



What Can You Do?*

Activity P.u

GRADE LEVELS: K - 3

OBJECTIVES:

The students will be able to:

- List things they could do to reduce the amount of trash that is made.
- Interview an adult in order to find out what they would be willing to do to reduce the amount of trash produced.

MATERIALS:

- Activity A, "The Three R's"
- Activity B, "Do Your Share"
- Transparency of Activity B, "Do Your Share"
- Three large sheets of paper or posterboard

PROCEDURE:

Day One

1. Tell students that in this lesson they will be asked to think of things they could do to reduce the amount of trash. Give them the following facts:

- "If Americans recycled one-tenth of their newspaper, we could save 25 million trees per year."
- "Every ton of recycled office paper saves 380 gallons of oil."

2. Distribute copies of Activity A, "The Three R's." Read the introductory paragraphs and directions. Have students work in small groups to complete this assignment. If students have a difficult time, offer some suggestions from the list below.

REDUCE:

A. Buy toys, school supplies and other products that do not have wasteful packaging. It is just torn off and thrown into the trash.

B. Share your old toys, books and games instead of throwing them away. Give things you don't use anymore to someone who can use them. You will make less trash and save natural resources. Ask an adult to help you find a new home for things you no longer want.

REUSE:

A. Use cloth towels to dry your hands or wipe up spills.

B. Use old, torn clothes for rags.

C. Use food containers with snap-on lids instead of aluminum foil.

D. Use a lunch box to carry your lunch to school. If you use paper bags, use them more than once.

E. Use batteries that can be recharged, instead of thrown away.

F. Don't bag it if you don't really need it. If you buy something small, carry it. If you need a bag,

bring your own from home. This may be one that you have saved from another shopping trip. It may be a backpack or a cloth sack.

RECYCLE:

- A. Recycle aluminum cans in your home. Save the cans and take them to a recycling center.
- B. Recycle glass bottles and jars in your home. Take off the lids, rinse them out and save them in boxes. Ask an adult to find out how you can get these to a recycling center. Your community may even have curbside pickup.
- C. Recycle plastic containers. Remove the lids, rinse the containers, step on bottles to reduce the volume and take them to the nearest recycling center.
- D. Buy and use products that come in packaging that can be recycled.
- E. Buy and use products that have already been recycled. Look for the recycling symbol. If paper-board is gray, it was probably made from recycled paper.
- F. Make compost from leaves and grass clippings. It will turn into soil and can be used as fertilizer.
- G. Write letters to stores encouraging them to sell more products made from recycled materials. Compliment those stores that already sell products made from recycled materials.
- H. Recycle paper-cereal boxes, notebook paper, bags, newspapers, etc. (Magazines don't recycle easily.) Collect the paper. Ask an adult to help you find out how you can get it to the nearest recycling center.
- I. Recycle plastic grocery bags. (Check with local supermarket to see if they have recycling programs.)

3. On three large sheets of poster board or paper, write the headings: REDUCE, REUSE, and RECYCLE.

4. When students have developed their lists from Activity A, ask each group to tell the rest of the class their ideas. Alternate between groups, and write their suggestions on the large sheets of paper or posterboard. Place the suggestions under the appropriate categories: REDUCE, REUSE, and RECYCLE.

5. Ask students which of the things on this list they would personally be willing to do.

6. Tell students that many people do not realize how much they, as individuals, can do to help reduce the solid waste problem. For this reason, they are going to conduct a class survey to see if they can determine what a group of adults would be willing to do.

7. Distribute copies of Activity B, "Do Your Share." Read the directions to the students. Ask them to conduct the interviews and return them by a given date (1 – 3 days later, if possible).

1 – 3 Days Later

1. Use a transparency of Activity B to tally the results of the surveys. Read each item and ask students to raise their hand if the adult they interviewed was willing to do that task. Write the total on the transparency.

2. Discuss the results of the surveys by asking the following questions:

A. Were the results what you expected? Why or why not?

B. What might be done to encourage kids and adults to act more responsibly to reduce solid waste (education, laws to require recycling)?

3. Summarize by telling students that they and the adults they interviewed and everyone else contribute to the solid waste problem. But they can all do something to reduce it! If large numbers of people choose to buy products that limit packaging or that can be reused or recycled, it sends a message. Each time a shopper chooses one item instead of another in a store, that choice tells stores something. What a person buys is important because it tells businesses what people are willing to accept.

The “dollar votes” of shoppers can influence what is sold, how much is sold, and how it is packaged. By choosing products that tend to reduce waste, people can help solve our solid waste problem.

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

1. Share what you have learned with your parents and other adults. When many of them grew up, people did not think the environment was in trouble. They may not know that some of the things they do are not good for our solid waste problem.
2. Write a letter to the local newspaper telling people what they can do to help solve the solid waste problem. Tell them what you are doing. Ask an adult to help you get the addresses.
3. Write letters to businesses. Encourage them to build more recycling centers, to develop products that can be recycled more easily and to use recycled materials. Encourage them to develop products made with fewer natural resources and with less wasteful packaging.
4. Encourage your school to get involved. Ask them to buy textbooks, writing paper, paper towels, etc. that are made from recycled paper. Ask them to recycle the writing paper, milk cartons or jugs, juice containers, soda cans, tin cans, and other products they use.
5. Help organize a recycling center at your school. Advertise the center. Find a way to get the materials to the nearest recycling center. Challenge other schools to do the same.
6. Write to local politicians or government organizations to encourage them to initiate curbside collection, recycling, etc., programs.

*Source: Du Pont Solid Waste Management Curriculum K – 6