



# Mindfulness and Consumerism: Starting off the New Year with Good Habits

## January 2025 Lesson Plan: Elementary

**Grade Level:** Elementary

**Duration:** 1 Hour + Extension Activities

### Objective:

- Students will explore the relationship between consumerism and environmental impact.
  - Students will practice mindfulness in decision-making, focusing on reducing, reusing, and repurposing items to minimize waste.
  - Students will engage in an eco-challenge to repurpose old classroom items into something useful or creative.
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### Materials Needed:

- Old jars, paper, plastic bottles, scrap materials (e.g., buttons, cardboard, fabric scraps, magazines)
  - Scissors, glue, tape, markers, paints
  - Whiteboard/Blackboard and markers
  - Projector or visual aids to show examples of repurposing
  - Digital camera or smartphone (for taking photos of finished projects)
  - **Repurpose Brain Teaser Worksheet** (includes a list of everyday items for students to brainstorm creative ways to reuse or repurpose them)
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### Lesson Outline:

#### 1. Introduction (10 minutes)

##### Discussion:

- Begin by discussing consumerism and what it means to “consume.” Ask students:
  - What are some things you buy often?
  - How do you feel when you buy something new?
  - Why do we buy so many things, and how do these things affect the planet?

##### Explanation of Mindful Consumerism:



- Introduce the concept of mindful consumerism. Explain that it involves making thoughtful choices about what we buy and how we use things. Highlight the importance of reducing waste by reusing and repurposing items.
- Discuss the environmental impact of overconsumption: waste, pollution, and resource depletion.

## 2. Repurpose Brain Teaser Worksheet (10 minutes)

### Worksheet Instructions:

- Hand out the **Repurpose Brain Teaser Worksheet** to each student.
- The worksheet lists everyday items (e.g., plastic bags, old shoes, cardboard boxes, bottle caps, worn-out clothes) and asks students to come up with at least one creative way to repurpose each item.
- Encourage students to think outside the box and be creative. After completing the worksheet, students can share their ideas with the class.

### Worksheet Example:

- **Item:** Plastic Bottle
  - **Creative Repurpose Idea:** Turn it into a bird feeder by cutting it in half, adding string to hang it, and filling it with seeds.
- **Item:** Old T-shirt
  - **Creative Repurpose Idea:** Cut it up and turn it into a reusable shopping bag or a fun headband.

## 3. Activity: Repurpose and Create (25 minutes)

### Instructions:

- Split the class into small groups or let them work individually.
- Provide a variety of materials: old jars, paper, plastic bottles, scrap materials, etc.
- Encourage students to think creatively about how to repurpose the items. For example:
  - Old plastic bottles could become planters or storage bins.
  - Scrap paper could be used to create greeting cards or bookmarks.
  - Broken furniture could be turned into an art project or a new functional item with a little creativity.

### Mindfulness Discussion:

- As students work, remind them of mindful choices. Ask them to reflect on how repurposing these items is helping reduce waste and contribute to sustainability.
  - What can we learn from repurposing old items?
  - How does it feel to create something new instead of buying something new?

## 4. Group Reflection & Sharing (10 minutes)

### **Class Discussion:**

- After the activity, gather the class together to discuss the projects and worksheet answers. Ask each group or individual to share what they created and explain how their project helps the environment by reducing waste.

### **Reflection Questions:**

- How did it feel to reuse old materials instead of buying something new?
- What other items in our school or home could we repurpose?
- Why is it important to be mindful about the things we buy and use?

### **5. Eco-Challenge Wrap-Up & Homework (5 minutes)**

#### **Conclusion:**

- Remind students that small decisions can have a big impact on the environment.
- Encourage them to continue practicing mindfulness in their consumer habits by reusing, repurposing, and reducing waste at home.

#### **Homework Assignment:**

- Ask students to identify one item at home that they can repurpose or reuse instead of throwing away. Have them bring in their ideas or creations to share with the class in the next lesson.
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### **Assessment:**

- Participation in the repurposing activity.
  - Quality of the finished projects, reflecting creativity and mindfulness.
  - Completion of the **Repurpose Brain Teaser Worksheet**, including creative and practical ideas.
  - Contributions to the class discussion about consumerism and sustainability.
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### **Extension Activities:**

- **Classroom Project:** Organize a class project to repurpose items collected throughout the school year, such as turning old paper into recycled notebooks or creating an eco-friendly art display.
- **Parent Involvement:** Send home a letter to parents explaining the eco-challenge, encouraging them to engage their children in repurposing items at home, and perhaps even share their photos with the class.

