

Make, don't buy- Upcycled tote bag

Scouts give more thought to being thrifty by making something they need using what they already have. For this activity, the item is a tote bag.

Section: Cubs, Scouts, Ventures, Rovers
Time: 1 hour
Where: Home, Den,



PLAN

Discuss the concept with the scouts. Ask scouts to consider all the clothes they have at home and ask them to consider how often do they wear them all. Chances are they have lots of clothes they have forgotten about or don't really wear. Discuss how much waste can be generated when we buy things we don't use. Consider ways we could make things we need with items we already have.

Use the example of a tote bag. If you have one to show the scouts, consider the natural resources that help make this bag (e.g. cotton, water and energy). Most are made from cotton, a water-thirsty crop which is grown in places like The United States, India, China and Uzbekistan. Use Google Maps to see how far away these place are. Depending on the age and enthusiasm of your scouts, you might leave them off to research, design and create the bag themselves, or you might like to give them the basics and maybe show them one that you "made earlier" yourself!

Materials

T-shirt, ruler, marker and scissors

Useful Tutorial

<https://www.craftaholicsanonymous.net/no-sew-t-shirt-bag-tutorial>

DO

There are lots of different ways to make these, so go online and find a design. At its simplest, grab a few t-shirts and decide which will work best for your bag. Do you need stretchy material or rigid? Do you have a colour preference for your bag? How big or small would you like your bag to be? After using the sponge, stick it in with the laundry and it is ready to go again, and again, and again! If you want to fit your laptop in the bag you might go for a strong cotton material. If you want to fit your laundry in it a cotton and elastane blend could work well. The good thing is that these don't take too long to make. Experiment with all different styles and sizes and see which works best for you.

REVIEW

If the scouts made these together in the den, come together at the end to look at their handiwork. If they made them at home, then chat about them the next time the scouts come together, by which time the bags might have been in use already.

How did the scouts find the challenge? What did they learn from making the bags, and what might they do differently the next time? Be sure to bring the conversation around to the consideration of what people buy, and the natural cotton, water and energy needed to make, package and transport it before it reaches the consumer.



In a nutshell...

- Scouts figure out how to upcycle a simple tote bag to reduce waste.
- Using old t-shirts and scissors, they use their resourcefulness to upcycle something old into something new
- They think about how using their own creativity can help reduce waste and encourage more conscious consumption



Follow-on

The same approach could be useful to find other things which could be made instead of bought. Have the scouts brainstorm to come up with their own solutions, then get on and try them out.

Check out our resource sheets for other Make, Don't buy projects.



SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

SDG 12 seeks to achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, and to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. Scouts can help to achieve these goals, and replacing a purchased item in their household with something they make themselves will get them thinking about other possible solutions.



Find out more!

Visit - www.betterworld.ie

Contact us - sustainability@scouts.ie

Produced by the Scouting Ireland Sustainable Scouting Team