



Waste Campaign: Alternative Gift-Giving

Background and concepts

Alternative gift-giving means finding ways to give gifts without having to buy new things. Some campaign ideas are listed below.

Here are a few reasons for choosing alternative gift-giving:

- Give gifts without spending a lot of money.
- Cut down on the “stuff” we are getting.
- There are lots of charitable organizations that need money and items.
- Refocusing students on the value of their time and creativity.

Pre-and post-campaign audit questions to consider

Pre-campaign audit:

- When do students give gifts at school?
- Are there any rules or guidelines for gift-giving?
- What do students and teachers like about gift-giving events?
- What do students and teachers dislike about gift-giving events?
- Do students and teachers have any ideas for how gift-giving events can meet their school's needs?

Post-campaign audit:

- If possible, track and weigh the items donated. This can be used to determine the volume of waste diverted from the local landfill.
- Was the project a success? Did it achieve your goals?
- What did students and staff like about the alternative gift-giving?
- What did students and staff dislike about the alternative gift-giving?
- What would you do differently next time?

Ideas for campaigns

- Host a holiday gift fair or school-wide garage sale. Students from upper grades donate a gently used item to a fair where younger students can go to buy gifts for family and friends. Proceeds from the sale can go to a special school event or to a charity. It's recommended that prices for donated items be under \$5 to make the event accessible.
- Reuse products to make gift items. There are many craft ideas for making your own paper, lunch bags from colourful plastic packaging, etc.



- Make gift wrap out of recycled paper or use cloth bags. Make your own gift cards.
- Have a school or classroom challenge to bring items for the food bank.
- Have a school challenge to bring books or gently used items for a school in need.
- Hold a book swap at your school. Have students bring gently used books from home. They can receive a ticket for each book they bring. These tickets can be used to choose books at the swap. Leftover books can be placed in the library or classrooms where appropriate or donated to another organization.
- Secret Santa - Encourage students to include homemade gifts, gifts of time, or donations in the person's name or a minimal limit of \$2.00. Or instead of Secret Santa, agree to donate a maximum of \$5.00 each to a charity students choose.
- Have a party without gifts. Ask all students to bring enough cookies or homemade treats for 2-3 students. There should be lots for everyone.
- In the school newsletter, inform students and families about local charities and what they need. For example, Animal shelters may need food and toys, and food banks may need specific items.
- Instead of a teacher gift, ask your classmates if they would like to make a class donation to a charity in your teacher's name.
- Make bird-seed balls to hang in the garden or give plant seeds in packages for spring planting.

List some other campaign ideas you may have:



Curriculum Connections

Grade 1 Science: OM1.2 Examine methods of altering and combining materials to create objects that meet student and or teacher specified criteria.

Grade 2 Social Studies: RW2.2 Analyze various worldviews regarding the natural environment.

Grade 5 Social Studies: RW5.1 Explain the importance of sustainable management of the environment to Canada's future.

Grade 6 Social Studies: RW6.1 Examine and analyze factors that contribute to quality of life, including material and non- material factors.

RW6.2 Contribute to initiating and guiding change in local and global communities regarding environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Grade 7 Social Studies: RW7.3 Assess the ecological stewardship of economies of Canada and the circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.

Grade 8 Social Studies: RW8.2 Assess the implications of personal consumer choices. **RW8.3** Critique the approaches of Canada and Canadians to environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Health Education: USC8.6 Examine and assess the concept of sustainability from many perspectives and develop an understanding of its implications for the well-being of self, others, and the environment.