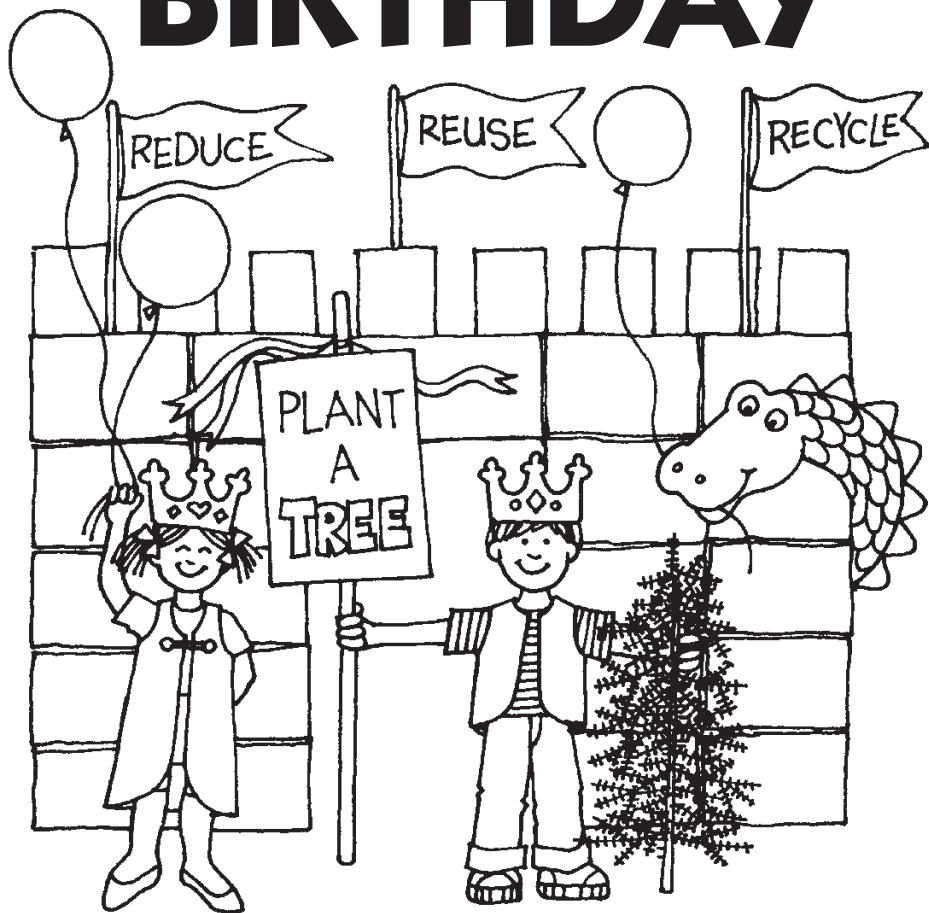


EARTH DAY BIRTHDAY



Imagine a royal village where people are earth-friendly and concerned about ecology. Imagine it in your classroom on Earth Day—a paper bag principality, where the palace is built of paper bag blocks, the prince and princess are clothed in recycled grocery bags, and the palace dragon writes on a magic slate to save paper. It's all part of a play written and produced by your students. All you need are paper bags, newspaper, a little time, and a healthy attitude toward recycling.

Happy Birthday, Earth Day!

Originally celebrated on April 22, 1970, Earth Day is a time to recommit ourselves to preserving and protecting the environment. Your students probably don't remember a year *without* an Earth Day. They have grown up with environmental issues the topic of family discussions, community projects, and campaign promises. Still, it's important to keep the spirit alive and well—especially for their future. This year, help them celebrate Earth Day's birthday with a short play for which they construct a set and costumes out of recycled materials and then research and

write the major part of the play with a top ten list of ways to save the Earth. There's a part in this play for every student!

A Top Ten List

Help your class brainstorm a list of simple things they can do at home and at school which involve recycling, reusing, and renewing. From this list, create slogans for placards to be used in the play. Choose the ten best slogans and ask students to work in small groups to research and write short facts and ideas to accompany each slogan. The slogans and facts will become the body of your play. Assign two students to each slogan. They will create a placard and share the reading of the facts and ideas. For example:

Slogan: STAMP OUT
STYROFOAM

Fact 1: Styrofoam wastes lots of space at already-bulging landfill sites. It is NOT biodegradable and will remain there even 500 years from now.

Fact 2: Americans produce enough Styrofoam cups every year to circle the Earth more than 400 times.

Idea 1: Don't buy products packaged in Styrofoam and don't use Styrofoam plates and cups.

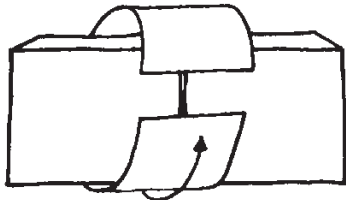
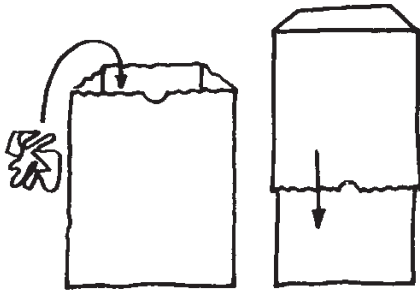
Idea 2: If you eat at fast food restaurants, ask for paper plates and cups.

When presenting the placard slogan, each of the two students can read or recite one fact and one idea. Adjust the assignments according to the age and ability of your students.

Paper Bag Palace

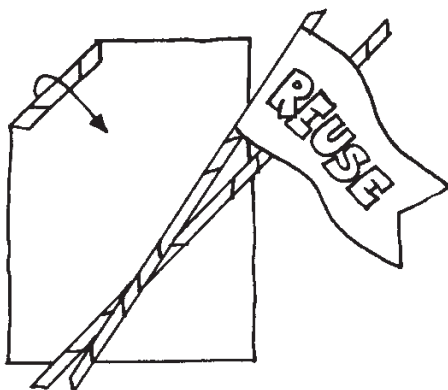
Enlist the help of your students and families in collecting brown paper grocery bags and newspapers. Set up a recycling corner in your classroom for their collection. You can begin to make paper bag blocks for your palace right away, working day by day until the palace is complete. To make a building block,

fill one bag with crumpled newspaper. Slide a second bag over the first. The number of blocks you'll need will depend on your space and imagination. Stack the blocks on top of each other to create the walls. To create a double block (for doorway and window openings), cut open a bag and wrap it around two blocks as shown. Turret blocks can be made from smaller bags.



You can stabilize your palace walls by stapling or gluing the blocks together. Or, if you prefer, leave the blocks unattached to allow children to build and rebuild as a problem-solving activity...until showtime.

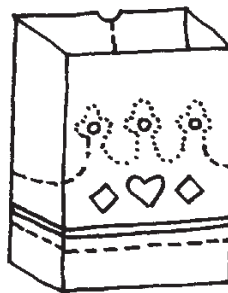
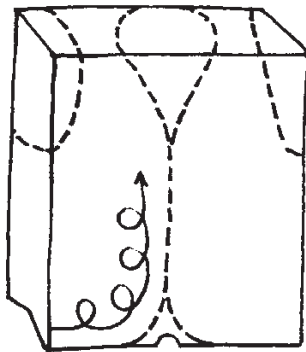
Atop each turret, attach a paper pennant stapled to a small pole created by tightly rolling a sheet of newspaper. Write an Earth-friendly word on each pennant (recycle, reuse, renew, pre-cycle, etc.). As a final touch, decorate the palace with balloons and streamers. This is a real birthday celebration!



Characters and Costumes

The character with the largest part is the ace TV reporter, Holly Wood. For this part, choose a student who has a flair for the dramatic. If that student happens to be a boy, simply rename the character. Ask students to lend clothing from home for this costume...perhaps a trench coat, sunglasses, a wig, etc. The reporter's microphone prop can be anything from a banana to a real microphone. Use your imagination!

The prince and princess should wear a robe or vest and crown created from paper bags. Use markers, glitter glue, sequins, and yarn to decorate the paper bag costumes.



The camera person, light technicians, hairdresser, and make-up person can wear regular street clothes or uniforms, if the kids prefer. Props for these characters include a camcorder—either real or created from corrugated boxes and cardboard tubes. You'll need a hairbrush and hairspray (non-aerosol) for the hairdresser and a huge powder puff and mirror for the make-up artist.

The dragon, a non-speaking part, can be played by one or more students under a blanket. Recycle materials to create a dragon mask and tail. Paint them with tempera or acrylic paint. The dragon's only prop is a magic slate. One of the kids is sure to have one. Finally, the children of Recyclot will need only their placards. If they wish to wear costumes, too, create simple tunics out of paper bags for the medieval look.

Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Invite friends, family, and other classes to attend your Earth Day Birthday celebration. Create invitations from scraps of construction paper collected in your classroom paper recycling bin. Serve birthday cake to all attending and involve guests in a brainstorming session to suggest ways to recycle the paper bag palace.

Paper Bag Books

While students are working to create costumes, placards, and the paper bag palace, entertain them with two stories about paper bag royalty. Check your school or public library for:

The Paper Bag Princess

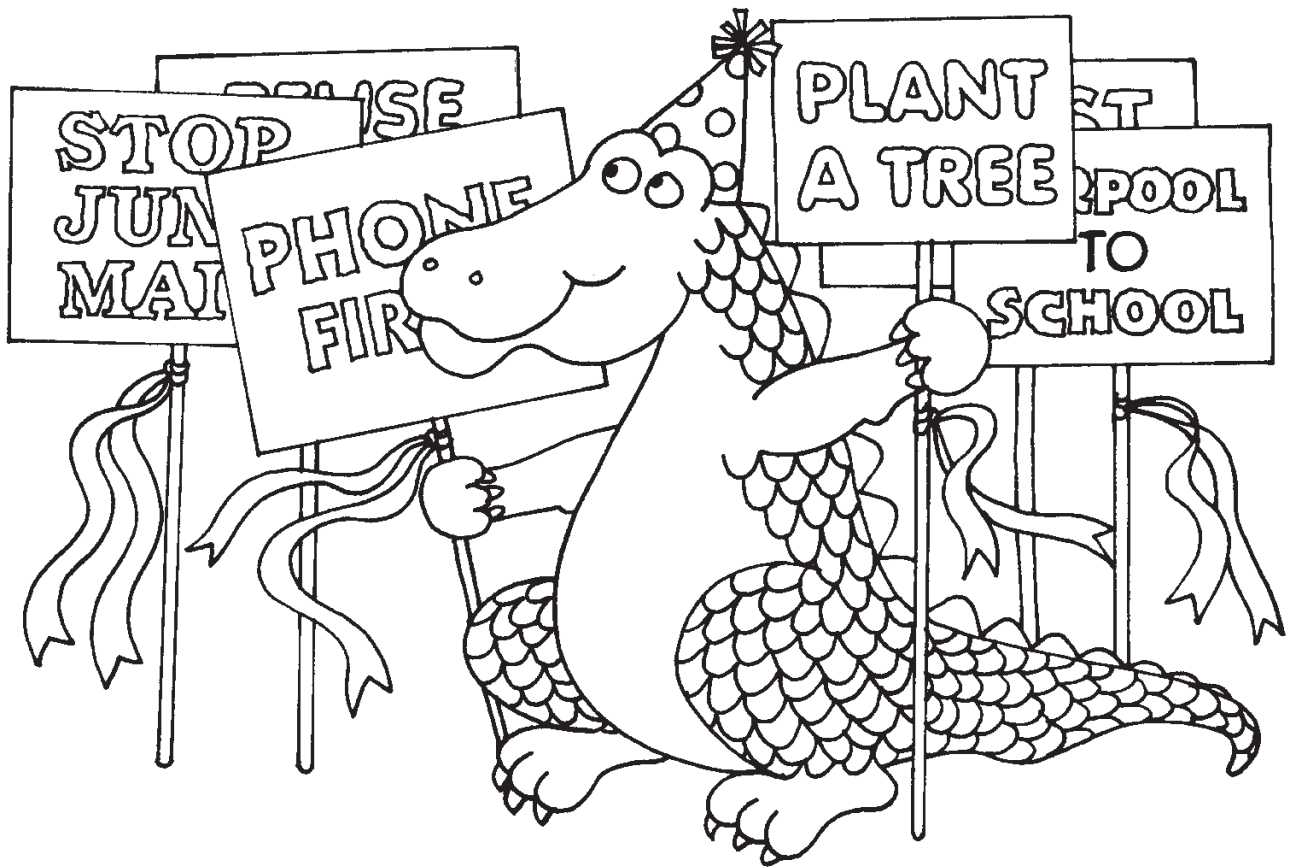
by Robert N. Munsch
illustrated by Michael Martchenko
(Annick Press)

Princess Elizabeth, left with only a paper bag to wear, outsmarts a dragon who has kidnapped her fiancé and pillaged the kingdom. In the end, she lives happily ever after, but with a modern twist.

The Paper Bag Prince

by Colin Thompson
(Knopf)

An old man known only as the Paper Bag Prince is the only one who believes in the land that has been abused and used as a dump. In time, the old man comes to watch nature reclaim the land and show signs of life returning...a perfect story for Earth Day preparations.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EARTH DAY!

Top Ten Ways to Save the Earth at Home and School

A Play Written and Produced by Your Students

Characters: **Holly Wood**, ace reporter for URX-TV
Paper Bag Prince, Recyclot royalty
Paper Bag Princess, Recyclot royalty
Earthday, palace dragon

Props: Camcorder, microphone, flashlight, magic slate, placards, drum

Setting: Paper Bag Palace, Earth Day 2005.
 Over the palace door is a banner—
 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EARTH DAY!
 Balloons and streamers decorate the
 palace built of recycled grocery bags.

As the play opens, URX-TV reporter Holly Wood races into position in front of the palace door. She is followed by an entourage of TV personnel... a camera person, lighting technicians, her make-up person, and her hairdresser. They are hurrying to prepare her for the on-location broadcast.

Holly: GOOD morning, viewers! This is Holly Wood, of URX-TV, where “X” marks the spot where “U R” and where you want to be. Today “U R” in Recyclot, home of the famous Paper Bag Palace, where plans are under way for a huge celebration...because today, my friends, is Earth Day!

(Dragon enters from side stage and tugs on Holly’s sleeve to interrupt her. He carries a magic slate.)

Holly: *(startled by dragon)* Yipes! A dragon! With a magic slate! Stop the camera!

(The camera person stops “shooting” and holds the camera down at his side. The lighting technicians turn off their flashlights. All eyes turn to the dragon, who writes “Hi” on his slate, then holds it up so the audience can see.)

Holly: A friendly dragon! Roll the camera!

(Hair and make-up people rush to do a quick fix on Holly. The flashlights go on and the camera rolls.)

Holly: What's your name? *(She holds microphone to dragon's mouth. The dragon points to "Earth Day" on banner.)* Yes, today IS Earth Day, but what is your name? *(The dragon continues to point to the banner as the prince walks out of the palace door.)*

Prince: Perhaps I can clear this up for you.

Holly: Why, it's the Paper Bag Prince, folks. Your Royal Highness, can you help us communicate with this dragon? Does he have a name? *(She holds microphone up to the Prince.)*

Prince: Of course he does! This is the palace dragon. He was born on the first Earth Day in 1970 and so we gave him a very important name—Earthday. He tries to live up to it by setting a good example for everyone. For example, in order to save paper, he writes on this magic slate. Right, Earthday?

(Dragon writes "yes" on slate, holds it up.)

(Princess comes out of palace)

Princess: He CAN talk, though...can't you, dear. *(Dragon holds up slate again.)* You see, he even recycles words!

Prince: All year, Earthday has been working with the children of Recyclot to find the top ten ways to save the Earth...at home and at school.

Princess: And today—Earthday's birthday—is the day he has chosen to share them with us. Are you ready, Earthday?

(Dragon holds up magic slate...YES!)

Holly: *(motioning to camera person)* Great! Lights, please! Roll the camera!

(Hairdresser and make-up person rush forward to do a quick fix on Holly's hair and makeup.)

The camera person and lighting technicians focus on the palace door. The dragon writes #10 on his slate and holds it up as the first two students come through the door with a placard.

Placard #1 example: STAMP OUT STYROFOAM! After holding up and reading the slogan placard, the students present the reasons for the slogan and then suggest ways we can help or solve the problem. This part of the play may be recited or read from note cards. Dialogue for this top ten list is researched and written by students beforehand. When presented, the dragon rewrites the list numbers—10 to 1—before each placard is presented. An actual drum roll may precede the final placard. Then the play continues as written below:

(Students applaud and cheer after the last placard is presented and then begin to sing the birthday song to Earthday the dragon... "Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday, dear Earthday...happy birthday to you!" Then lights and camera turn to Holly for the wrap-up.)

Holly: So there you have it, folks—Earth Day in Recyclot, where palaces are made of paper bags, dragons write on magic slates, and Earth Day is a birthday. This is Holly Wood, of URX-TV, where "X" is where "U R" and where you want to be...on Earth Day, 2005.

EARTH DAY SLOGANS

- Recharge your batteries!
- Phone first!
- Stop junk mail!
- Plant a tree!
- Carpool to school!
- Reuse old news!
- Glass is good!
- Save the rainforests!
- Paper or plastic?