

ECO FASHION SHOW

Every person in the U.S. throws away an average of 70 pounds of clothing and other textiles annually. Only 15 percent of textile waste is reused or recycling, meaning 85 percent ends up in the trash. By reusing and repurposing, materials that someone no longer wants or needs can be given a new life. Reusing is an even better option than recycling because reusing doesn't require processing or manufacturing, which saves energy and resources. By shopping reuse, you can get quality, unique goods and save money.

Outcomes

- Participants will learn the value of reusing items instead of buying new.
- Participants will organize a fun event to illustrate creative reuse ideas.

Audience

Youth (ages 11+), adults

Time

Planning will take at least two weeks; actual time depends on how involved the event becomes. See Extensions for a one-day activity.

Concepts

- Before you buy a new item, think about whether you could get it used. Get creative! There are endless ideas for how you can reuse and repurpose materials into new-to-you, unique items that show off your personal style.
- By shopping used first, you can get quality, unique items and save money.

Supplies

- Reused clothes and accessories can be collected, purchased or created (see Additional activity ideas for ideas)
- Handout: Donation Opportunities Guide (*optional*)



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Preparation

- Collect reused clothes and accessories by asking participants to bring in items they no longer need. Consider partnering with a local reuse outlet and giving participants a budget (if possible) to purchase items.

Procedure

- Ask participants about their favorite places to get clothes and accessories. Then ask participants if they ever wear secondhand items. What do they like or dislike about shopping reuse or wearing secondhand items? What are the challenges with shopping reuse?
- Have participants organize an Eco Fashion Show by assembling outfits from reused clothes and repurposing or altering reused clothing and accessories. Consider incorporating a theme, such as outfits inspired by famous musicians, songs, movies, cartoons, parts of the world, sports or outdoor activities, fancy party outfits, etc.
- Award prizes in categories such as “most reused materials,” “least expensive,” “most beautiful,” “most creative,” “weirdest,” etc. Prizes should be made from reused or repurposed materials or encourage reuse (reusable shopping bags, gift cards to local reuse outlets, etc.).
- Have participants develop a plan, if applicable, for advertising the show to the friends, family and the community. Consider integrating the fashion show into an existing event within your organization.

Discussion questions

- What did you learn that was new? What surprised you?
- What was the most successful part of the show? What would you do differently in the future?
- What was most fun about working with reused clothes or accessories?
- What was your favorite outside? Which outfit would you actually wear?
- What is your past experience buying used goods?
- If you are reluctant to buy used goods, what is holding you back?
- Will you buy or use more used goods after this experience? Why or why not?
- When you are done using something, what do you do with it? Where can we donate usable items we are done using? (see the Donations Opportunities brochure for ideas.)
- What do you want to learn more about?

Additional activity ideas

Make accessories from reused materials

- In addition to or instead of a fashion show, you can make smaller accessories made from reused materials. Follow these suggestions or search online for additional ideas:
 - Make bracelets from old snack bags. (<http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/snackbag-chain-bracelet-673305/>)
 - Make beads for a necklace out of old magazines or junk mail (www.wikihow.com/Make-Paper-Beads)
 - Make a purse out of old blue jeans (<http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/jean-pocket-purse-667156/>)
 - Make flower pins or headbands from fabric scraps

Research the life cycle of clothing

- Clothing serves many purposes, including function and fashion. But what do we know about the environmental impact of the clothing we wear? Ask participants to take a look at the tag on an article of clothing they are wearing. What can you learn from the tag? What is the item of clothing made of? Where was it made?

- Have participants research fabrics – what raw materials are fabrics made of and what are the environmental implications? How much textile waste is generated, and how much is reused or recycled? What are the issues with fast fashion and other clothing trends? What are the benefits and challenges of buying reused items versus new items?
- Discuss ways of reducing the environmental impact of our clothing choices (buying reused, buying classic and well-made items, looking for sustainable fabrics, etc.).

One-day eco fashion show

- Group leaders should secure reused clothes and accessories in advance of the session, or have participants bring several items of clothes or accessories.
- Have the participants assemble an outfit from the items provided and perform a spontaneous fashion show.

Resources

Handout: Donation Opportunities brochure

