



Bag it up!

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Subject: Art

Grade levels: Kindergarten–Grade 7

Brief overview

Students will decorate grocery bags donated by a local grocery store with sustainability messages. These bags will be used in the grocery store on Earth Day.

Theme(s)

- environment
 - addressing climate change, desertification, deforestation, etc.

Time required

Three or more class periods.

Required materials and/or equipment

- paper grocery bags donated by/on loan from grocery store
- art supplies
- computer
- access to internet web site www.earthdaybags.org
- PowerPoint projector (optional)
- chart paper and marking pens, reusable plastic sheets (chart size), and dry erase markers.

Procedure

Day one

1. Introduce the concept of the environment to students. Show them a picture of the earth, and ask them who lives in this environment. Students should understand that we are all a part of the environment and are all interconnected.
2. Ask students, “What are some things that are hurting our environment?” As they brainstorm a list, record their ideas on chart paper or a safe place on the board. Discuss their answers, expanding on the students’ thoughts.
3. Tell students that April 22 is Earth Day and that we have an opportunity to share their ideas for helping the environment.

4. Tell students about the Earth Day Groceries Project. If possible, show photos (www.earthdaybags.org/pictures.htm) of decorated Earth Day bags and the PowerPoint presentation (www.earthdaybags.org/powerpoint.htm) from the project website (www.earthdaybags.org/powerpoint.htm).
5. Ask, students to bring materials that they could recycle to decorate their grocery bags (i.e. ribbons, bows, wrapping paper).

Day two

1. Bring back the brainstormed list from prior day. Review thoughts shared.
2. Divide students into [co-operative learning](#) groups of three or four students each. Ask each group to select a [facilitator, reporter, recorder and encourager](#) (or alternate group role).
3. Review group roles, emphasizing that:
 - the group facilitator is to ensure that everyone participates in the discussion and that the task is properly completed within the allotted time.
 - the group recorder is to record highlights of the discussion on chart paper or reusable plastic sheets.
 - the reporter is to report highlights of the group discussion to the class as a whole.
 - the encourager is to encourage the active participation of all group members.
4. In their small groups, within a specified period of time, students are to:
 - brainstorm measures that people could take to help the Earth (recording all ideas without comment).
 - review the list, discussing each idea in turn and selecting those that are realistic and something that everyone can do.
 - list selected ideas on chart paper (recorder).
 - prepare to share selected ideas with the class as a whole (reporter).
5. Have groups post their chart papers/plastic sheets in a location visible to all. Using these recorded notes for visual support, group reporters are to report out as a class as a whole.
6. Have students return to their small groups to generate short messages to convey their solutions. Discuss how these messages could be put on bags. (For intermediate students: discuss eye-catching slogans and designs—a discussion of advertising techniques might be useful.)
7. Each group is also to decide on their favorite message and discuss how they would represent it through artwork.
8. Share thoughts.

Day three

1. Begin the class by inviting the reporter from each group to share their group's favorite message with the class as a whole.
2. Spend time discussing use of bag space. If possible, show samples of bags from the website.
3. Based on your examination of the sample bags (www.earthdaybags.org/pictures.htm) generate criteria for the look of a well-decorated grocery bag.

Sample criteria

- a. The message is easy to understand and to read.
- b. The image is big and bold.
- c. The message and image are linked.
- d. The message and image are powerful.

Remind students not to put their full name on the grocery bag.

4. Have students return to their small groups to work on their bags.
5. When decoration of the bags is complete, invite student groups to present their bags to the class as a whole.
6. The class might submit a report and photos to the Earth Day Groceries website to share their experience.

Assessment strategies

1. Generate criteria together for the finished product (students could self-assess or peer-assess).
2. Teacher circulates to ensure that all students are contributing to project (students could self-assess or peer-assess)
3. Monitor student contributions to class discussion.

Suggestions to extend the lesson

This could become a school-wide event. Students could design environmentally friendly ideas for hosting a class Earth Day party.