

Chicago Conservation Corps Speakers Bureau
Sustainable Backyards: Water Conservation Activity
Drop In The Bucket



Materials: Two empty milk jugs, One bucket

- Fill your empty, clean milk jug to the top with water. Explain that this water represents **all** of the water in the world.
- Ask the audience to guess how much of this water is available for everyday use. Have them suggest percentages.
- Dump out all but ~½ cup of the water to demonstrate that **97% of the world's water is salt water**. Tell the audience that you are removing all salt water as it cannot be used for drinking, agriculture, use for bathing, etc.).
- Explain that what remains in the milk jug is all the fresh water in the world, but not all of it is accessible. **About 80% of fresh water is frozen in glaciers**. Dump all but about 2 tablespoons of water into the bucket.
- Dump a bit more water into the bucket and explain that not even all of the remaining water in the milk jug is available for human use. Some of that fresh water is in groundwater, mixed in with soil, or so badly polluted that it cannot be used.
- What remains in the jug (1 ½ tablespoons of water) represents all of the world's fresh water that is fit for consumption and use – **less than 0.5% of the world's water**.
- Of all the water remaining in the jug, a large part of it is stored in the Great Lakes. **20% of the world's fresh water is in the Great Lakes!**

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