**SAVE THE EARTH: IT’S EVERYONE’S HOME!**

**LESSON 4: Grades K-3**

# PLEASE CHOOSE TO REUSE!

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:**  1.1, 1.2, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 1, 4 & 6; Mathematics: 1, 3 & 6; Science: 7 & 8

Social Studies: 5, 6 & 7; Fine Arts: 1 & 4

**Objective:**  Students will identify and distinguish reusable items from non-reusable items and apply their understanding of the concept of reusing by organizing a donation drive for reusable items needed by a local animal shelter. They will use the scientific method to determine which item is donated the most.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.3-4.1—Engage effectively in collaborative discussions building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.**

**SL.3-4.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to remarks of others.**

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

We all have a responsibility to walk lighter on this earth, to preserve our resources and take responsibility for our actions as they relate to the impact on all that share our world. Our actions (or lack of action) are like tossing a pebble in a lake. The ripples the tossed pebble cause spread outwards, causing movement within the water, changing it. Same with the earth. It’s important to remember that even the slightest action, i.e. breaking a bottle in an abandoned lot, can have lasting effects on other living creatures. (Remember, animals go barefoot. A cut on the foot of a stray cat can become infected and possibly cause the loss of her leg.)

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**2-LS2-1—Events have causes that generate observable patterns.**

Cause and Effect are powerful observation tools that can predict patterns. How can cause and effect help your students understand the serious problem of solid waste and the ripple effect on our earth? Discuss various recycling scenarios with them.

**Materials:**

* Pillowcase to fill with:
* Reusable items needed by animal shelters:
  + - cardboard soda flat (can be reused as a litter box for shelter cats)
    - gently loved stuffed animals (to comfort the homeless animals)
    - newspapers (line cages with)
    - gently used linens of all kinds, especially towels and blankets (to provide warmth and comfort to animals in cages)
    - gently used pet toys, especially sturdy toys like kongs and nylabones (to be used for enrichment and stimulation to homeless animals as they await adoption to a forever home)
    - treats (to reinforce training in a positive manner) check with your local shelter to see if there is a brand they prefer due to diet restrictions
    - Large boxes or bins for donation drop off areas
    - Poster paper
    - Markers/crayons

**Method:**

1. As a teacher, you have mastered the art of reusing! Whether by choice or necessity (saving $), you are undoubtedly using things in your classroom for purposes other than their original purpose.Begin by asking the students what they think it means to reuse something. Discuss and agree upon an answer. Ask them to look around your classroom for items that you are currently using that originally served another purpose. For example, you might be using a shoe box to hold markers instead of purchasing a new container.
2. List the reasons why it is wise to reuse:
   * Save $
   * Conserve resources
   * Less waste in landfills
   * Others might need what you don’t (one person’s trash is another’s treasure)

Explain the above concept (trash=treasure) and that one type of organization who needs reusable items is an animal shelter. Demonstrate this by telling students you have a bunch of reusable items in your pillowcase that can be used by an animal shelter. Pull them out one by one and ask students to guess what they could be used for and explain the above reasons. Ask them to raise their hand if they have any of the above things in their homes right now that could be donated to an animal shelter instead of being thrown away, kept in the back of the closet or recycled. Bring them in! How can we gather even more items?

**Call to Action:** Organize a donation drive and set a goal! Using the scientific method; hypothesize which item will be donated the most, make observations, collect the data, graph the data and determine the conclusion. Have your students assemble into groups to make posters to hang in school asking others to bring in the items too! Ask your principal for permission to make an announcement about the drive, put it in the school newsletter, etc.

Designate drop off areas and place boxes there to hold the items. Keep track of the collected items and graph the data on a bar graph to display for the school. What item did you collect the most of? The least of? Arrange a field trip to the local animal shelter to drop off the items. Ask for a tour and a chance to meet the animals you are helping!

Consider collecting these items in your classroom all year round and keep accurate records to assess the amount of “trash” that was reused.

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**

[www.kidsplanet.org](http://www.kidsplanet.org)

[www.environmentalconcerns.org](http://www.environmentalconcerns.org)

[www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/home.htm)

[www.epa.gov/kids/](http://www.epa.gov/kids/)

[www.kidsface.org](http://www.kidsface.org)

[www.greenpeace.org](http://www.greenpeace.org)

[www.ikecoalition.org](http://www.ikecoalition.org)

[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eek/)

Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for additional animal-related web sites.