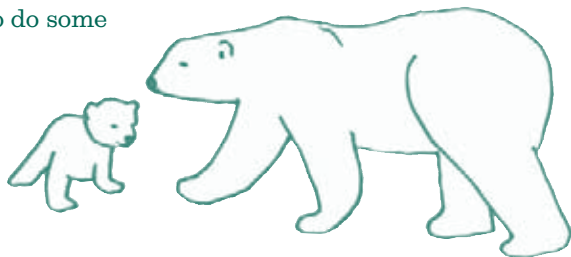
To Serve and Protect

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

NUMBERS 6:24

HAVE YOU EVER noticed the words on the side of a police car? In many cities, the door of a patrol car says, “To Serve and Protect.” Genesis 2:15 says the Lord put people in the Garden of Eden to “tend and watch over it” (NLT) or to “work it and take care of it” (NIV). The original Bible words (in Hebrew) are *abad* and *shamar*, which actually mean to “serve and protect.” Many law enforcement people don’t realize their patrol cars are quoting the last part of a Bible verse!

Part of serving God is taking care of the “garden” he has given us to live in—the world around us. We can take care of his creation by being careful of where we put our garbage, how we use our water, and how we make and use energy. But what’s this bit about protecting? God also calls us to care for his creatures and their homes, to preserve clean water and air, and to not use up all the wilderness. Is the whole Earth too big to protect? Is it too late? There are things that all of us can do to be better Earth keepers. A lot of people think the problems are too big. They say, “What can *I* do? I’m just one person.” But God has used a lot of “just one persons” to do some amazing things.





Connection

As we see in Genesis 2, “The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.” That is one reason God has put us here: to watch and tend his “garden,” the world. Each of us can do our part to care for creation, and when we work together, big things can happen! An African proverb says, “Many little people in many little places doing many little things can change the world.” A multitude of people just changing the way they do one or two things can have a major impact. So you don’t have to do huge things. Believe this: with God’s help, every little bit that you do makes a difference.



What Can I Do?

Respect the land. Make a game of picking up one piece of trash every time you are outside. One of the best ways to protect the land and water is simply to clean up! Trash not only clogs rivers and makes wildlife sick but it also takes away from God’s beauty around us.

Joke

Q: What promise did Adam and Eve make after they were kicked out of the Garden of Eden?

A: They promised to turn over a new leaf.



DAY
4

The Starfish

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the
least of these . . . you did for me.

MATTHEW 25:40, NIV

THERE'S A STORY about a little boy at the seashore. As he walked along the sand, he noticed hundreds of starfish that had been washed high up onto the beach the night before by a fierce storm. He knew they would never make it back to the water on their own, so he started picking them up one by one and carrying them back to the water so they would live. His older brother came along and said, "That's stupid. Why are you even bothering to do that? There are so many of them, it's not going to make any difference." The little boy looked down at the starfish in his hand, dropped it into the water, and said, "Well, it makes a difference to that one."

Even little kids can do things to help take care of God's world. The boy carrying the starfish back to the water was doing what he could to help some of God's creatures who were in trouble.



Connection

In Matthew 25:40, Jesus was talking about taking care of other people who need our help. But fish, birds, and animals—even the Earth itself—need our help too, as we learned in Genesis 1:26. Are you going to do every single thing that we mention in this book to help the planet? Of course not. But even if you only do *one* thing, it will make a difference.



What Can I Do?

Relay your thoughts to God. “Lord, there are 6 billion people on this Earth, and I am just one of them. Please show me what you want me to do to make your world a little better. Thank you.”

Joke

Q: What fish always gets asked for his autograph?

A: The starfish.





DAY
5

The Real Creator

Turn from these worthless things and turn to the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them.

ACTS 14:15

THE WORLD IS full of ideas about God. Some are right; others are not. Some people have the mistaken idea that God created the world but then took a vacation. In other words, they think God made the universe to be like a giant machine and then sat back to watch it run down like an old clock. People who believe this think that God is not interested in what happens here on Earth. But that is not true. Genesis tells us that at the end of the creation week, God looked at all he had made “and he saw that it was very good!” (Genesis 1:31). He put his stamp of approval on the whole universe; he is very interested in what happens to it!

Another wrong idea is that God and creation are the same thing. Some people think that God is in the trees and flowers and creatures and air. But Genesis, the first book in the Bible, tells us that God existed even before the world was made and that he is separate from it. God tells us not to worship anyone or anything besides him. And that includes nature.

God is better than all those ideas. He’s greater, bigger, more awesome and amazing than his creation, but he also cares about the world he has created.



Connection

When some people do things for the environment, it is because they love the Earth. This isn't a bad thing, but it's not the whole story. When Christians take care of God's creation, we have an extra good reason: we do it out of love for our Father in heaven—the one “who made heaven and earth”!



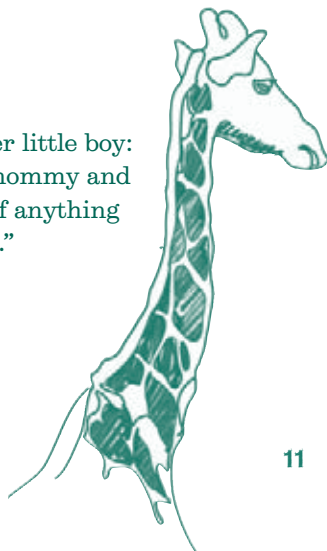
What Can I Do?

Reflect on who God is. We can make sure we have a clear view of who God is by studying his Word, the Bible. We can trust the Bible to be true because it is “God-breathed” (2 Timothy 3:16, NIV). That means the words in it are just what God wants to tell us. So if we hear something about God, we should always check in with what the Bible says about it.



A Child's Prayer

A mother overheard this bedtime prayer by her little boy: “Dear God, please take care of my daddy and mommy and me. Oh, and please take care of yourself, God. If anything happens to you, we're going to be in a big mess.”





DAY
6

What Do You Love?

Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

JOHN 21:16, NIV

HANNA LOVES MUSIC. There is one band that is her absolute favorite, though. She *loves* their music. She listens to it all the time. She goes to the band’s concerts whenever she can. She owns all their music, and she collects their posters and T-shirts.

Hanna takes good care of her music, posters, and T-shirts because they have something to do with the band she loves. She knows the band puts a lot of work into their songs, and Hanna honors her favorite band by taking care of what they have made.

God is the *great* musician. The song of his creation drifts on the winds, thunders in the clouds, and lilts in the voices of birds and bugs. He’s not distant from what he has made. God created and is redeeming this world, and he is healing it through the power of Jesus. He cares for our planet. If we love God, we’ll care for it too. If you love the Creator, care for his creation. It’s just that simple.





Connection

In today's verse, Jesus tells Simon Peter that if he truly loves Jesus, he will take care of Jesus' "sheep." Jesus' sheep are his followers. If we truly love God, we will take care of his family, his creatures, and his world.



What Can I Do?

Respect *God's world.* One way we can show God how much we love him is to care for the things he loves, whether that's people or other parts of his creation. Even when we feel frustrated with a friend or family member, Jesus wants us to treat that person like a treasure, with care and love.



Fun Fact

One of the most common musical instruments mentioned in the Bible is the lyre. It had eight or ten strings and a sound box, much like a guitar today. Lyres that are 4,750 years old have been found in the ancient city of Ur.

Joke

Son: Mom, I want to grow up and be a rock 'n' roll musician.

Mom: Well, Son, you've got to pick one or the other. You can't do both.



Top 10 Tips for Creation Care

RESPECT

1. Pick up one piece of trash every day.
2. Bring a little Eden to your neighborhood: set up a bird feeder in the winter; plant a garden or a tree; create a compost pile.

REDUCE

3. Save water by taking four-minute showers. Remember what saving water did for Mono Lake!
4. Instead of having your parents drive you, walk or bike to nearby places.
5. Reduce power use by turning off lights. Don't leave your computer or DVD player on standby or sleep mode. Remember those energy vampires.

REUSE

6. Instead of buying new bottled water, refill your water bottle.
7. Reuse shopping bags. Save plastic or paper bags, or buy canvas ones to bring home the groceries.

RECYCLE

8. Recycle metal, glass, paper, and plastic.

RETHINK

9. Give acts of service instead of stuff.
10. Look at God's creation in new and different ways. He has given us the task of taking care of his world—every bit of it. Can you do it? Will you? Living at peace with God's creation makes our lives richer and brings us closer to our Creator.

Acknowledgments

WE WOULD LIKE to thank Greg Johnson at WordServe Literary for sharing in our vision of this book and helping it come to fruition. Katara Patton and Stephanie Voiland and the editorial and design staff at Tyn-dale nurtured that vision, encouraged us to make it even better, and then made us look good! Our thanks to Arne and Harriet Truman and Mark and Kelsey Gilliland, who spent hours reading and giving us valuable suggestions. Also, to Professor Steven Bouma-Prediger of Hope College, and to Professor Ellen F. Davis of Duke Divinity School, for insights and inspiration, theologically, historically, and environmentally. A project like this only comes to pass when the Lord is in it. Our prayer is that our words have communicated the heart of God to our readers!





About the Authors

CAROLINE AND MICHAEL CARROLL have written a dozen children's books together on subjects ranging from dinosaurs to ancient cities of the Bible. They teach writing classes at a local community college. Michael teaches art to children and adults, and Caroline is a children's librarian. Putting science and kids together is their favorite thing ever! They have two grown children who live near them in Littleton, Colorado.

