

## **Earth Is Our Home Try It**

The Earth is our home. Living things like people, plants, and animals make their home on our planet. How can you make your home a better place?  
Complete four of the six activities.

### **ACTIVITY #1 - Make natural soap**

These inexpensive yet lovely soap bars make perfect gifts.

What you'll need: Glycerin soap, clear or white (this only works with glycerin soap - transparent Neutrogena bars will work fine.), Soap dye in colors or your choice, Soap or candy molds, Microwave safe liquid measuring cup, Spoon, Popsicle stick or coffee stirrer, Knife (adults only)

How to make it: If using bars of soap, cut into three pieces. If using purchased glycerin blocks, cut off 2-3 pre-measured chunks. Put glycerin soap into a measuring cup, microwave according to package directions (or 20 seconds), then in 10-second intervals until melted. If you want colors, this is the time to add the dye. Add a few drops and stir with a spoon. If you want the color darker, simply add more dye. Slowly pour the liquid soap into the mold. Set aside to harden for 45 minutes to an hour. Some soaps may harden sooner than others. Rinse out measuring cup and repeat process for other colors. After soap has cooled completely, pop them out of the molds. If you find this difficult, you can place the soap into the freezer for ten minutes and try again. When solid carefully tie a piece of ribbon or raffia around the soap bar.

Tips: For multicolor layers, pour the first color in and allow it to cool enough to form a skin (about 5 minutes). Carefully and very slowly add the second color over that. You can purchase glycerin soap, soap dyes and several different types of molds from your favorite craft supply store. These are usually found near the candle making supplies.

### **ACTIVITY #2 - Earth's Caretakers - Adopt A Tree**

In an area of the woods with a fair number of trees and not too much underbrush, blindfold one of the girls and spin her around. Taking a curvy route, walk her to a tree and place her in front of it. Encourage her to feel the texture and irregularities of its bark and to rub her cheek against it. Invite her to smell the tree and to walk slowly around it, feeling with an outstretched hand for trees or plants growing close by. If there are special features of the tree that she is missing, guide her toward them. Be sure she wraps her arms as far around the trunk as she can to get an idea of its size. When she is done exploring, lead her away

from the tree by a roundabout path and remove the blindfold. Then, challenge her to find "her" tree.

To determine approximately how old your tree is take a tape measure and measure its girth about 3 feet above the ground. Each circumference inch equals approximately one year of age.

Create a "My Tree" book. In it draw a picture of your tree. How big is your tree? How old is your tree? What color is your tree? What is its bark like, its leaves like, its branches like? Give your tree a name. Go back and find your tree at a later date (or a different season) and see what has changed. Record it in your book.

### **ACTIVITY #3 - Natural dyes - make a bandanna**

Learn what natural products make dye and then make your own and dye some clothing.

You will need 1 large (100° cotton) man's handkerchief per girl, large pot, wooden spoon, ingredients for dyes (Lots of onion skins, purple grapes, blueberries, 2 or 3 teabags, Cinnamon, cranberries)

Directions: Bring to a boil about 2 cups of water in a medium pan. Add one of the above ingredients. If using berries mash them well. Reduce heat and let simmer. Stir and then add your cloth. Keep it in for as long as you like. The longer you leave it the darker and deeper the color will be. Rinse and hang up to dry.

Here are the colors you will get: onion skins - yellow-brown, Grapes - pale blue, Blueberries-purple color, tea bags - tan or brown, Cinnamon- very pretty brown, Cranberries - rose

4. Ecology hunt - candy wrapper, plastic fork, plastic spoon, paper plate, napkin, aluminum beverage can, paper cup, gum wrapper, soda bottle, article of clothing (sock, mitten, sneaker, etc.)

### **ACTIVITY #4 - Recycle craft project**

Here are some great project and craft ideas for reusing and recycling everyday items you might have around the house.

Identify at least 15 new uses for the following common "trash" items.

A 2 liter bottle; an old sock; old greeting cards. Make something old new again.

#### CD Photo Frame

You Need: Old Compact Disk, dough or clay, Photo, Scissors, Double Stick Tape, Adhesive Backed Felt, Tacky Glue, Pain, Scrap of Cardboard

Instructions: Use dough/clay to mold a base for your photo frame. Make sure that it is at least 1" deep and 2" around. Use cardboard or a table knife to make a slot at



least half way down through base and wide. Paint. Cut photo into a 3" circle. Attach it to CD with double face tape. Cover the back of the CD with sticky back felt. Use tacky glue to secure in into slot in base.

### Finger Cymbals

Go to the parade and make some noise with your own finger cymbals.

You Need: Two Caps from Baby Food Jars, Blue Craft Foam, Low Temp Glue Gun, Confetti, Scissors, Glue

Instructions: Cut two 1-7/8" circles out of foam. Glue them to the inside of the baby food jar caps. Cut a strip of foam 4-1/2" x 7/8". Glue into a loop and glue the loop inside a cap. This will slide on to two fingers. Cut a strip of foam 3-1/2" x 7/8". Glue into a loop and glue the loop inside the other cap. This will slide on to your thumb. Decorate with confetti.

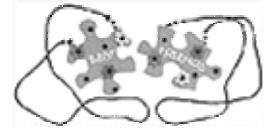
### Baby Food Jar Air Freshener

You need: Potpourri, Clean Baby Food Jar (no top needed), 5" Paper Doily, Rubber Band, ribbon, Lace, Ribbon Rose, Low Temp Glue Gun

Instructions: Fill jar with potpourri. Cover with a paper doily or tulle. Secure with rubber band. Tie a ribbon around the jar to hide the rubber band. Hot glue ribbon rose to ribbon.

### "Best Friends" Necklace

You will need: Pieces from an Old Puzzle, Paint, Satin Cord, Mini Pony Beads, Hand Hole Punch, Tacky Glue and Toothpicks, Low Temp Glue Gun, Scraps of Craft Foam, Markers or Letter Stickers



Instructions: Paint two puzzle pieces that interlock together. Let dry. Write "BEST" on one piece and "FRIEND" on the other (or you can use letter stickers). Decorate using holes punched out of scraps of craft foam. Using a toothpick to dab on glue will make this easier. Cut two pieces of satin cord to make puzzle pieces into necklaces. Hot glue one end to the back of a puzzle piece. Slide on some beads. Hot glue the other end to the other side of the puzzle piece. Repeat for second piece. Give one to your best friend.

### Tissue Box Photo Frame

You Need: Small, Decorated Tissue Box, Scrapbook Cardstock or Cardboard, Glitter, 4mm Round Beads, Ming Wire, Low Temp Glue Gun, White Glue, Magnetic Sheets, scissors, tape, photo

Instructions: Cut the top off the tissue box. Remove the cellophane. Tape the photo underneath the top to show through the opening, trimming if necessary. Cut a piece of decorative paper slightly larger and glue the "frame" in the middle of it. Add some glitter. String beads on pieces of ming wire bending the edges to keep them in place. Hot glue around frame. Add a magnet to hang in your locker.

Dog House for Teeny Bean Bag Animal

You Need: Teeny Bean Bag Animal, Empty Half Gallon Milk Carton, Paint, Pictures of Bean Bag Animals, Glue Stick, Hot Glue Gun, scissors

Instructions: Wash and dry the milk carton. Cut off the top third of the house. This is the only part you will need. Hot glue the container closed. Cut an arched opening in the front for the door. Paint the carton. Let dry. Decorate with pictures of Bean Bag Animals,



**ACTIVITY #5 - Trash stash experiment**

Learn which items will naturally decompose and which will not.

Materials: Clay/plastic flower pot, Potting soil, Pair of scissors, Plastic gloves, Stick, Small stone or pieces of Styrofoam, Assorted litter, Water, Plastic wrap and a rubber band, Newspaper

Procedure: Cover the hole in the bottom of the flower pot using the small stone or the styrofoam pieces to keep water from draining out too rapidly. Fill pot (or other appropriate container) about 1/3 full of soil. Cut, break or tear the litter into quarter-size pieces. This litter should include: foil, vegetable food scraps, paper, plastic from a baggie and polystyrene foam. Scatter a piece of each type of litter over the soil. Cover the litter with potting soil until the pot is almost full. Sprinkle with water until dampened. DO NOT SOAK. Cover the container with plastic wrap and hold in place securely with a rubber band. Place in a warm, dark place. (i.e. a closet, paper bag, box, etc....) Check weekly; add additional water if needed.

After four weeks pour the contents out onto an open newspaper. Use the stick and your gloves to spread the soil and investigate what has happened to the litter.

Observe which materials decomposed and which did not.

How Long will Litter Last?

- Aluminum cans . . . . . 80 - 100 years
- Glass bottles. . . . . 1,000,000 years
- Plastic bags. . . . . 10 - 20 years
- Plastic coated paper. . . . . 5 years
- Plastic film containers. . . . . 20 - 30 years
- Nylon fabric. . . . . 30 - 40 years
- Rubber boot sole. . . . . 50 - 80 years
- Leather. . . . . up to 50 years
- Wool sox. . . . . 1 - 5 years
- Orange and banana peels. . . . . 2 - 5 weeks
- Cigarette butts. . . . . 1 - 5 years

## **ACTIVITY #6 - Littering - Our Enemy**

### Activity A

1. Ask the troop/group what "littering" is. Ask whether any of the girls have littered. What was littered? Why? Do the girls know of any areas in or around the community where litter can be found?
2. Divide the troop/group into smaller groups. Using girls suggestions, select a destination for each group to search for litter. The locations can be indoors or outdoors and must be as specific as possible. Identify the locations on the map. The goal of the exercise is to collect and analyze all litter located within the selected area. Allow 15 - 30 minutes for the litter collection.
3. After the litter collection, have each group examine the collected litter materials. Each group should categorize the litter and determine the most frequent litter components. Have each group relate its experience to the class. Each group should identify its litter search area on the map.
4. After the group presentations, discuss:
  - Which locations yielded the most litter and why?
  - Can any of the littered items be recycled or used in some other way?
  - By examining the types of litter, can it be determined which age group may be most responsible for the problem?
  - Does the school or community have rules or laws against littering? If so, are the rules or laws enforced? What penalties are involved?
  - Does the community provide refuse containers near the litter locations?
  - How can the amount of littering be reduced?
5. As a follow-up activity, repeat the exercise after a week or month has passed and compare the findings. - Make a collage of your litter findings.

### - OR - Activity B

Compare two common lunches for their "littering" impact. - Put together the following two lunches and compare.

LUNCH A - Lunch box containing a thermos of drink, a piece of fruit such as an apple, pear or plum, a sandwich container, chips and/or carrots and celery sticks in a reusable plastic container, napkin.

LUNCH B - Paper bag containing juice carton, sandwich wrapped in plastic wrap, bag of chips, Twinkie or fruit pie, banana, carrots or celery sticks wrapped in plastic wrap, and a pudding cup, napkin and spoon.

Procedure: Examine the contents of each lunch. Discuss and estimate the amount of trash that will be generated by each lunch. Eat all of the food that can be eaten.

Weigh the non-recyclable/ reusable waste from each lunch.

Ask the following questions: Which lunch produced less trash? Why did one lunch produce more trash than the other? Why would students not bring the "less trash-producing" lunches to school? How might you alter your lunch so that it produces less trash? Using magazines or drawings compose the perfectly packaged lunch.