

# "Don't Forget the Bag" Week

**Developed by:** Cathy Walters

**Discipline / Subject:** Environmental Science

**Topic:** School-wide project empowering students to take care of our planet

**Grade Level:** PK-12

**Resources / References / Materials Teacher Needs:**

1. PowerPoint Presentation
2. Letter of participation
3. Collect plastic bags for one week prior to "Don't Forget the Bag" Week
4. Find a sponsor to donate reusable bags or purchase cloth bags for each student to decorate using permanent markers and fabric paint
5. Poster project promoting "Don't Forget the Bag" Week

**Lesson Summary:** Students and their families will sign up to participate in a one-week program where they will not use plastic shopping bags and use cloth/reusable bags instead.

**Standards Addressed:** (Local, State, or National)

Alaska state standards:

**SE1 Students develop an understanding of how scientific knowledge and technology are used in making decisions about issues, innovations, and responses to problems and everyday events.**

SE3.1 GLE 10 & 11 Current environmental problems are analyzed and discussed.

Problem solving methods are implemented

SF1.1 - SF3.1 GLE 11 A variety of cultures are discussed in attempting to solve environmental problems

**Learning Objectives:**

The student will:

1. Attend a "Don't Forget the Bag" Week presentation
2. Younger students will participate with his/her family in remembering to use cloth/reusable bags when shopping for one week
3. Decorate a cloth shopping bag for his/her family (optional)
4. Make a poster for "Don't Forget the Bag" Week
5. Discuss information given in the presentation

**Method of Assessment for Learning:**

Teacher observation or criteria can be set for creating designs on posters and canvas bags

**Procedural Activities:**

1. Send announcement home in weekly school newsletter asking families to please send in all the plastic shopping bags they use in one week for an upcoming project. Get a large box (washing machine size) to set up in a common area in your school for bag collection.

Label the box, PLASTIC BAGS.

2. Schedule your school-wide presentation. My presentation only required 30 minutes. I gave one presentation to Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and a second to the middle and high school students. The PowerPoint was the same for both groups but I changed the introduction to address the older students. I know it was effective for both groups because there was no talking, no wiggling in chairs, and audible sighs to what the students were viewing. I gave the presentation on a Thursday and the "Don't Forget the Bag" Week began the following Sunday.
3. The sign-up sheet for participation was sent home the day before the presentation to students in grades PK-8<sup>th</sup> grade. To show participation families returned the sign-up form to school. We had nearly 100% participation! High school students were given the opportunity to be responsible for their own reusable bag use. They signed a pledge hosted by the environmental science club called Roots and Shoots.
4. At the end of your PowerPoint presentation show students the mountain of plastic bags that your school uses in just one week. Placing the bags behind a curtain makes for a dramatic reaction when the curtain is pulled.
5. Ask students what they can do to stop the pollution and the danger to animals caused by using plastic bags.
6. Pass out bags given by a sponsor or discuss how each class is going to have the opportunity to decorate a canvas bag to use for shopping.
7. When students return to class discuss the presentation and brainstorm ideas for making posters for "Don't Forget the Bag" Week. These posters can be displayed on the family refrigerator to help build the habit of using cloth/reusable bags or displayed in the classroom and around the school.

**Materials Students Need:**

If you choose the option of decorating canvas bags, you will need bags, permanent markers, and fabric paint. There are several on-line sites for ordering canvas bags:

[cheaptotes@hotmail.com](mailto:cheaptotes@hotmail.com) sells them for \$.69 a piece.

**Technology Utilized to Enhance Learning:**

[www.ativsolutions.com/images/The-Dangers-of-Plastic-Bags.pdf](http://www.ativsolutions.com/images/The-Dangers-of-Plastic-Bags.pdf) or

[www.poconorecord.com/flash/soundslides/20080505plasticbags/soundslider.swf](http://www.poconorecord.com/flash/soundslides/20080505plasticbags/soundslider.swf)

I took this slide show and prefaced it with ten clues:

1. "It" is found all over the world.
2. "It" is found on land and at sea.
3. "It" is found in the desert and at the Poles.
4. "It" is referred to as the "National Flower" of South Africa.
5. They call it *White Pollution* in China.
6. "It" is taxed in Italy and Belgium.
7. You must pay for "It" in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Spain, and Norway.
8. "It" is banned in several countries.
9. 85 to 100 billion are used in the United States each year.
10. Do you know what "It" is?

**Other Information:**

I cut standard sized poster board in half for students to create their "Don't Forget the Bag" message.

**Modifications for Special Learners/ Enrichment Opportunities**

**There are so many places you can go in your studies from here! Research how plastic breaks down in the environment. Do other forms of plastics cause pollution and dangers to our ecosystems? Is it better to use paper bags when shopping? Why has legislation not been passed to ban the use of plastic shopping bags in your city? State? Country? What are some other simple ways we as individuals can help our environment?**