



Curious George's Recycling Challenge

Once children have an appreciation for nature, you can help them learn to be stewards of the environment by “doing their part.” In this activity, you can introduce children to the simple principles of identifying and sorting materials for recycling while you talk to them about the benefits of recycling (reducing waste and making good use of materials that have already been created by using them again).

What you'll need:

Children may need help identifying material, and a parent/assistant can provide some prompts

If there are many children, assistants may be needed to help empty or monitor the bins

3 bins (labeled Paper, Cans, and Plastic)

Depending upon the ages of the children expected to participate, you may want these to be somewhat short so that children don't have any trouble seeing into the bins and depositing the materials.

An office sized trash can or short recycling bin (approximately 1.5' in height) would be appropriate for even young children.



Materials to sort from the three categories:

Choose a variety of sizes and shapes of materials to challenge the children to think about the material the item is made from (vs. its size or shape)

Paper: newspaper, magazines, loose leaf paper, envelopes, etc...

Cans: Soda cans, soup cans, large coffee cans, etc...

Plastic: Milk jugs, soda bottles, sour cream or yogurt containers

Make sure that all items are well cleaned and that any metal materials do not have sharp edges that might cut small fingers.

The Activity:

Explain the three different bins to the group. o Paper, Cans, and Plastic.

Show the children some examples of each and explain a bit about how they are different. Ask children to provide some input here.

Paper: “How do you know something is made of paper? What kinds of things are made of paper?”

Cans: “What comes in cans? What are cans made of?”

Plastic: “What comes in plastic? Is all plastic clear?”

Tell each child to pick out five items from the pile and put them in the correct bin

After they have recycled the materials, award each child with a ‘Recycling Expert’ badge

You can send children/parents home with a recycling challenge sheet so that they can create their own recycling sorting bins.