



I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Description:

Students brainstorm changes they can make in their daily lives to live more sustainably. Students set one personal goal to make a change to positively impact the environment and their community.

Objective:

- Students will work as a group to brainstorm actions they can take to make a positive impact the environment.
- Students will set achievable personal goals.
- Students will assess their own achievements critically and determine actions to take to make improvements.

Standards:

All Grade Levels

- SS X.1.2 Civic Participation
- SS X.3.3 Describe relationships between humans and the physical environment.
- LA X.3.1 Speaking: Students will develop, apply and refine speaking skills and strategies to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations.
- LA X.3.2 Listening: Students will develop and demonstrate active listening skills across a variety of situations.
- LA X.3.3 Reciprocal Communication: Students will develop, apply, and adapt reciprocal communication skills.

5th Grade

- SC.5.13.4.C Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.

Materials:

- White board, smart board, chalkboard, dry erase board
- Student handout pages
- Markers/crayons





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Activity:

1. Distribute student handout pages.
2. Ask students to think of all the activities they have completed during this unit. As a class, ask students to list things they have learned. Write these things down on the board.
3. Ask students to come up with some ideas of what they can do to make a difference. Have students work in pairs or small groups. On the BACK of their student page, they should make a list as long as they can of all the things they can do to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Their list should be VERY specific - "recycle" isn't specific enough, but "recycle my water bottle after soccer practice" works. If they need some help, give them some suggestions. Some thoughts:
 - a. Turn out the lights when you leave the room.
 - b. Turn off the water when you brush your teeth.
 - c. Make sure to bring a reusable water bottle to school each day.
 - d. Remind family members at home to recycle.
 - e. Tell family members what can and cannot go into the recycle bin.
 - f. Pick up litter on the way to school.
 - g. Pick up litter at a local park.
 - h. Double check that there is no litter near the empty trash bin after the trash/recycling pickup day each week.
 - i. Walk to school instead of driving.
4. Have several students share their thoughts – give this as much time as you can. Make a list on the board of all of the student thoughts.
5. Discuss which of these ideas the students could actually do. For example, if a student says, "buy an electric car," it's a great idea but is not something that *they* personally can do.
6. Explain to the students that they are going to pledge to do something to make difference. Students should look at the list of actions the class generated. They should pick their top 3 and put them in the first box on the front of their student page. They can either write words or draw a picture of themselves doing those actions.
7. After carefully considering their top 3 ideas/actions, students should select ONE thing they think they really can achieve. They should draw a picture of themselves achieving this goal in the second box of their student page. They can also write a short description of the picture in this space.
8. Collect the student pages and, if possible, display them on a classroom bulletin board. As much as possible, remind students of their goals and do a quick verbal check in to remind them of their pledges.
9. After two weeks, revisit the student handouts. Ask students to consider their success. Did they achieve their goal? Do they need to expand it and add a new goal? Or do they need to reconsider their goal so they can achieve it this time around?





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Activity Cont:

10. If possible, revisit the goals every few weeks for several months to help students understand that goal setting is a process.

Suggested extension: As a class, develop a goal/pledge that the whole group will work on. Revisit this goal on a daily/weekly basis as is appropriate. There are an infinite number of goals you could establish as a group, but here are a few suggested classroom goals:

- Earn an extra 15 minute recess each week for good behavior and use the time to do a schoolyard litter cleanup.
- Make sure all waste paper in the classroom makes it into the recycle bin and not into the trash can.
- Reduce the number of paper towels we use. (Note, this may require first doing an assessment of how many paper towels are used on a daily/weekly basis first.)

Assessment:

- Classroom discussion
- Completed student handout pages

