

It's Easy to be Green

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Leader's Guide

Introduction

Being “green” means doing small things every day to make a difference in our world. From choosing products with less or no packaging, to setting up and using recycling bins at home, it is important to look for ways to reduce waste.

Who is this lesson for?

- FCE and other community organizations
- Youth groups
- Middle school or high school science classes
- Individuals who are interested in cleaning up the environment

Lesson Objectives

Participants will be motivated to:

- become familiar with recycling centers in their community
- learn where to take hazardous waste for safe disposal
- encourage family members and friends to recycle anything
- change buying habits to reflect a better understanding of “living green.”

Suggested Program Preparation

- Review MF2886 *It's Easy To Be Green*.
- Visit a local recycling center to get information about what items may be recycled.
- Gather recyclable items for a display. Attach items to a display board using hook

and loop tape. Place the display in high traffic community locations, such as the public library, lobbies of businesses, etc.

- Gather information about dates when hazardous waste may be taken to a drop site.
- Review suggested Web sites.

Activities

- Before distributing copies of the fact sheet, choose at least five items from the list that shows how long it takes for garbage to decompose in the environment. (For example, glass bottle, tin can, plastic bag, wool sock and paper towel.) Let program participants guess how long each takes to decompose and line them up in that order.
- Gather at least 10 items that may or may not be recyclable in your area. Place them in a trash bag and have members of the audience reach in and grab something. Have the participants guess whether their items can be recycled or not.
- If you are leading this lesson with a small group, each person could share one thing they do that is “green.” (Examples: recycle, ride bicycle to work, turn thermostat down in the winter, etc.)
- Plan after-school activities or 4-H project meetings that emphasize recycling.

Environmentally Friendly Activities

- Give a natural wreath as a gift. Use recycled materials to package and wrap the gift.

- Choose or make gifts that are practical and consistent with environmentally friendly materials. For example, assemble the dry ingredients for cookies or soup in a canning jar, attach a recipe and top it with scraps of seasonal fabric, ribbon, and a pine cone.
- Print your own gift wrap using nontoxic paints on recycled craft paper.
- Use your newspaper's comic section as a cheery, bright and recyclable wrapping.
- Recycle old crayons by preheating the oven to 250 degrees F. Put some crayons in each cup of a muffin tin that has been lined with a paper muffin cup. Mix the colors to make multi-colored crayons. Be careful not to overfill the cups. Children should ask an adult helper to place the baking tray in the oven. Turn on the oven light, so you can watch the crayons melt. Bake for 10 minutes or until all the crayons are melted. Remove baking tray from oven and allow to cool. These make fun little gifts for young children.

References and Websites for Extended Learning

EHMI – Environmental Hazards Management Institute – daily recycler for home and office, 2002.

Municipal Solid Waste Generation, Recycling, and Disposal in the United States: Facts and Figures for 2007.

Environmental Protection Agency; available at www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/municipal/msw99.htm#links
Sunflower First Step Recycling Center, Great Bend, Kan.

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids>

<http://earth911.org/recycling>

<http://www.worldwatch.org>

<http://www.earthshare.org>

More about plastic packaging symbols

http://www.kdheks.gov/kdsi/pg10_symbols_defined.html

<http://www.thedailygreen.com/green-homes/latest/recycling-symbols-plastics-460321>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resin_identification_code

Recycle symbols:

<http://www.packaginggraphics.net/plastic-recycle-logos.htm>

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Donna Krug, *It's Easy to Be Green*, Leader's Guide, Kansas State University, August 2009.