

Recycling Responsibly

Overview:

To become more responsible about waste management, students discuss which objects to recycle and reuse and make a chart reinforcing this awareness.

Materials:

- Magazines (to cut up)
- Glue
- Paper, pencils, or pens
- Bulletin board
- Scissors

Procedure:

1. In front of the class, crumple up a piece of newspaper and throw it in the wastebasket. Ask: *Why was my action not responsible? After soliciting answers, say: While it was good that I threw my trash away — I didn't litter — I was not responsible because my trash was paper. Paper can be recycled.*
2. Explain what recycling is and what kinds of products can be recycled. (You may want to display examples.) Ask the students to name types of trash that can be recycled. Discuss why recycling shows responsibility. Offer examples of how it helps the environment. Discuss ways to recycle and reuse items (e.g., a jelly jar can hold marbles, etc.).
3. Distribute scissors, magazines, and glue. Demonstrate on the board what you want them to do on the paper. Have them cut objects out of magazines that can be found in trash that are reusable or recyclable. Have them glue each item to the paper and label it “reusable” or “recyclable.”
4. Display the items in the room and designate an area for recyclable items.
5. You may want to take the children on a field trip to a recycling plant or have them bring in items from home that can be reused in the classroom.

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Inspired by an activity in *Pollution, Recycling, Trash, and Litter* by Doris Roettger (Carthage, IL: Fearon Teacher Aids, Simon & Schuster Supplementary Education Group, 1991).

This lesson is from the *Good Ideas* book, available for purchase from the CHARACTER COUNTS! online store: <http://www.charactercounts.org/store>

McREL standards

Geography

Standard 14. Understands how human actions modify the physical environment.

Level II, Benchmark 2. Knows how the environment is stressed by human activities (e.g., changes in climate, air pollution, water pollution, expanding human settlement).

<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>