



10 Ways For Kids and Their Families to Enjoy An Earth-Friendly Holiday—

Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year. The extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week!

If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high. If we each sent one card less, we'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper.

1. **Make Your Own Wrapping Paper or Go Without:** Certain types of wrapping paper are not recyclable, such as ones that are foil or that have glitter on them. Plus most of it ends up going to the landfill anyway once it's ripped off the package. Why not be creative and use old maps, newspaper, or your own artwork to jazz up your gift? Or you can use a scarf, a dishtowel, or some other type of useful fabric that can be its own gift of sorts.
2. **Buy Energy Saving LED Holiday Lights:** Tell your family to replace their old Christmas lights with LED lights that consume 90 percent less energy than traditional lights. They also produce less heat and last up to 200,000 hours. When one burns out, the others stay on!
3. **Recycle Your Christmas Tree:** You can bring your live Christmas tree to the Preble County Landfill between December 26 and February 1 for recycling into mulch for free. Consider donating artificial trees to others who may need them or make crafts from the parts.
4. **Recycle Your Old Cell Phone or Tablet:** Are you getting a new cell phone or tablet this Christmas? Don't know where to take the old ones? Electronics and batteries don't belong in your recycling bin, but you can dispose of them properly by bringing them to the Household Hazardous Waste Trailer at the Preble County Landfill during regular landfill hours: M-F 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Did you know that each year, over 130 million cell phones are thrown out, weighing approximately 65,000 tons? Recycling your old phone helps keep dangerous chemicals like mercury, cadmium, and lead from going into the landfill.
5. **Join Your Family in Donating Time or Money to An Environmental Cause or A Holiday Charity Event:** There are countless ways to help your community and the planet during the holidays! Volunteer to clean up a local park or help serve a holiday dinner for the homeless. You can spend time with your family and make a difference in the lives of others as well!
6. **Make Hand-made or DIY Gifts for the Holidays:** A gift doesn't have to be store-bought to be special to the one who receives it! DIY gifts such as homemade ornaments, picture frames of friends and family, or handmade soaps and cards can be fun both to make and receive. Visit Pinterest or other craft sites on the internet to find some really great ideas!
7. **Give "Experience" Gifts:** Give the gift of an experience with your family. Find a place to visit or take your family that can be economical (even free?) and fun to visit. Or you can make dinner for your family and watch a special holiday movie together for a wonderful memory.
8. **Purchase Eco-Friendly or Locally Made Gifts:** If you do buy a ready-made gift for friends and family, buy gifts that don't come in a lot of packaging, are made from earth-friendly materials, or can be easily recycled. Consider giving a reusable coffee mug or a water bottle, or a reusable shopping bag for your parents or grandparents to take to the grocery store.
9. **Stuff Stockings with Natural Treats:** Instead of stuffing your socks with cheap, breakable items that will quickly end up in the landfill, bake some cookies or create small, handmade crafts to put inside for an interesting change of pace.
10. **Secret Santa Gift Exchange:** Encourage your family to hold a "Secret Santa" gift exchange instead of buying gifts for each member of the family. You can save money, use less packaging, and get someone a little nicer individual gift too than if you had to spread all your holiday dollars out to buy for everyone. It can be great fun to guess who your Santa is too!

**Fun holiday craft idea: See the back of this newsletter for instructions to make a festive reindeer light bulb ornament...*

*Teachers: Preble County Solid Waste District offers free classroom recycling presentations throughout the year. An informative recycling education speech which includes a fun recycled craft project is a great way to prepare for the holidays. To schedule a presentation for your class, call Beth at 937-456-6880 or email her at beth.wright@prebswmd.org.

Reindeer Light Bulb Ornament



This is a great way to recycle those burnt out night lights or Christmas bulbs. With a few simple craft supplies and some hot glue, you can make a reindeer or two.

Materials:

- Brown pipe cleaner
- 5mm or 7mm red pompom
- 10mm silver or gold bell
- 1/8" Wide ribbon in holiday colors
- C7 Christmas bulb or night light bulb*
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- 7 mm googly eyes

*I was able to find a couple of boxes of light bulb garland at a yard sale. Each light bulb, when taken off the string, already had a hanger on it so for those reindeer, I was able to omit the step where you attach the ribbon hanger.

1. Cut a 6" length of thin ribbon as a hanger for your ornament. Holding your light bulb (bulb-side down) and using hot glue, glue the two ends of the ribbon together just below the screw portion of your bulb.
2. Cut an 8" piece of ribbon. Tie it in a bow and glue it on top of the ribbon ends you already glued on.
3. Bend a 6" piece of brown pipe cleaner as pictured, then hot glue the center of it on top of the ribbon bow and glue a bell on top of that.
4. Finally, glue on the googly eyes and a pompom nose as pictured.

Option: If you want colored bulbs but only have clear ones, spray paint the bulbs. Before painting the bulbs, cover the screw portion with masking tape to keep the paint off it.

*Craft found on CraftElf.com