



Caring for our environment

a cross curriculum environmental education unit

curriculum:

Social Studies

- Place and Environment

Health & Physical Education

- Healthy Communities and Environments

English

- speaking, listening, presenting, reading, writing

Links to

- Mathematics, The Arts, Environmental Education

Levels: 2-4

essential skills

- **communicating clearly and confidently**
- **organise information in tables and graphs**
- **gather, organise, analyse and use information**
- **thinking critically and creatively**
- **work effectively as individuals and within groups**

TEACHER NOTES

Clean Up New Zealand is part of a world-wide anti litter campaign and is held every year in the middle of September. Use this unit as motivation for taking part in the campaign - or as a stand alone unit at any time to help trigger long term behavioural change in our increasingly littered community and country.

TUNING IN TO THE ENVIRONMENT

An Adopted Place

- To establish an awareness of the environment, take your pupils on a walk around the school and ask them to find their own personal place.
- For the duration of the unit, have each child sit quietly in their adopted place, once a day, with a note pad and discover as much as they can about this place on an on-going basis.
- Start with a minute and gradually extend the time. Have the pupils discover the sights, smells, sounds, textures, of their 'place'. Have them note these down.
- Extend this to thoughts and feelings they have about this place.
- Have pupils share these with each other in pairs, groups and as a class.
- Use these as a source of motivation for poems, stories, pictures, sound pictures, mimes.
- How could this special place be enhanced/preserved/respected? Pupils make suggestions.
- Have children design a worksheet to record changes that happen on a daily, weekly and seasonal basis in their adopted place.
- Brainstorm ideas as to the information that could be recorded about the adopted place e.g. rainfall, prevailing wind, temperature, colours, names of trees, animals and insects etc.
- Have groups devise suitable ways of recording these on an on-going basis.

FOCUS ON LITTER

Making a Collection

- Have your pupils make a collection of all their lunchtime food scraps, plastic bottles, wrappers etc. for a period of a week. (Foodscraps could be kept in a sealed plastic bucket).
- Pupils decide on classification headings for the items.
- At the end of the week have the pupils count the number of individual items in each category. This could be 'one container full' rather than an actual number if more appropriate.
- Weigh each category
- Which category of lunchtime litter was the greatest, least, lightest etc.
- Display results on graphs/tables.
- Calculate the amount of litter your class would generate in a month, in a year, in the two, six or eight years spent at school.
- Extend this out to find the amount of lunchtime litter for every class of the school.

COPING WITH LITTER

Recycling

- Invite the school caretaker to talk to the class about the school policy of coping with the daily litter found at school. Find out how it is disposed of.
- Introduce the idea of recycling and making better use of the litter found at school e.g. aluminium can recycling schemes, bottle collections, turning the foodscraps into compost for the school and/or home gardens, (this could be sold for funds) making recycled paper.
- Have pupils devise a policy for better coping with the school litter problem. Are there ways of educating other children in the school to cut down on the amount of waste that is brought to school?

ANTI LITTER CAMPAIGN

- Pupils plan and run an anti litter campaign for the school. What are the best ways of getting the message across and raising pupil awareness e.g. posters, talks, competitions, videos, displays, bulletin boards etc.

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

A Litter Free School

- Survey. Have pupils survey the school to find out the amount of litter there is in the playground.
- Ask the pupils to tell how they feel about having litter around the grounds.
- Note any specific places where most litter is found. Why? Ask pupils to come up with suggestions e.g. more bins, certificates at assembly etc.

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- Collect all the litter for a week around the school and display it in one place. Divide into suitable classifications.
- Invite other classes to view the display and identify the problem.
- Explain to the other pupils that you would like them to come up with some ideas as to how this problem can be overcome and what benefits it can bring to the school environment.

THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Raising Awareness

- Extend the survey to the local district or shopping centre. Have the children make a collection and arrange for a public display of all litter collected.
- Invite parents, the local press and civic leaders to the display.
- A sponsored March. Organise a sponsored 'March A against Litter' around your local area. This can take the form of placards and sandwich boards plus cleaning up the environment.
- Interview & Report. Invite local city and district council members to school. Find out about any local council anti-litter initiatives and how the community disposes of its litter and rubbish. Is there a recycling scheme in the district?
- Invite a representative from a Waste company to school. Interview. Find out the advantages of recycling for New Zealand. Who uses recycled material?

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Art & Craft

- Make colourful collages from waste paper and packaging.
- Make litter mobiles from cans, cardboard, paper and packages.

Language

- Make a class newsletter to distribute to the community promoting a litter free community and recycling. Have every class member contribute. It can contain: poems, slogans reports, articles on recycling, grapes, statistics. Various community groups may take out advertisements to defray costs and promote their businesses and show they care about the local environment.

Using Litter Creatively

- Music. Make a junk band out of waste materials. Compose and play 'junk music'.
- Drama. A play about the day in the life of a milk container.
- Art. Make a large sculpture from cartons, cans and bottles.
- Art. Make paper bag masks and decorate with waste materials.
- Language. Invent uses for junk materials such as matchbox containers, plastic pot plant holders, tin can mobiles, junk presents etc.
- Establish a glass, plastic, aluminium and paper recycling bank school.
- Show the children how to make compost.
- Make your own recycled paper.

evaluation:

Social Studies Evaluation

- can the students identify how local communities make efforts to promote anti littering and recycling initiatives?

Health Evaluation

- can the students say how community litter awareness enhances the well-being of the local community?
- can students come up with solutions to increase community awareness of litter problems?

Arts Evaluation

- do the students show imaginative use of materials and sounds to express an anti-litter theme?

Maths Evaluation

- are the students able to collate, organise and display survey results in meaningful and effective forms such as tables and graphs?

Skills Evaluation

In the context of the unit, were the students ...

- able to express ideas and feelings confidently and clearly?
- able to work both independently and within groups?
- think both logically and creatively?