

Litter Lesson

Age Group: 1st-3rd Grade (can be adapted for other age groups)

Approximate Time: 45 minutes minimum

Materials Needed: garbage bags, latex-free gloves for each student

Discussion:

- What is litter?
 - Litter is garbage that is thrown somewhere other than a garbage can, normally found outside.
- Have any of you ever littered or have you seen someone else litter?
 - What and where did the littering take place?
 - A lot of people throw garbage out of their cars – cigarettes, fast food containers, gum wrappers, tissues, etc.
- Why is litter bad?
 - Makes everything dirty – Would you want to play in a park filled with garbage?
 - Harmful to animals
 - Animals mistake litter for food - small pieces of garbage might look like a bug or plant that birds and fish eat
 - Animals can get caught in litter, which makes it hard for them to survive - birds can get caught in soda rings, which makes it hard for them to fly
 - Pollutes water that we need to drink and fish need to live in
- Where does litter go?
 - Trees, grass, water – most litter doesn't stay where people first put it.
 - Nature can move the litter, can you tell me how? – wind, water
 - Who has seen litter on the side of the road?
 - That litter might be carried away by the wind into a nearby river. Have you seen litter in a river or stream?
 - Where does the river take it? – the ocean
 - In the ocean, all of the litter clumps together, making a large floating pile of garbage in the middle of the ocean. Right now scientists know that these large clumps of garbage exist in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

- Most of the litter found in these patches of garbage is made up of plastic that could have been recycled

Litter Clean-up Activity:

- Now, we're going to go outside to see what kinds of litter we can find around the school (groups can be sent to different locations to help show the diversity of litter in different areas).
 - Each student receives a pair of gloves and is broken into a group of 3-4 students. The groups each receive an empty plastic bag to place the litter that they find.
 - Make sure the students know that if they find anything made of glass or that looks sharp they should notify you or another adult to pick it up.
 - After picking up trash for the desired amount of time (can be as little as 10 minutes and as long as an hour), bring the students back together.
- Activity Reflection Questions:
 - What types of litter did you find?
 - Who it might be coming from?
 - How could we stop littering here?

This lesson plan has been designed and made available by the S.A.V.E. Foundation. If you use this lesson, please send an email to recycle@Savemobile.org to let us know so we can keep track of where it has been used. The Student Advocates for Valuing the Environment Foundation is dedicated to promoting environmental stewardship with daily habits and environmental awareness. Learn more at Savemobile.org.

