

# GREEN PARTY PLANNING

With all the food, packaging, decorations and giveaways, events of any size – from small gatherings to large parties – can generate a lot of waste. Many party supplies used at gatherings are used once and then thrown away. In this activity, participants will create reusable party supplies, including a pennant banner and a tablecloth, which can be used for all of their celebrations throughout the year. Participants will also review a green event checklist to assist in party planning. Whether the gathering is an upcoming holiday celebration or a birthday party, planning efforts to make and use reusable party supplies will help reduce waste.

## Outcome

- Participants will learn how to reduce waste at celebrations by making reusable party supplies.
- Participants will use a green event checklist to reduce waste at celebrations and gatherings.

## Audience

Youth (ages 10+), adults

## Time

20 – 60 minutes

## Concepts

- Parties of any size can generate a lot of waste with decorations and other party supplies, and reusable supplies can help reduce waste.
- Planning waste reduction strategies before a party can help the host throw a successful green celebration.

## Supplies

- Newspapers, magazines, old maps, colored paper or fabric
- Twine or ribbon (length depends on size of pennant banner)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Fabric tablecloth (one per participant, available at most party supply stores)
- Fabric paint (available at most arts and crafts stores)
- Handout: Green Party Checklist available in the Appendix (one per participant)
- Markers, crayons, colored pencils, ribbon, string or fabric for decorating (*optional*)



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## Preparation

- Gather supplies in advance or ask participants to bring their own supplies.
- Create one pennant banner and tablecloth in advance to become familiar with the process and make samples.

## Procedure

### Create a pennant banner

- Hand out the Green Party Checklist to participants and have them read through the list.
- Ask participants if they have considered any of the steps for previous gatherings or parties. Ask which of the steps would be easiest and hardest to follow to make a gathering or party greener.
- Have a discussion with participants about waste created from decorations and other party supplies, and ask participants to brainstorm ideas for alternatives to disposable decorations and party supplies (tablecloths, dishware, etc.)
- Have participants cut newspapers, magazines, old maps, colored paper or fabric into triangle shapes. The more triangles you have, the longer the banner will be! Encourage participants to use colors and designs that can be reused for more than one celebration so the banner can be a go-to event supply.
- Have participants fold over the top edge of the triangles about half an inch.
- Have participants glue or tape the twine or ribbon under the half inch fold and press down on the paper to secure the triangles to the banner firmly. Participants can use the scissors to snip any extra corners sticking out from the triangle.
- Have participants continue adding triangles to the twine or ribbon until the banner reaches the desired length.
- Participants can bring their banners home to use as a decoration for any event celebration.
- Make a reusable tablecloth
- Make sure each participant has a tablecloth. Have participants use fabric paint to decorate the tablecloth. Encourage participants to use colors and designs that can be reused for more than one celebration so the tablecloth can be a go-to event supply.
- Let the tablecloths dry.
- While the tablecloths are drying, hand out the Green Event Checklist to participants and have them read through the list.
- Ask participants if they have considered any of the steps for previous gatherings or parties. Ask which of the steps would be easiest and hardest to follow to make a gathering or party greener.
- Have a discussion with participants about waste created from decorations and other party supplies and ask participants to brainstorm ideas for alternatives to disposable decorations and party supplies (tablecloths, dishware, etc.)

## Discussion questions

- Why do you think people use new event decorations and supplies for each party or celebration?
- What kind of difference would it make if everyone created reusable event decorations and supplies?
- In addition to using green decorations and supplies, what else can you do before and during parties or celebrations to reduce waste? (Use reusable dishes instead of disposables, providing recycling options, etc.)
- What other ideas do you have for green party decorations and supplies?

## Additional activity ideas

### Check out the Green Parties Learning Trunk

The Green Parties Learning Trunk helps illustrate ideas for hosting greener parties and includes party supply examples for high-waste parties, low-waste parties, and parties with organics for composting as an option.

The trunk also includes an engagement guide to facilitate brainstorming and planning an example party with the group. Check out a learning trunk at [angela.ziobro@hennepin.us](mailto:angela.ziobro@hennepin.us) or visit [www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation](http://www.hennepin.us/environmentaleducation)