

Recycling Crafts for Kids

With the hustle and bustle of everyday life, teaching our kids about recycling isn't always top of mind. It's important to set aside time to educate them about its significance in our world.



Getting Started

Upcycling, which is repurposing old household items, is a great way to entertain and educate kids about the principles of recycling while still having fun. Let's craft our way to helping our planet by doing one or all of the projects below.

Self-Watering Seed Starter Pot Planter

Here is a fun and easy way to teach kids about recycling that also teaches them how to take care of plants. A self-watering seed starter pot planter is a DIY planter that reuses 2-liter bottles and is designed in a way to help kids begin to understand what it takes to care for plants.

Things you'll need:

- 2-liter bottle
- potting soil
- seeds
- scissors or knife
- vegetable oil and paper towels



Step 1: Clean the Bottle

Remove any labels and leftover glue from the bottle before you take out the scissors and start modifying your 2-liter bottle. Household items including vegetable oil, margarine, and peanut butter can be used with a paper towel to remove the sticky residue left over from the label.



Step 2: Cut the Bottle in Half

Using scissors or a knife, cut the bottle in half about 5 inches from the bottom.

*Be careful when using sharp objects. Use them cautiously.



Step 3: Make Water Holes

Take the 2-liter bottle and puncture eight holes around the top, about 1-inch apart from each other. It's important to puncture enough holes so that your plant can get the right amount of water needed to help it grow.



Step 4: Add Potting Soil and Water

Flip the top half of the bottle over and fill it with about 3 cups of damp potting soil. Make sure to not overfill it so there is enough room to plant your seeds at the end. Afterwards, fill the bottom half of the bottle with water and place the top half of the bottle, neck down, into the water.



Step 5: Finishing Touches

Plant some seeds in the potting soil and lightly water. Have some fun with choosing what you'd like to plant in the soil, like a favorite herb you can add to your food or maybe a nice plant that you'd like to have in your room or kitchen.

Now all you've got to do is keep an eye out to see when your plant may need more water.

This is a perfect craft for the spring or summer when the weather is warm, but can also be done in the fall or winter, as long as your plant gets the proper sunlight it needs to grow indoors.

Wine Bottle Bud Vase

Kids can even upcycle some of the things adults use, like wine bottles! Wine bottles have a very slender, sleek shape that fit into any setting. Here's a craft that takes wine bottles and turns them into pretty centerpieces. Follow the simple steps below to turn an ordinary bottle into a beautiful bud vase.

Things you'll need:

- wine bottle
- soap and water
- flat white spray paint
- masking tape



Step 1: Clean the Bottle

Prep your bottle for painting by soaking it in soapy water to remove any stickers or sticky residue. For a great finish, make sure your bottle is smooth and clean before you apply the spray paint.



Step 2: Tape It up for a Unique Touch

Take masking tape and make an interesting design covering parts of the bottle. You can have some fun with this and add your personality to the bottle, giving it a unique look that's specific to you.



Step 3: Spray Paint the Bottle

Take the flat white spray paint and spray the whole bottle, top to bottom. If one coat is not enough, spray on a second coat. Let dry.

*While working with the spray paint, always remember to wear a mask to protect you from the fumes. Spray painting is best if done outside or in a garage.



Step 4: Finishing Touches

Once dry, remove the masking tape from the bottle and your craft is ready for its finishing touches. All that's left to do is fill the bottle with water, place a flower or some greenery inside and set it on the table as décor.

You can use other glass items, like mason jars, and add different designs to them, creating a fun collection of glass décor for your home.

Juice Carton Bird Feeder

There are plenty of household items kids use on a daily basis, like milk and juice cartons, that are great foundation pieces for teaching kids about recycling.

We've created a 5-step guide for you and your kids to follow, so you can take what was once a carton of sweet juice and recreate it into a friendly, cardinal-inspired bird feeder. So finish up that last bit of orange juice, rinse out the carton, and get to making your recycling craft!

Things you'll need:

- used juice/milk carton
- red paint (enamel)
- knife
- (2) large plastic bottle lids (2) small white plastic bottle lids
- black permanent marker
- (2) popsicle sticks
- hot glue gun
- clothespin
- bird feed



Step 1: Clean Your Carton

Using rubbing alcohol and a few cotton balls, remove any packaging and branding stickers from the surface of your carton. This will allow your paint to dry more evenly later on.

*Always remember to wear protective clothing while working with rubbing alcohol.



Step 2: Paint Your Carton

Grab your enamel paint and decorate the carton. Enamel paint is great to use because it's waterproof and will withstand any rainy weather that's to come.

Have some fun with the colors you choose, and make your bird feeder unique to you. Make sure to paint a couple coats to help the colors be vibrant and even. Let dry.



Step 3: Cut the Center + Make Some Wings

Using your knife, cut out the center of the front side of the carton. This is where the bird food will go.

It's important to make sure you cut a hole big enough for a bird's head and upper body to fit in and reach the food inside the carton.

Next, use your knife to cut two flaps on each side of the carton to make wings.

The wings can be cut any size you'd like, but make sure to cut out only three sides and leave the top part attached to the carton to create an actual flap.



Step 4: Glue the Eyes

Glue the bottle caps onto the carton where the eyes will be. Use black plastic caps first, then smaller white caps on the inside. Take your permanent marker and draw in pupils on the white caps. Feel free to use this step to add some silly personality to your feeder.

Then, using scraps from the carton cutouts, add a little bird beak underneath the eyes.



Step 5: Finishing Touches

Poke two holes under the center cutout and glue two sticks to look like the cardinal's feet. These sticks will be the perches for birds to stand on as they eat. It's important to make sure the sticks are long enough for a bird to be able to stand on comfortably to enjoy the food.

Now, pour in some birdseed, hang your feeder outside, and watch all the birdies flock to their generous friend.

These are just a few of the many ways you and your kids can have fun repurposing old household items. With these crafts, they'll be able to let their creativity come to life while learning about – and helping – the environment.