



GARBAGE INVENTORY

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OBJECTIVES //

1. To raise awareness of how much waste is generated on a daily basis in participants' school, parish or community;
2. identify ways to reduce waste in their school/parish, thus reducing negative environmental impacts

TIME // 1 Hour

MATERIALS //

- Garbage Inventory Sheet
- Pens/Pencils
- Garbage bags (full of garbage) collected from around the building
- Thick gloves for all participants (for safety!)
- Scale(s) to weigh items
- Poster paper, whiteboard, blackboard or SMART board

Optional:

- Garbage pail to hold garbage while it is being weighed (remember to subtract the weight of the pail when you are weighing the garbage!)
- Consider face-masks and aprons if the garbage is particularly wet or stinky

PREPARATION //

Collect garbage bags from garbage bins around your school/parish. Speak to your building's janitorial staff ahead of time, so that they can help you.

Print out a Garbage Inventory Sheet for each individual or group, and ensure that you have enough writing utensils for each individual/group.

Set-up stations for each individual/group with a bag of garbage, a Garbage Inventory Sheet, and writing utensils. If you have enough, provide one scale per group. If sharing is necessary, place scales in a central location.

Prepare a larger version of the Garbage Inventory Sheet on your poster paper (whiteboard, blackboard or SMART Board), so that you can record each group's totals and calculate a grand total for your entire group.



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ACTIVITY GUIDE

STEP 1 // Share the following quote with participants:

"We are, after all, what we waste. Archaeologists study the garbage of ancient peoples to learn about their lives, their beliefs, and their values. When they examine our middens, I wonder, what will future archaeologist have to say about us?"

Chapman, Sasha. "Laying Waste: Why We Throw Away More Than 6 Million Tonnes of Perfectly Good Groceries Every Year." The Walrus: October 2015.

Lead a preliminary discussion with participants before you begin the activity:

If we want to help the environment, we should think not only about what we consume from the Earth, but also what we put back into the Earth. Just as the quote above says, what we throw out can tell us a lot about our lives and values. If we examine the garbage from our school/parish, what do you think it will say about our respect for the environment as a community? We are about to find out, by examining garbage that has been collected from our school/parish.

STEP 2// Divide participants into groups, and send participants to each station. Explain the activity:

Participants are to sort the garbage in their respective bags into the categories outlined on the inventory sheet. Once the garbage is sorted, have them weigh each category on the scales, and record the weight on their inventory sheet.

STEP 3// When everyone has weighed their garbage, invite the group to come back together as a whole. Have each individual/group read their measurements aloud, and record these findings on the larger Garbage Inventory sheet. Add up all of these numbers to get grand totals for each category.



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ACTION STARTER

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POST-ACTIVITY DISCUSSION//

Lead a post-activity discussion with participants. You can use the following questions to start the discussion:

- In which category the school/ parish is the most wasteful?
- Do these findings surprise you?
- What do you think these findings say about the values/beliefs of the people in the school/ parish?
 - Pay special attention to the categories in which recyclable/ compostable materials have been mistakenly tossed in the garbage.
- What can be done to reduce the most wasteful categories?
- What can be done to cut down waste in their school/ parish generally?
 - Have participants brainstorm ideas on how to reduce waste.
 - Encourage the group to act on these ideas in real life.



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| CATEGORY | WEIGHT |
|---|--------|
| <i>Food Items</i> | |
| Food Waste (any garbage generated by food items, such as food wrappers, plates, cutlery, coffee cups) | |
| <i>Food items that could have been composted</i> | |
| Plastic (Non-recyclable – check municipal/ provincial standards) | |
| Plastic (Recyclable) | |
| Fabric | |
| Metals (e.g. aluminum cans) | |
| Miscellaneous | |
| Glass | |
| TOTAL WEIGHT | |
| Total Weight of Recyclable Materials | |
| Total Weight of Compostable Materials | |

NOTE:

Bold Rows Represent Items that could Have Been recycled

Italic Rows represent items that could have been composted