

The Lunch Crunch

OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate the concept of waste reduction by involving the students in the reduction process.

MATERIALS: plastic shopping bags, masking tape, scales, **HANDOUTS:** Letter to Parents (B21), Garbageless Lunch (B22)

VOCABULARY: waste reduction, convenience, packaging, pollution, preservation, waste, reduce

BACKGROUND:

Nearly half of the waste that we generate is packaging. Some packaging is necessary for safety, preservation or practicality. Medical supplies need protection against tampering, certain foods need some preservation and liquids or powders must be contained somehow. However, most packaging is merely another form of advertising or a substitute for a little time and effort.

Flashy boxes and unique containers are designed to catch the consumer's eye; packaging is used to entice people into buying a product. Individually wrapped cheese slices, pudding cups and drinking boxes illustrate convenience packaging. The public is led to believe convenience packaging will save time.

Because many children eat lunch at school, the ideal way to introduce the concept of waste reduction is through their lunch pails.

PROCEDURE:

One week before this activity is to be conducted, send a letter home with the children. The letter should explain to the parents or guardians that the child will need some adult help in completing an assignment at home. A sample letter that could be photocopied for distribution is provided on the **HANDOUT: Letter to Parents** (B21).

1. Before lunch on the day the activity is to occur, distribute a plastic shopping bag to each student (you may wish for the students to bring their own bags from home). Tell the class they are to place any garbage from their lunch (plastic films, drinking boxes, jars, bottles, food waste, etc.) into their individual bags.
2. After lunch is finished, ask the class to examine their waste. Write down on the blackboard some of the items the students have described.
3. Explain the idea that in order to help the Earth, we need to produce less waste. You may wish to mention how trees are saved and pollution decreases when we produce less waste.
4. Tell the class to tie their shopping bags and have each child's name written on a strip of masking tape. Distribute the tape then have the children stick the tape to their bags.

REDUCE - PRIMARY ACTIVITY 1

The Lunch Crunch (cont.)

PROCEDURE (cont.)

5. Now, inform the class they are going to do an experiment to see if they can reduce their waste. Take a few of the items the students described in Step 2 and suggest alternatives. Ask the class if they can think of alternatives to make their lunch so waste is reduced.
6. Tell the class they are to go home tonight and ask their parents to help them make a "Garbageless Lunch". Give each child a copy of the HANDOUT: **Garbageless Lunch** (B22) to take home.
7. Before the Garbageless Lunch begins, once again give each student a plastic shopping bag. Tell the children they are to put any garbage they may have in the empty bag.
8. When the Garbageless Lunch is over, ask the class to compare today's shopping bags with those from the day before. Ask the children to describe the difference between the bags.
9. Tell them they have just helped the Earth by reducing their waste. Mention how easy it is to reduce our garbage. Gather all the shopping bags up then reuse, recycle and dispose of the waste.

EXTENSION:

1. Collect all the waste generated on the first day in one garbage bag. Weigh the bag. Collect the waste generated from the Garbageless Lunch in a separate garbage bag. Weigh it also. Show the class the two bags and ask them to guess which one weighs more or ask them to guess the weight of each bag.
2. Have a Garbageless Lunch club. Every time a child brings a garbage free lunch to school, he or she is awarded points, etc. After a child reaches a certain number of points he or she is given a prize (plant, tree growing kit, etc.)

EVALUATION:

1. Ask the children if they are going to try everyday to reduce the waste from their lunch.
2. What would the student do to make a waste free lunch?
3. Reduction is good for the environment. Why?