



# Lesson: Primary Songs

**Grade:** K-3

**Subject:** Arts, English

**Objectives:**

Students will:

- use familiar tunes to write lyrics about recycling and reusing materials
- learn and sing songs composed by other students and analyze the meaning of the new lyrics
- (optional) make musical instruments out of discarded items and use them in the performance of their songs.

**Teaching Time:** 20-30 minutes; more time is needed to include the optional musical instrument activity.

**Materials:** transparencies, "On Top of the Landfill"; "In Room 10"; "Join Us Recycle"; "Pick It Up Recycle"; "Litter is Garbage"; and "Banana Peel Blues".

(Optional:) Making a Musical Instrument activity. Instructions and pictures or examples of the real musical instruments that the students are mimicking. Concept: California Integrated Waste Management Board: *Closing the Loop: Exploring Integrated Waste Management and Resource Conservation K-6* (2000)



## Background:

Through writing and singing songs, students can reinforce what they have learned about reusing and recycling their trash. By making instruments out of discarded items, students perform authentic tasks related to rescuing trash from Oregon landfills and bolster their creativity.

## Procedures:

- If you plan to make musical instruments, ask students to bring materials to class and follow the directions for making musicals . Write materials list on the board for children to copy.
- You might have the class sing the original song of "On Top of Old Smokey" before using the transparency, "On Top of the Landfill."
- Discuss the song. "What story is this song telling?" Encourage students to share their thoughts.
- Repeat the above procedure with "In Room 10."
- Similar songs and lyrics are listed below:

### **"Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"**

Twinkle, twinkle little can  
You don't belong in a garbage can  
It is better if you're reused,  
Or melted down and corners fused  
Then a new can you become,  
Providing food and drink for some  
lyrics by Cara Morgan, CA

### **"Itsy Bitsy Spider"**

Reduce, reuse, recycle  
Everything you can  
And you will give the Earth  
A nice helping hand  
lyrics by Olga Clymire, CA

### **"I'm a Little Teapot"**

I'm a little red bin  
Short and square  
Put me at the curb  
To show you care  
lyrics by Natasha Stillman, CA

### **"Are You Sleeping"**

We recycle, We recycle  
Paper and cans and glass  
We won't fill the landfills  
or take the homes from animals  
With our trash, With our trash

## Reflection/Response:

- Ask students or small groups to make up their own songs and share them with the class.
- Ask students to write a description of their homemade instruments and how it works.
- Ask students to compare their homemade instruments with the real-life instruments they represent. What are the similarities and differences?

## Extensions:

- Perform a concert or create a class musical for parents or other classrooms.

**Common Curriculum Goal:**

**Arts:** Create, Present, and Perform

- Apply artistic elements and technical skills to create, present and/or perform works of art for a variety of audiences and purposes.

**English:** Writing

- Use a variety of modes (e.g., narrative, imaginative, expository, persuasive) in appropriate context.

**Grade 3 Benchmark:**

- Create, present and/or perform a single form of art, using experiences, imagination, artistic methods and composition to achieve desired effect.
- Write in a variety of modes (e.g., narrative, imaginative, expository, persuasive).

**Making Musical Instruments**

Ask students to bring in the following materials for the musical instruments listed below:

**Drum:** soup can, oatmeal container or coffee can; balloon; string or rubber band

**Drumsticks:** sticks wrapped in cloth and taped with masking tape

**Tambourine:** flip tops off soft drink cans or plastic bottle caps, coat hanger wire, tool to poke holes in bottle caps

**Percussion instrument:** wood blocks, sandpaper, glue

**Rattle:** soft drink cans; rocks, seeds, or beads; tape

**Shaker:** plastic containers with lids; dried beans, other seeds, or small stones; or two paper plates, beans, tape

**Clay pot chimes:** clothesline rope, small clay pots

**Kazoo:** cardboard roll from toilet paper, piece of wax paper to close off one end, rubber band

**Harp:** rubber bands or fishing line, tacks, shoe box

**One-string bass:** five to six feet of heavy string or clothesline rope; a large can, bucket, or washtub; a broom handle or dowel rod about five feet long



# On Top of the Landfill

(sung to “On Top of Old Smoky”)

On top of the landfill  
All covered with trash,  
I stacked all my bottles  
They fell with a crash.  
If I had recycled  
Or even reused,  
This world that we live in  
Would not be abused.

I picked up my bottles, I picked up my cans,  
I looked all around me  
And came up with a plan.  
Now when I go shopping  
For something to drink,  
I'll check the containers;  
Now what do you think?

And when I need cookies, Or popcorn for treats,  
I'll look for less wrappings; Now isn't that neat!  
So now I'll recycle, Reduce, and reuse;  
My world will be brighter, Since wisely I choose.

Lyrics by Bonnie Styles's third-grade class,  
Las Palmas Elementary School, (National School District. ) CA  
Source: California Integrated Waste Management Board:  
Closing the Loop: Exploring Integrated Waste Management and Resource  
Conservation K-6 (2000)





# Join Us Recycle

(To the Tune of Waddle-le-ah-cha camp song, add hand motions depending on appropriateness for the age of the students.)

**Reduce and recycle.  
We've used it before  
Let's try it once more.**

**Join us recycle.  
You can recycle.  
Save resources now.  
I'll show you just how.**

**Easiest thing,  
there isn't much to it.  
All you've got to do  
is commit yourself to it.  
Let's keep Earth alive,  
help species survive,  
when we recycle, reuse it too.**





# Pick It Up Recycle

(sung to "Pick a Bale o' Cotton")

Try this song with hand motions that work for you.  
Appropriate for primary grades.

## Chorus:

Gotta jump down, turn around  
Pick it up, recycle  
Gotta jump down, turn around,  
Recycle every day. (Repeat)

Newspaper, I'm a good recycler,  
Glass and Steel, recycle every day.  
School Paper, I'm a great recycler,  
Junk mail, make it go away.



Sing one line with hand motions. Have students echo back.  
Sing entire song together, then repeat chorus at a faster pace.

(Words by Eileen Stapp 1991)  
Clackamas County Recycling Partnership, [eileens@co.clackamas.or.us](mailto:eileens@co.clackamas.or.us)



# In Room 10

Sung to the tune of "This ole Man"

**In Room 10, We reduce,  
We wont fill landfills too soon.**

**If you want to be happy, save your trash today,  
In Room 10, we've found the way.**

**In Room 10, We reuse,  
We don't toss what others might use.**

**If you think it's trash, then really think again  
Before you put it in the bin.**

**In Room 10, We recycle,  
We recycle all we can.**

**Paper, plastic, aluminum, and glass,  
We will make our resources last.**

Lyrics by Lynda Mooney's first grade class, Las Palmas Elementary School (National School District), CA  
Source: California Integrated Waste Management Board: *Closing the Loop: Exploring Integrated Waste Management and Resource Conservation K-6* (2000)





# Litter Is Garbage

Sung to "Wheels On The Bus"

Litter is garbage that wasn't put away,  
Wasn't put away, wasn't put away.  
Litter is garbage that wasn't put away,  
In the garbage can.

I put my garbage in the garbage can,  
The garbage can, the garbage can.  
I put my garbage in the garbage can,  
I'm not a litterbug.

Gayle Bittinger

Source: Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance: *Whata Waste K-6 Waste Management Education Curriculum*. Originally borrowed from "Totline" *Learning and Caring about Our World*, Gayle Bittinger, Warren Publishing House, Inc.





# "Banana Peel Blues"

(sung to the tune of "Take me out to the Ballgame")



Take me out to the compost,  
Take me out to the heap  
Chop me up into tiny bits;  
I don't care if I'm brown at the tips  
Cause it's root, root, root, for recycling  
If we all compost we'll gain  
For it's 2,4,6 weeks I'm out to the old  
garden.

