



Tour Theme: Sustainable Practices (grades 3 to 5)

Pre-Visit Activity #1 Greening Your Lunchroom

Procedures:

Day 1

1. Prior to the classroom lesson, visit the school lunchroom and take pictures that show the lunchroom during lunch and the waste receptacles at the end of lunch. Be sure to include pictures that show the types of waste, how it is handled, how it is disposed of, and the quantity.
2. Determine how these pictures will be shown to your students (e.g. PowerPoint, photos, printed on paper, collage) and prepare for your students.
3. Discuss *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* and what it means.
4. Divide the class into groups of 4. Each group is to come up with 3 ways to put *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* into practice in their classroom. Share with the whole group.
5. Present the pictures to your students. Discuss what they see. Create a web to graphically show these observations. Students may include things they have observed that are not shown in the pictures.

Day 2

1. Prearrange with the custodian a visit to the lunchroom after lunch.
2. Measure the volume of trash generated during one day's lunch by counting the number of trash bags. (This number will be compared with the bags of trash that do not include recyclables, trays, and liquid waste on the low trash day.)
3. After returning to the classroom, use a large 3-column chart to list items the students identify that can be reduced, reused, and recycled in the lunchroom. Use the *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* model
 - Reduce the packaging brought from home
 - Recycle plastics and aluminum
 - Dump the liquid waste
4. Challenge students to think of ways to convince their peers to have a low trash lunch. This can be an informal homework assignment.

Day 3

1. Tell the students that they will be having a low trash lunch on _____, *(a day approved by the principal and prearranged with the custodian)*.
2. Work with the class to select a catchy name for this day.
3. Come up with a plan to spread the word to the school. The class could create a very short presentation they can give to each classroom group, an ad to be given over the intercom during school announcements, an announcement during their morning school gathering, posters, or any similar medium. Set day(s) this will be done.
4. Use the rest of this class period to create whatever they have decided to do. Have materials available.
5. While small groups are creating the above, a group of 4 or 5 will plan the set-up for a drop-off line in the lunchroom on the low trash day. They will need to have the following:
 - a. Bins/trash cans for recyclable materials – plastics and aluminum
 - b. Trash can for liquid waste
 - c. Way and place to stack the trays
 - d. Trash cans for all the rest
6. Preview/practice “advertisements.”

The day before your low trash day . . .

- Assign jobs
- Make sure all students know how to do their job
- Establish a meeting time (if this is not a self-contained class)
- Confirm plans with custodian (where the drop-off line will be, appropriate number of trash cans, etc.)
- Make final announcement of low trash day to school

Low Trash Day

- Have trash cans, etc., set up prior to first lunch
- Students in assigned spots
- Make sure students sort and organize waste appropriately

When lunch is over

- Bag up recyclables (*these bags are not counted*). Recycle.
- Dump the liquid waste.
- Measure the volume of the remaining waste.
- Calculate the difference in volume as appropriate to your grade (e.g. simple comparison of numbers, fractions, percentages). *For example, we reduced our trash by 60%.*
- Report to school (make an announcement, etc.) by the end of the day.

Last Class Day

1. Post the number of trash bags from your baseline count and the number of trash bags of waste on the board. Display the amount of change as determined yesterday.
2. Evaluate the project. Ask the custodian to come talk to the class. Was there a better way to dispose of the trash (based on what they learned at the Desert Living Center's Sustainability Gallery)? Discuss successes and areas that could be improved. Discuss the impact on students, and possible long-term effects on student behavior.