
String-Along Reusables

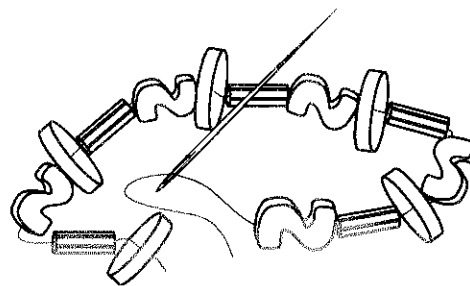
Make necklaces or garlands for holiday decoration.

Materials:

plastic bottle caps
polystyrene packing pieces
drinking straws cut to various lengths
long pieces of colored string
large needles (2-inches long)

Procedure:

1. Before class, pound a hole in each of the plastic bottle caps with a hammer and nail.



2. Help children thread a needle.

3. Let children string the packing pieces, bottle caps and straw pieces together on the colored string.

CAUTION: small pieces may be swallowed by young children. Only do this activity with older children and under strict supervision.

Soda Bottle Greenhouses*

This can be a group project in which children can work together to build a greenhouse and learn what plants need to grow.

Materials:

two-liter clear plastic soda bottle
small stones
potting soil
scissors
plant seeds or small plants that like lots of moisture
water

Procedure:

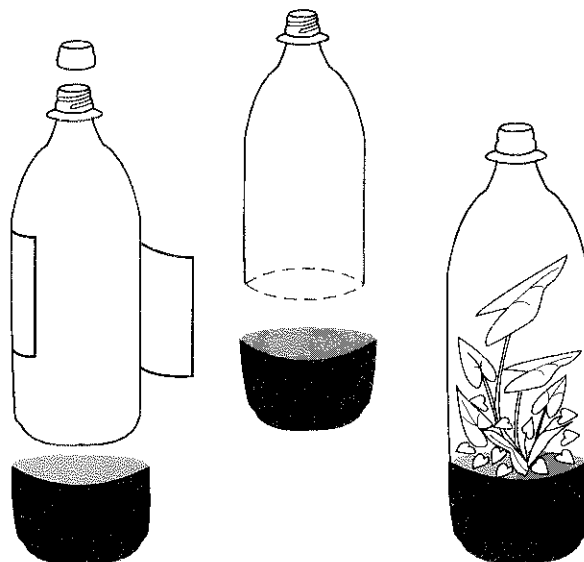
1. One bottle is needed for each greenhouse. To remove the label, fill the bottle one quarter full with hot tap water. Screw the cap back on firmly. Tip the bottle on its side so that the hot water warms the area where the label is attached to the bottle — this will soften the heat sensitive glue. Slowly peel the label from the bottle.

2. To separate the bottle from its base, tip the bottle upright so the hot water warms the glue holding the bottle to the base. Hold the bottle tightly and slowly twist off the base. Empty the water from the bottle and then screw the cap back on tightly.

3. With a sharp scissors, cut around the “hip” of the bottle to remove the top from the rounded end. The rounded end can be recycled or reused in another craft project.

4. Use the base of the bottle for the “pot.” Have your children put small stones in the bottom of the base to help with drainage. Next have them add enough potting soil to almost fill the base.

5. Help them plant their seeds or small plants. Let them pack the soil over the seeds or around the plants and add a little water.



6. Help each of them place the upper portion of the bottle on top of the base. Twist slightly to work the clear edge into the soil about one quarter inch. Place the small greenhouses on a window ledge where they can get some, but not too much, sunlight.

7. Caring for the greenhouse is easy. If the bottle cap remains screwed in place, the greenhouse should be self-watering. If too much condensation develops on the inside of the bottle wall, remove the cap for a few hours and then screw it back on. If the plants do not appear to have enough water, remove the cap and add a little water through the opening. Screw the cap back on tightly.

8. Check the greenhouse two times a week with your children. Make a chart to record childrens' observations of plant growth and moisture content.

* Adapted from: **Bottle Biology Resources Network** (see “Resources”).

Coin-Keeper Creatures*

Reusing "trash" for crafts is like money in the bank.

Materials:

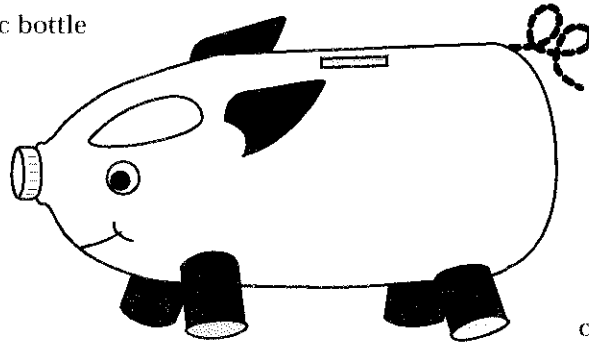
plastic one-gallon bottles from bleach, juice or vinegar (they should have a screw-type cap)
film canisters or plastic bottle caps
pipe cleaners
scraps of paper
glue
scissors
markers

Procedure:

1. Clean bottles thoroughly.

2. Give each child a bottle.

Tell your children to look at the bottle and imagine what creature the bottle looks like. Suggest laying the bottle on its side or turning it upside down. They may see a pig, a cow or maybe a monster. Once the child decides, help him/her to create the animal.



3. Children can cut features from construction paper and glue them onto the bottle, or features can be drawn on with a marker.

4. To make a curly tail, twist a pipe cleaner around a pencil and then slide it off. With the tip of a scissors poke a hole for the tail at the base of the bottle. Stick the pipe cleaner tail into the hole and secure it with a drop of glue.

5. Cut a slot, large enough to fit a fifty cent piece in, on the upper portion of the bottle.

6. Glue film canisters or plastic bottle caps on the bottom of the bottle for legs.

7. Feed coins to your coin-keeper creature. If you want your coins back, just unscrew the cap and dump them out.

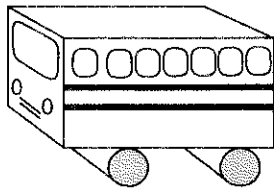
* Adapted from: **Nature's Recyclers Activity Guide** (see "Resources").

Wee-Mobile

All aboard the Wee-mobile!

Materials:

clean paperboard milk carton (quart or half gallon size) or rectangular tissue box
large paper bags cut open and flattened
toilet paper rolls
glue
scissors
tape
crayons or markers



Procedure:

1. Press in the milk carton spout and tape it flat.

2. Cut a paper bag along several of the seams to open it flat. Help each child wrap the milk carton or tissue box with the paper bag and tape it in place.

3. Let children design their Wee-mobile with crayons or markers. Glue toilet paper tubes to the bottom of the vehicle to make wheels.

5. Discuss with your children what the Wee-mobiles could be used for.

Bird Feeder

Reusing is for the birds.

Materials:

plastic two-liter soda bottles
eight-inch stick or dowels
(1/4" diameter)
birdseed
craft knife
nail
hole punch
thin wire

Procedure:

1. Use a craft knife to cut two three-inch holes across from each other near the base of a two-liter bottle.

2. Make a small hole with a hole punch one inch below each larger hole.

3. Insert a stick or dowel through the two holes to make a perch.



4. Poke small holes in the bottom of the bottle with a nail to let rain water drain out.

5. Poke two holes across from each other near the top of the bottle. Thread the wire through the holes and twist the ends together to make a hanger.

6. Children can help fill the feeders with birdseed.

7. Hang a feeder in a tree near a classroom

window. Make a chart to keep near the window to record how many birds come to dine. Note which species are most common. Look these species up in a bird book to learn more about their habits.

8. Send a copy of these directions home with each child so that they can make feeders with their families.

Classy Covers

Create beautiful sun catchers and ornaments to display throughout the year.

Materials:

clear covers from yogurt cups, deli containers or pre-packaged lunch meats
scraps of colored tissue paper
permanent markers
white glue
hole punch
pieces of yarn or ribbon

Procedure:

1. Let your children tear colored tissue paper into small pieces and glue the pieces onto the clear plastic cover in a design or collage. Variation: Use permanent markers to draw a design onto the plastic surface.

3. Punch a hole near the rim of the cover. Thread a piece of yarn or ribbon through the hole and tie the ends together.



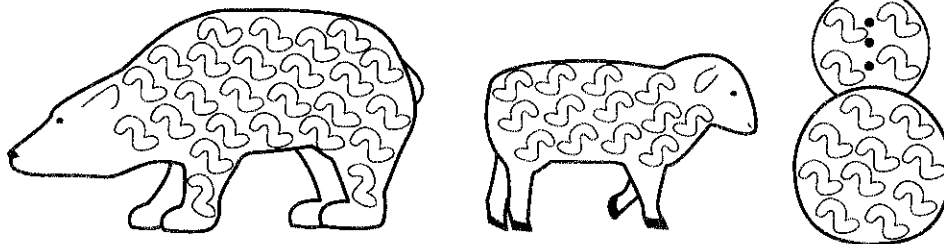
4. Hang the classy covers in a window or on a holiday tree.

Snow, Fur, Wool*

Ever wonder what to do with all those polystyrene packing pieces? Turn them into "snow", "fur" or "wool".

Materials:

scissors
large sheet of paper
glue
polystyrene packing pieces
markers
crayons



Procedure:

1. Draw the outline of an animal or object that is usually white on the large sheet of paper. Give this to your children.

2. Have your children color in eyes, nose, mouth, hooves, claws, etc., with markers. Let them glue

packing pieces onto the paper to make white "snow," "fur" or "wool."

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