**Teaching Kindergarteners to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle: Science Lesson Plan and Activities**

Lesson Plans for Pre-K and K / By Patricia Gable / Teaching Grades Pre-K to 5

**Objective: I Can Reduce, Reuse and Recycle!**

Things that people do to live comfortably can affect the world around them. They can make choices that reduce their impacts on the land, water, air, and other living things. STEM Curriculum ESS3.C: Human Impact on Earth Systems

**Materials**

Book Kids Save the Earth: Recycle Every Day by Tammy Gagne

Book Stuff: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle by Steven Kroll

Large empty boxes or trash bins (to separate paper, plastic, cans, glass or whatever categories are appropriate for your classroom)

Vocabulary

Recycle- taking old items and making them into something new to be used again

Reuse- use an item again instead of throwing it away

Reduce- to make something smaller or use less, which results in conserving or less waste

Preparation

Collect a few days of classroom trash without students’ knowledge.

**Day One**

Say, “Can you name some of your favorite super heroes? Did you know that you could be a hero, too? You could be a hero who helps to save the Earth! Let’s find out how."

Read the book Kids Save the Earth: Recycle Every Day, which explains in simple terms the abundance of trash in the landfills and ways to slow the process. Students hear about simple ways that they can recycle and reuse things.

Show students items from the trash that you have collected. A broken crayon? A barely used piece of writing paper? Large pieces of construction paper? An empty plastic water bottle? Decide on labels for the empty boxes to sort items. Enlist ideas for dealing with these things.

**Here are some suggestions:**

1. **Broken Crayons**

Collect broken crayons, remove the paper from them, mix a variety of colors and place in muffin tins. Bake at 150˚ until melted, then cool and pop them out of the pan. Use them to color.

1. **Plastic Water Bottles** –

Turn on its side and cut a slit in the top. Decorate and use as a bank.

Partially fill with beans and use as noisemakers.

Cut off top portion and plant seeds in the bottom section.

Fill with birdseed. Cut two small holes on opposite sides. Slide a wooden spoon through the holes. Hang from a tree and use as a bird feeder.

1. **Scrap Construction Paper**

Place pieces of construction paper in an “Art" box for use in art projects.

Homework

Reuse it! With a parent or other adult to help you, find one item in the trash that you can recycle into something new. (A jar that can hold a small plant, a can that can be a pencil holder)

**Day Two**

Do you take more than you need? Do you keep more than you use? Is your closet, desk, bedroom or house a cluttered mess? A pack rat named Pinch learns how to “Reduce It" in the book Stuff: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle by Steven Kroll. Read and discuss the book with your students. Challenge them to reduce something in their homes (closet, desk, junk drawer, toy chest) with the help of a parent. Then ask them to share what they reduced with the class the next day.

Trash-Free Lunch

Choose a day every two weeks or once each month to challenge students to have a “Trash-Free Lunch Day." You may try to enlist the help of the cafeteria but if that is not possible encourage packed lunches to be trash-free. Pack items in reusable containers and use a washcloth instead of a paper napkin. Take a few minutes to have students share their trash-free lunch ideas.

References

Gagne, Tammy. Kids Save the Earth: Recycle Every Day. Amicus Publishing, 2014.

Eco Kids Canada

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Young, Karen Romano. Junkyard Science. National Geographic Society, 2010.

Kroll, Steven. Stuff! Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Marshall Cavendish Children, 2009.

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