

SWAP PARTY

Everyone loves new things, even when they're used. Organize a party where no one spends money and everyone leaves with gifts! Have adults and/or children look through their things and collect gently used items they no longer want. Consider a theme for the swap party, such as books, music, toys, kitchen items, clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc. Your swap party can be informal, by casually laying everything around your space and taking turns choosing items, or formal by making a game of it.

Outcomes

Participants will learn first-hand that reuse is a good way to both get rid of items you no longer want and get new-to-you items.

Audience

Youth (ages 4+), parents and children, adults

Time

30 - 60 minutes, varies by size of swap party

Concepts

- We typically have stuff we don't want any more that is still in good shape. We also like getting new stuff.
- Swap parties are a good way to get rid of stuff and get new stuff without buying new.
- Instead of shopping for new items, choose to reuse.

Supplies

- Gently used items (books, music, toys, kitchen items, clothes, shoes, jewelry, etc.)
- Computer with internet access to look at Hennepin County's Choose to Reuse Directory at www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse (optional)



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Preparation

- Ask participants to bring gently used items to swap (remember to consider choosing a theme for the party, or create different areas at your swap for different types of items).
- Consider how your swap will work. You can have a

smaller informal swap in which items are laid out for people to take, or a larger, more formal swap with a process for how people get to select items or with items wrapped (remember to use alternative gift wrap ideas) so the swap can be more of a game.

Procedure

Small swap:

- Lay out the participants' gently used items in your space.
- Have participants take turns choosing the items they want until all items are taken.
- Decide where items that were not selected in the swap will go. Look in the Donation Opportunities brochure for options or search items on Hennepin County's Green Disposal Guide at www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide

Large swap:

- Lay out the participants' gently used wrapped items in your space.
- Write out consecutive numbers on small pieces of paper. Make numbers for the amount of people participating in the gift swap party (if there are 10 people participating then write out numbers 1 through 10 on small pieces of paper) and put them into a bowl, bag or hat.

- Have everyone draw a number. The number will designate the order in which guests choose a gift.
- Begin with the participant who chose the number 1. The participant will choose any gift and open it.
- Continue with the next participant. The next participant can either choose an unopened gift or they can steal an item guests have opened previously.
- Someone who has their gift stolen can either steal another gift from someone else or choose an unopened gift. A gift cannot be stolen more than once a turn.
- Continue until all participants have had a turn and a gift.
- Decide where items that were not selected in the swap will go. Look in the Donation Opportunities brochure for options or search items on Hennepin County's Green Disposal Guide at www.hennepin.us/green-disposal-guide.

Discussion questions

- Was it easy or difficult to find a reuse gift to bring to the swap party? Why do you think this was?
- What surprised you during the swap party? How did the swap party compare to a typical gift giving party?
- How does reusing items reduce waste? How can

we continue to make waste reduction a part of our everyday life?

- Did you save money when planning your swap party compares to a typical party? Why do you think this was? How can reusing items save money?

Additional activity ideas

- Incorporate a swap party into your holiday or birthday celebrations.
- Host a larger swap party for your organization and incorporate into an existing event. Consider timing the

event to correspond with a change in the seasons, before the holidays, etc. Consider incorporating a repair or mending aspect of your swap by having handy volunteers with repair or sewing skills on-hand.

Resources

- Handout: Donation Opportunities Guide available in the Appendix
- Computer with internet access to look at Hennepin County's Choose to Reuse Directory

at www.hennepin.us/choosetoreuse and the Twin Cities Free Market at www.twincitiesfreemarket.org.

- Do it Green! Minnesota's Swapping Made Easy Guide available at www.doitgreen.org.